

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, 5 March, 1987.

Time — 1:30 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER by Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER, Hon. M. Phillips: Presenting Petitions . . . Reading and Receiving Petitions . . . Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees . . .

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, I'd like to table a copy of the Directory of French Language Services that will be distributed to all members of the Legislature, pertaining to the services that are available in French from Government Services.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Culture and Heritage Resources.

HON. J. WASYLYCIA-LEIS: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to table a Triennial Report, entitled "Moving Forward," of the Manitoba Advisory Council on the Status of Women, December 1982 to March 1986.

MADAM SPEAKER: Notices of Motion . . . Introduction of Bills . . .

HON. J. WASYLYCIA-LEIS: Sorry, Madam Speaker, I have a Ministerial Statement.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Culture and Heritage Resources.

HON. J. WASYLYCIA-LEIS: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to take this opportunity to inform the House of an important day for women in Manitoba, in Canada, and, indeed, throughout the world - (Interjection)- excuse me, I have the copies right here.

Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to inform the House of an important day for women in Manitoba, in Canada, and, indeed, throughout the world. Sunday, March 8 is International Women's Day, a day which has come to symbolize the efforts of women throughout history to ensure a world where justice and equality for all become the rule, not the exception. In recognition of the importance of this event, the Government of Manitoba has declared March 1 to 8 as International Women's Week.

Madam Speaker, the yellow roses which my colleagues and I are wearing today are part of a tradition, a tradition begun by our colleague, the late Honourable Mary Beth Dolin, and are a tribute to the suffragettes who worked long and hard at the turn of this century to ensure that the franchise was extended

to women. The activities of the early suffragettes, indeed, directly relate to the involvement of women in this Legislative Assembly.

Madam Speaker, in the last decade in our country and, in particular, in this province, we have witnessed many changes in the social and in the economic circumstances faced by women. The demands for equality guarantees in both home and work life have resulted in substantial improvements in the status of women. Yet, despite the gains we have made, equality for the women of this world is still not a reality.

There are literally thousands of activities throughout the world, during the month of March, organized around International Women's Day, which have connected many women on issues such as economic security, decent jobs, decent wages, child care, housework, the double burden of responsibilities in the paid and unpaid labour force, health care, pornography and violence against women. These activities have served to underscore the ongoing determination of women to build together societies which can truly be rich, with all of our diversities, truly open to all opportunities, and truly free of intolerance, racism and sexism.

Madam Speaker, the principles which frame these activities are the very principles which frame a humane society, a society where all members can participate equally, a society where those who require assistance and encouragement will receive it fairly and with dignity, a society truly caring and just, and these issues, Madam Speaker, are the very issues which are rooted in the values and beliefs all citizens hold dear.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to have the opportunity to join with the Premier and with all of my other colleagues in this Assembly in a celebration of International Women's Day at a public reception today between 4 p.m. and 7 p.m., and I would invite all honourable members to attend and together reaffirm our commitment to continue the work towards equality, greater fairness and greater opportunity for women around the world.

Madam Speaker, I would also invite all members to view a slide show featuring the work of women artists, prepared in cooperation with the Manitoba Arts Council, and a photography and publications display produced by the Historic Resources Branch of my department. These events are part of the reception tonight in Room 254.

Madam Speaker, International Women's Day was born out of a protest by women textile workers in New York back in 1857, protesting against unfair working conditions, long hours and low pay. In Manitoba, in 1987, a series of province-wide events have been planned to commemorate how this single event has touched the lives of all of us, and how together we must all continue to work in the struggle for equality between all men and all women.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Kirkfield Park.

MRS. G. HAMMOND: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I welcome the statement made by the Minister responsible for the Status of Women today. We all agree that women want and should have equality. I believe, though, that the suffragettes today are the farm women in Manitoba, and this is an area that is crying for help, the women in rural Manitoba.

These women, along with their families, are bearing the brunt of the crisis of agriculture in our province. If the Minister responsible for Status of Women and the other women in the government caucus would pressure their colleagues to give some immediate help to the farm community, they would relieve some of the enormous stress that farm women are facing today. They are trying to help their families stay together, trying to keep things on an even keel with limited resources and ever-decreasing cash.

I would suggest to the Minister, although we welcome everything that she has said in her statement, and agree with the things, there is an immediate need for help in the farm community. If she wants to help women, and the government wants to help women, this is the place to start right in Manitoba, in rural Manitoba.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Co-operative Development.

HON. J. COWAN: Yes, Madam Speaker.

As you are aware, through a cooperative process last year, the Rules were changed and the new Rules provide for the tabling of the sequence of the consideration of the Estimates of the various government departments by each section of the Committee of Supply, as was established in consultation between the Opposition House Leader and myself just yesterday.

So, in accordance with provisions of Rule No. 65(6.1), I would like to table for the House the sequence, as has been determined, and I would like to thank the Opposition House Leader for his full cooperation and assistance in this regard.

RETURNS TO ORDERS

HON. J. COWAN: As well, Madam Speaker, I'd like to table several Returns to Orders on the motion of the Honourable Member for Gladstone:

Order for Return, No. 4, dated May 22, 1986;

Order for Return, No. 5, dated June 4, 1986;

Order for Return, No. 6, dated June 9, 1986.

And for the information of honourable members, I'd like to indicate that these Orders for Return were developed by the staff of the Department of Employment Services and Economic Security at a total cost of just about \$6,000.00.

MADAM SPEAKER: Ministerial Statements and Tabling of Reports . . . Notices of Motion . . . Introduction of Bills . . .

Order please, order please. Question period is coming shortly.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MADAM SPEAKER: Before Oral Questions, may I draw the attention of honourable members to the gallery

where we have 18 students from Grade 11 from Gordon Bell High School, under the direction of Mr. Henry Hubert, and the school, I'm proud to say, is located in the constituency of Wolseley.

On behalf of all the members, we welcome you to the Legislature this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Agriculture - crisis situation

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is for the Premier.

Given that last year the Province of Saskatchewan spent \$1.64 billion in agriculture support programs, the Province of Alberta spent \$515 million in agriculture support programs, and Manitoba, according to the Western Producer, from figures obtained from the Department of Agriculture, spent only \$36.5 million in agriculture support programs; and given, Madam Speaker, that even after the \$1 billion federal grain support program there will still be a loss of net realized income to farmers in Manitoba of 21 percent this year, what action is this Premier prepared to take to assist the beleaguered farmers of Manitoba to survive this coming year?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, clearly, the Leader of the Opposition realizes that this question should have been asked yesterday at 1:30 p.m. rather than today. Secondly, insofar as action, my first action will be to correct some of the misinformation that has been left on the record by the Leader of the Opposition in his question this afternoon.

Madam Speaker, first, the Leader of the Opposition conveniently ignores over \$1.1 billion of the money that he refers to as being provided to the farmers in the Province of Saskatchewan was by way of loan.- (Interjection)- The Leader of the Opposition very conveniently, Madam Speaker, uses a figure of \$30-some-million for the Province of Manitoba when the total amount of farm assistance and capital provided is some \$160 million in the Province of Manitoba.

I would suggest the Leader of the Opposition either speak to his researchers or ensure that he obtains new researchers to give him accurate information on the agricultural crisis in the Province of Manitoba as well as other parts of this country.

Madam Speaker, also, the Leader of the Opposition appears, when he salutes the efforts of Premier Devine in the Province of Saskatchewan, obviously, he has not heard the information released only a few moments ago when the Premier of Saskatchewan indicated to the people of Saskatchewan that assistance to hospitals and schools and universities will be zero percent or less, including the hospitals and schools of rural Saskatchewan . . . - (Interjection)-

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

HON. H. PAWLEY: . . . to the assistance of the women that the Honorable Member for Kirkfield Park referred to only a few moments ago . . .

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MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

HON. H. PAWLEY: . . . the farm women in the Province of Saskatchewan.

MADAM SPEAKER: I remind honourable members that answers should be brief and deal with the matter raised and not provoke debate.

MR. G. FILMON: I don't think this Premier can take any . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. G. FILMON: . . . comfort on health care . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please. If the honourable member has a question . . .

MR. G. FILMON: . . . when he wants a 10 percent cut in beds.

MADAM SPEAKER: Does the honourable member have a question?

MR. G. FILMON: Of course, I do. That's why I am standing, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Would you please ask it?

MR. G. FILMON: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Given that other provinces are making serious commitments to their farmers, commitments in terms of hundreds of millions, if not billions of dollars in loan capital, in support payments, in programs of all sorts to keep their farmers buoyant, will he not consider taking immediate action, immediate action so that our farmers in Manitoba know that this government wants them to survive, as the Provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta want their farmers to survive, instead of giving us all the lip service and the rhetoric and the other extraneous comparisons?

HON. H. PAWLEY: The Leader of the Opposition appears to continue to ignore the information released from Saskatchewan a few moments ago about - (Interjection)- the Member for Arthur says we're not worried about Saskatchewan. Then I don't know, Madam Speaker, why the Leader of the Opposition keeps referring to the province of Saskatchewan in his question. At least I thanked the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet yesterday who had his facts straight and presented his question in a way that made some logical sense in this Chamber.

Madam Speaker, this government, in specific response to the Leader of the Opposition, provided some \$160 million approximate to the farmers of the Province of Saskatchewan. In the Province of Manitoba, the numbers being much less insofar as total farmers in the Province of Saskatchewan, and, Madam Speaker, in addition to that \$160 million, there will be further initiatives. There were other initiatives I might mention that honourable members opposed last Session that were launched in support of the banks as against unfair treatment of farmers by banks. Of course, they took

their marching orders from the banks, Madam Speaker - \$160 million last year in financial assistance to the farmers in the Province of Manitoba and additional programs will be launched this year.

MR. G. FILMON: I know that the Premier likes the questions from the Member for Lac du Bonnet because he writes them for him.

Madam Speaker, my question to the Premier is: Given that he has pointed out the program of the Province of Saskatchewan that provides loan capital to farmers, will he . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet on a point of order.

MR. C. BAKER: I want to inform the Leader of the Opposition that I'm capable of writing my own questions. I understand . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please. Order please.

MR. C. BAKER: I'd appreciate it very much if you'd withdraw that remark.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please. The honourable member does not have a point of order. A dispute over the facts is not a point of order.

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, given that the Premier has pointed out the wisdom of the Saskatchewan program on loans . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: The Member for Lac du Bonnet on a point of order.

MR. C. BAKER: I don't really know the Rules of the House, Madam Speaker, but just common decency and dignity would move somebody on the opposite side to withdraw a remark that he knows is not true.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member does not have a point of order.

Order please.

The Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, if I have offended in any way the Member for Lac du Bonnet, whom I respect, I will withdraw any portion of my comment that he is offended by.

Madam Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Given that he has pointed out the wisdom of the Saskatchewan program that provides massive amounts of loan capital to all of their farmers at 6 percent interest, is he prepared to bring in a similar program for the farmers of Manitoba to help them overcome the crisis situation which they are 6 percent loan money guaranteed and interest reduced to that level by the Province of Manitoba?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Since the Leader of the Opposition persists in providing the House and the public with

erroneous information, the Minister of Agriculture is going to provide some detail to the Leader of the Opposition so we can ensure that there is some accurate information provided to this Chamber.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition with a question.

MR. G. FILMON: Yes. Since the Premier is unable to answer that question, Madam Speaker, I'll ask him another question.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker . . .

MR. D. ORCHARD: Now he wants to answer. Come on, Howie, make up your mind.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.
The Honourable First Minister on a point of order.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, the usual custom in this Chamber is to refer questions that are of a detailed nature to the appropriate Ministers, and I want to do that because the Leader of the Opposition's resting his case on massive erroneous information. I refer that question to the Minister of Agriculture.

MR. D. ORCHARD: It's quite a spot to be in, Madam Speaker, when your Premier won't answer.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.
The usual custom in the House, in my understanding, is that if there is detailed information to be given, it can either be tabled or given in a Ministerial Statement.

Farm land - removal of education tax

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, in view of the fact that the Premier's unable to answer that question, I'll ask him a further question. Is he prepared, in order to support the farmers of Manitoba, to remove all or a portion of the education tax off farm land in Manitoba?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, to the honourable member's question, we have indicated as a government during the last election campaign that this matter that he now raises certainly is a priority of this government.

Madam Speaker, the honourable member left on the record an erroneous impression that the budgetary spending of Saskatchewan, being \$1.6 billion, is two or three or four times that of the Province of Manitoba. Madam Speaker, let's understand that there are virtually three times as many farmers in the Province of Saskatchewan.

When you take those loan funds at 6 percent on an average Manitoba farm of, say, 500 acres and you look at a subsidy of today's interest rates of 10 percent, which is a 4 percent subsidy on 500 acres, Madam Speaker, that translates into \$500 per farm, not massive

support in terms of individual farmers. Madam Speaker, when you compare that to our Interest Rate Relief Program, two years running of \$6,000 of direct benefits per farm, that program alone is five and six times as much as the Honourable Leader of the Opposition speaks of.

Madam Speaker, the Saskatchewan Government brought in that program prior to an election. This government has brought in long-term lasting programs, four and five years running, and we have committed ourselves to the long-term protection of agriculture, Madam Speaker.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

Farmers - interest rate reduction

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition with a supplementary.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

Is he prepared to bring in a program of interest rate reduction for farmers to get them out of their crisis today, to get them out of the problems they face with respect to this coming crop year? Is he prepared, as well, to remove all or a portion of the education tax off farm land?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, this government brought in interest rate reductions two years running, trying to embarrass . . .

MR. G. FILMON: Not for all farmers, just MACC.

HON. B. URUSKI: . . . and I say that quite clearly - we tried to embarrass your colleagues in Ottawa to lower interest rates for everyone across the board - homeowners, small businessmen and farmers.

Madam Speaker, everyone in rural Manitoba and rural Canada is suffering as a result of the insane high-interest rate policy of the Federal Government, which they supported when they were in government. That's why we see the thousands of farm families near bankruptcy today, the businesses that are closing, Madam Speaker, that's the reason . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please. Order please!

It's almost impossible for me to hear the Minister's answer over the noise in the Chamber. Could honourable members please do the Minister the courtesy of being quiet enough for us all to hear the answers.

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: My question very simply to the Premier is: When is he prepared to live up to his responsibilities to support the farmers of Manitoba

instead of simply whining that it's somebody else's problem?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, this New Democratic Party Government has taken action over the last number of years vis-a-vis interest rate reductions for those farmers in need. It was this government that launched important beef stabilization, hog stabilization programs. It was this government that launched a number of important programs.

Madam Speaker, unlike the indifference that is demonstrated by Conservatives, whether they be in Ottawa or in the Province of Manitoba, toward the plight of western agriculture, this government is prepared to stand by its record of assistance to the farm people of the Province of Manitoba. This government is prepared to act in the future in respect to initiatives that will assist the farmers of this province, and we certainly don't intend to reduce the assistance to rural schools and hospitals in the Province of Manitoba to zero and less.

MPIC - autobody repair rates

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation.

Madam Speaker, the Autopac rates regulating the income of autobody repair companies in Winnipeg and elsewhere are still up in the air, causing a great deal of uncertainty in the car repair business. More seriously still, in recent negotiations, the MPIC negotiators have called for no increases at all in these rates. Therefore, as far as MPIC is concerned, the income of auto repair businesses will not even be able to keep up with inflation.

I would like to ask the Minister the following question: How does the Minister justify the contradiction whereby his agency increases fees from 9 percent to 30 percent, and yet denies the repair shops the chance to meet their increased costs of operation, or is there once again a rule for government and another one for the private sector?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister responsible for MPIC.

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

With respect to the negotiations that are taking place, the member is quite correct that MPIC has laid out a position that, at this time, they are prepared to offer zero percent.

The member didn't indicate that at the same time the Automotive Trades Association has been asking for something like 17 percent to 30 percent.

I'm also surprised that the member would want to bring negotiations into this building. Negotiations between the corporation and the association have, in the past, taken place at the bargaining table, and I

would hope that the parties involved would get back and negotiate a reasonable settlement.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: A supplementary to the same Minister, Madam Speaker.

Is the Minister unwilling to step into these negotiations which have been going on since November and in which the autobody dealers have in fact now agreed to 9.9 percent, but the government, MPIC negotiators, are still at zero percent?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: Yes, the member is quite correct. I am not prepared to get in the middle of negotiations between the corporation and the association. That is properly a function for staff at MPIC to be dealing on behalf of the corporation.

I have every reason to believe that a reasonable settlement can be achieved. For the member's information, there has only been one meeting held so far.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: A final supplementary to the same Minister, Madam Speaker.

The negotiating representatives, the Automotive Trades, allegedly told MPIC negotiators that the owners of repair shops should look at a reduction of employees' wages to meet the substantial non-controllable costs. Could the Minister assure the House that this is not the policy of the government?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: I'm rather surprised that the Member for River Heights, who is a responsible person, would bring in an alleged statement to this House.

I was not at the negotiating table. Apparently, the member certainly wasn't. I have checked with MPIC; I've been told that certainly was not said or, if it was said facetiously, was not corporation policy. Again, all I can say is that I'm not here, as the Minister responsible, to become involved in the negotiations between the corporation and the association.

I think the sooner the association realizes this and gets back to the corporation, that some sort of a reasonable settlement can be achieved as has been achieved with some autobody shops in other parts of Manitoba not represented by the association.

MACC - interest rates reduction

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Virden.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

A constituent of the Member for Morris phoned MACC office yesterday and asked if the 8 percent interest policy was still in place for 1987. The answer he received is it is no longer corporation policy.

I would ask the Minister of Agriculture if that is true.

MADAM SPEAKER: Could the honourable member please rephrase the last part of his question? It's a member's duty to ascertain the truth of facts that he brings to the Legislature.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'll ask the Minister if that is government policy?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, the policy of the write-down of interest rates was in fact brought in two years running, and was for a duration period.

If the honourable member has some information that someone who may have been eligible for 8 percent for that write-down and did not receive it, I would like to have those details. But, certainly, the period that we spoke about and the announcements that were made were in fact made on two separate occasions, and unless there was some difficulty with an individual file, I would not be aware of it, but government policy has been carried out as promised.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Madam Speaker, does that government policy extend into the calendar year of 1987?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, that question, in terms of whether there will be any further write-downs and the like, will be announced in due course.

MR. G. FINDLAY: The farmers are under incredible financial pressure right now, and I would like to ask the Minister if he gets some sadistic pleasure out of making them wait and wonder if they're going to get any help?

MADAM SPEAKER: That question is not in order.

MACC - collection of loans

MADAM SPEAKER: Does the Honourable Member for Virden have a final supplementary?

MR. G. FINDLAY: Yes, a final supplementary, Madam Speaker.

I'd like to ask the Minister to tell the House on how many MACC loans or how many farmers with MACC loans has the corporation moved to collect those loans in the last year?

HON. B. URUSKI: I think the only one that may be - and I don't want to impute motives, I wish the honourable member would withdraw the inference in his comments earlier, Madam Speaker, in terms of the inference.

I believe, as Minister responsible for the Department of Agriculture, and a member of this government, that we have and will continue to provide the kind of support that we can financially bring about, and we will assist as many farmers as we can.

Our entire extension service has been changed to try and deal with families in crisis and will not always be able to deal with a crisis situation by strictly financial means. It will be by support, by stress counselling, and the like that we will try and support those families.

But for the honourable member to suggest that someone takes sadistic pleasure, Madam Speaker, that honourable member should withdraw that kind of an inference.

Federal Sales Tax Credit - social assistance recipients

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

MR. M. DOLIN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Employment Services and Economic Security regarding the federal sales tax credit.

I'm wondering if the Minister could give this House assurance that social assistance recipients will not lose this money, but will be ensured the benefits of the federal sales tax credit.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Employment Services and Economic Security.

HON. L. EVANS: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I can assure the honourable member and, indeed, all members of the House that it is our policy to enable provincial social allowance recipients to receive the benefit of the new federal sales tax credit, and that's consistent with our policy of universal tax credits which are available. We allow those to be passed on to recipients.

I might add, however, that it's unfortunate that in order to be able to be eligible for this, that the Federal Government is requiring now for the first time on the federal income tax forms that applicants must report their welfare benefits. This was done without consultation with any of the provinces, as I understand, which is very regrettable; and, indeed, what it may mean is that some families in Manitoba and, indeed, other parts of Canada will be denied the value of this federal sales tax credit because of being required to report it on their income tax form.

MPIC - auto insurance rates

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Kildonan with a supplementary.

MR. M. DOLIN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have a question to the Minister responsible for MPIC.

There was an article this morning about automobile insurance rates which shows Manitoba, by the Insurance Brokers Association, to be seven out of ten cities named Winnipeg. I'm wondering, No. 1: I have a stepson in Edmonton who, when he was 24 years old, was paying \$1,200 annually for insurance. These figures seem to be somewhat distorted. I'm wondering if the Minister could comment on whether or not these figures are realistic and whether Manitoba is seventh in the country in auto insurance.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please. The honourable member, I am sure, is aware that he is not to ask a question as to whether statements in a newspaper are correct.

The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

MR. M. DOLIN: Yes, if I could rephrase the question. Will the Minister tell this House whether or not Manitoba is seventh in the country in auto insurance rates or is Manitoba, as we have been led to believe, one of the lowest in the country?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister responsible for MPIC.

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker.

Indeed, I have read that article. It appeared in today's editorial page of the Winnipeg Free Press and I was quite surprised because I recall that last January there was an article on automobile insurance and the conclusion of the writer at that time was - and I remember the words so distinctly - "like it or not, public insurance is cheaper."

Now, they seem to have done an about-face by quoting the Insurance Brokers Association of Ontario and I have not seen the news release or the report from the Insurance Brokers Association. That has been requested and I know the examples which were used were probably very selective. In fact, the editorial indicates that they were probably such identical vehicles.

I don't have any hesitation whatsoever confirming that the insurance rates for automobiles in Manitoba are amongst the lowest, if not the lowest, in North America.

MPIC - investment policies

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Kildonan with a supplementary.

MR. M. DOLIN: Thank you, Madam Speaker, a supplementary to the same Minister.

I'm wondering if the Minister could advise the House when MPIC chooses to invest its reserves and what these investments are used for.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister responsible for MPIC, briefly.

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: Yes, I again presume that's . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.
The Honourable Minister.

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: Again, I presume that's in reference to the item which made some remarks about MPIC's investment policies. I'm pleased that about 95 percent or more of the investments made by MPIC are within the Province of Manitoba for such worthwhile projects as schools and personal care homes, hospitals and assets that are of value to our province.

The investments are also made by the Department of Finance at rates which very closely resemble market rates; therefore, Manitoba motorists need not feel that they are subsidizing the various institutions. However, they can be pleased to know that they are providing the funds for the construction of these projects.

Child and Family Services - lack of responsibility - Desiree Kozak

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Rhineland.

MR. A. BROWN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Community Services.

My question is about the death of two-year old Desiree Kozak who was sexually assaulted. The parents of this child had alerted Child and Family Services of their suspicions that this child was being sexually assaulted; however, Child and Family Services took no action and the result was the death of the child. This, Madam Speaker, is a very serious and indeed criminal lack of responsibility by Child and Family Services.

My question to the Minister is: What has she done to ensure that this lack of responsibility will not happen again?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. M. SMITH: Madam Speaker, any tragic death of a child is a matter of deep concern to us all. In this particular case, as you know, it's been before the court and we've been waiting for their determination for appropriate follow-up, but of course we've been working on the child abuse issue in an overall way for quite some time.

In this particular case, the youngster was actually placed by the mother with her sister, and as members well know, parents still do have some rights with regard to their children.

MR. D. ORCHARD: . . . you didn't say that about Jake Epp's comment.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.
The Honourable Minister.

HON. M. SMITH: Parents do have some prior rights as laid out in The Child and Family Act. It's not a case of Child and Family Service agencies being involved in every family situation. Again we are working to fine tune our reporting and our intervention in child and family cases where there can be advanced knowledge, but we also have to look at the right of parents to deal with their own children. It's a question of finding the balance point.

Madam Speaker, members opposite can be assured that we will be looking very, very closely at this case, as any other regrettable incidents that occur, to see if there is anything in the procedures which can be improved.

MR. A. BROWN: My question is to the same Minister.

Was the recent shift of the Assistant Deputy Minister of Child and Family Services, Aleda Turnbull, to Assistant Deputy Minister of Community and Social Services as a result of her incompetent handling of this and other cases; and if so, why was she not fired?

HON. M. SMITH: Madam Speaker, absolutely no.

Min. of Community Services - request for resignation

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Rhineland.

MR. A. BROWN: My question is to the Premier.

The Minister of Community Services has consistently followed bad advice regarding her department. Ever since the central agency of Child and Family Services was destroyed and Winnipeg divided into six areas, utter chaos has occurred in this department, resulting in criminal and unnecessary deaths of children.

Will the Premier ask for the Minister's resignation and her incompetent handling of her department?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, clearly, the Member for Rhineland must have received the same information from the research writers who assisted the Leader of the Opposition earlier in the question period, because again the question is based upon completely and totally erroneous information.

I want to say, and I believe this is shared by the majority of members in this House, we have, I believe, one of the most capable Ministers of Community Services in the personage of the Deputy Premier of the Province of Manitoba.

Daerwood Machine Works - incentive payment

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Business Development.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Yesterday, I took as notice a question from the Member for Portage la Prairie. I would, first of all, like to just take a moment to tell him that we are, on this side, glad to see him looking as fit as a fiddle, and that we are wishing him good health for this next Session.

Having said that, Madam Speaker, I would like to indicate and address the concern that he raised the other day suggesting that a loan that was made to a company called Daerwood might look as though it was made for political reasons. I am very pleased to report to him that the reason that the loan was made to this company was on the basis of a recommendation in the Ombudsman's Report to us on this matter. It's very difficult to make decisions like this when you want to make sure that you're being very fair and very equitable as the members opposite would want us to be. We decided that the recommendations that came to us from the Ombudsman's Report we would want to follow. We did that, and that was the basis for the decision that was made, Madam Speaker.

Elk ranching - Swan Valley

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Emerson.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Natural Resources.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

The Honourable Member for Emerson has the floor to place his question.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Natural Resources.

This poor Minister tried to expand the elk ranching in Manitoba and was turned down by his caucus and, as a result, announced the termination of the experimental elk ranch in Minitonas.

Can the Minister indicate how many elk were on the elk farm at the time that he made his announcement? How many elk are there now? How many have been returned to the wild? How many are the government going to be compensating for?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. L. HARAPIAK: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm pleased to indicate that we did deal with what was a very controversial issue. After having had the opportunity to have input from people throughout the Province of Manitoba and, indeed, the benefit of consultation with caucus and Cabinet, made a decision, and it was to terminate elk ranching as a commercial venture in Manitoba.

In terms of the numbers -(Interjection)- Madam Speaker, the number of elk on the Swan Valley elk ranch at the time notice was given that we were terminating, I believe was 55. I'm just going from memory. The figures are available. If you want verification of those, they can be obtained from my office.

The number today is still the same. We are in the process of discussion with the parties involved, Madam Speaker, to phase out the elk ranch in an orderly manner. The elk owing to the province, a decision will have to be made in respect to the disposition of those animals, but no animals owing to the province have yet been returned to the wild.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: To the same Minister, then: Can the Minister indicate what the total estimated costs of compensation will be to the taxpayers of Manitoba for the termination of that project?

HON. L. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, it's interesting to note that the Member for Emerson, like the Member for River Heights, appears to be wanting to lobby for specific interest groups in this Chamber.

It is true, Madam Speaker, that we are in the process of negotiating the settlement, and we indicated publicly that we would treat the participants in a fair and equitable manner. Those discussions are ongoing, and I don't think it would be responsible on my part in negotiating a fair settlement for the people of Manitoba in their interests to reveal in this Chamber in the interests of the Member for Emerson the progress that we are making at this stage. When we have reached a settlement, it will be tabled.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Emerson with a final supplementary.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: A final supplementary, Madam Speaker, to the same Minister.

Since the taxpayers of Manitoba are going to be involved in the compensation factor, is the Minister

prepared to table all correspondence that has taken place between his department and the experimental elk ranch?

HON. L. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, I want to indicate clearly, as we have on all occasions, that in managing the resources of the Province of Manitoba, we are in fact looking after the interests of the taxpayers of Manitoba. Madam Speaker, I want to indicate that there has not been an indication of liability on the part of the province in this matter. We said we want to deal with the parties in a fair and equitable manner but we are not, by way of that statement, indicating that there is some liability on our part. In terms of the communication that can be released, if there is third-party agreement to the release of that information, we would be prepared to table it.

Daerwood Machine Works - incentive payment

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for Business Development and Tourism.

Madam Speaker, in the settlement to Daerwood Machine Works, a business located in the Premier's constituency, the Ombudsman's Report was instrumental in the government and the Premier providing \$60,000 of taxpayer relief to Daerwood Machine Works.

Can the Minister indicate whether legal opinion sought on behalf of the government indicated whether there was a legal requirement to provide that assistance to Daerwood?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Business Development.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Madam Speaker, I think it's important in matters like this that governments not only do what is legally required but what is morally right.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Absolutely. Now she's in the chute.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: I just stated that because we wanted to make sure that we were reasonable and fair with a company that was having difficulties, and followed the recommendation of the Ombudsman to come to terms and to negotiate a settlement with that company, that is what we did, Madam Speaker.

Carman Agri Services - relief to

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Madam Speaker, my question is for the Premier.

Given that for Daerwood Machine Works Ltd., a company in his constituency, a \$60,000 loan was provided to that company . . .

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Interest free.

MR. D. ORCHARD: . . . interest free, to assist that company because of a moral obligation on the government, will he provide the same kind of moral leadership and instruct his Minister for Autopac to provide relief to Carman Agri who is similarly, because of bad action by MPIC the same as Daerwood Machine Works in Selkirk - will he provide the moral reasoning and take Carman Agri off the hook for a \$700,000 claim for which his government, his Crown corporation, knew for three-and-a-half years was before the courts and never once informed Carman Agri? Will he apply the same moral values to a business in Pembina constituency as he applies to a business in his own back yard?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, I find it extremely unusual that we would be discussing legal cases in this Chamber, a matter that I believe the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation indicated only yesterday was before the courts.

Is the Member for Pembina afraid of the courts? Is the honourable member fearful of the appeal that has been launched? Why would the Member for Pembina be wanting to discuss in this Chamber a matter that has not yet been resolved through the judicial process?

MADAM SPEAKER: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MADAM SPEAKER: On the proposed motion of the Honourable . . . - (Interjection)- Order please.
The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: On a point of order, I want the record to show that the Minister of Education, that the set of morals for the constituency of the Premier are different than those of the one for Pembina.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please. The honourable member does not have a point of order.
Order please.

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

MADAM SPEAKER: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, and the proposed amendment thereto by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Minister of Natural Resources has 19 minutes remaining.

HON. L. HARAPIAK: Thank you, Madam Speaker.
I'm pleased to have this opportunity to continue in the participation of the motion before the House. I want the record to show again clearly that I speak in support of the motion of the Member for Lac du Bonnet and in opposition to the amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition.

The Throne Speech indicates clearly the commitment of this government to provision of services to people

in all parts of the province. This is an area that the government has prided itself in providing equitable access to services, and it will continue in that way. It is true that the forum in which we are functioning, there will be tests to the system that they have not had to deal with previously, but I am confident that the government will continue to show its responsible handling of services to people and responsible administration of the resources in its charge.

In my address yesterday, I indicated the concern for agriculture, and again today in this Chamber we had further expression for the concern for what is happening in the agricultural community. There was concern expressed, and properly so, not only for agriculture - (Interjection)- as a business . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please. If honourable members have private conversations, could they please carry them on elsewhere so not to disturb the person speaking and the Speaker.

The Honourable Minister.

HON. L. HARAPIAK: As I was indicating, Madam Speaker, it is proper that there be expression not only for the state of agriculture, as it is viewed as an industry or as a business, but as well the impact that the current situation has on the families. What is the human toll that is taken by the current situation? As members from all sides have indicated, this problem is largely a question of depressed commodity prices, the cereal grains initially and the specialty crops following in the same direction. We have heard only yesterday that there are prospects for further decreases in the initial price of our grains, which would be an additional blow to the farming community and would again stress the importance of the need for support from various levels of government to see the farming community through this particular crisis.

But in addition to the declining commodity prices, we must look as well at the matter of cost of production. In that area we did have today in this Chamber some discussion on interest rates. Interest rates are certainly a factor to be considered in terms of input costs, though perhaps not at the same level that they were a few years ago. As a percentage of the operating costs they are, for many farm families, still a very significant factor.

The Provincial Government, through MACC, very ably demonstrated by the Minister of Agriculture, has attempted to deal with those interest rates, and has in fact in a very real way dealt with them. It is unfortunate that perhaps the lead shown in that respect was not followed by other levels of government or other lending institutions.

In addition, there is the matter of transportation costs. It is unfortunate that the advantage that the western Canadian grain producers had in terms of the Crow rate is no longer available to them. It was during a period in time when perhaps people did not adequately see or perhaps they could not foresee what would happen in terms of a downturn of grain prices. They were encouraged to support a new policy with respect to the transportation of grain and it resulted in increasing costs to farmers in Manitoba and, indeed, all of Western Canada. Those farmers could well use the benefit of those reduced rates at this point in time.

This particular government last year dealt with Bill No. 4, The Family Farm Protection Act. There was some indication from members opposite that particular bill had a negative effect on the farming community. There is indication from the members opposite, and as was indicated earlier, they were opposed to the bill. They spoke against it. We, from this side of the House, recognizing the difficult situation that agriculture was in, stood for the bill, and we said we were quite prepared to take the criticism that might be levied at us with respect to implementation of the bill. But it was necessary to take that measure to ensure that farm families under stress would have every opportunity to look at viable alternatives to their current situation.

There were some lending institutions that indicated that this bill would, in fact, have an upward impact on interest rates. I do not believe that is a fair representation of what is happening. In fact, many were seeing that the risks involved, lenders were seeing that the risks involved in agriculture, because of the viability and declining value of assets, would increase the risk to the lenders. Many of the lenders in making that assessment were wanting to increase the rates and saw this bill as an opportunity to transfer to the Provincial Government by way of Bill No. 4 some responsibility for that increase. But I think it does not truly reflect the increased risk to lenders and I do not suggest that there is not a risk involved for the lenders. I think that the risk to the lenders is more a reflection of the viability of the farming operations related to declining commodity prices and the risk attached to declining asset values.

As I said earlier, I have every confidence that the direction provided by the Throne Speech will see a continuation of the kind of growth that we've had in Manitoba. There are indicators that Manitoba is, in fact, one of the more stable places in all of Canada for industry.

Now aside from the question of agriculture, it is true that agriculture is experiencing difficulty, but if you look at the other sectors in Manitoba, the observers are very positive about the future of Manitoba. I want to read into the record that some of those observations are made by financial institutions which are not traditionally regarded as supporters of this particular government.

But I think, as is happening in other sectors, as is indicated by what is happening in the polls, Madam Speaker, there are others who are starting to recognize the wisdom of a cooperative approach; and indeed we have the Royal Bank of Canada and the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce indicating that Manitoba will be in a very favourable position with respect to the future of Canada and that Manitobans can enjoy that particular comfort, despite the pressure which exists for the agricultural sector.

I wanted, as well, Madam Speaker, to deal with the area of Natural Resources which is my primary responsibility as a member of Cabinet. We have tried to convey and this government will continue to convey an attitude of responsible stewardship of our resources. We want, by way of management of our resources, to provide for opportunities for recreation. We want to provide for opportunities for economic activity, but primarily, Madam Speaker, we want to ensure that the resources that are enjoyed by this generation are available to future generations.

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I've said on other occasions and I would want to say on this occasion that our first responsibility, as users of the resource and our first responsibility as a department, as a custodian of the resource, is to see that our resources are passed on to the next generation in at least the same state of health as a minimum in which we received them, but ideally we should want these resources to be passed on in an enhanced state.

One particular area is the matter of forestry. I am proud of the record of this government with respect to forest management and forest renewal. I think this indicates a clear commitment to the future and indicates that we have every confidence and a strong desire to see that future generations can enjoy the forests as a place of recreation. They can enjoy the forest, the benefits that come from the opportunities to harvest the forest; and, indeed, they can enjoy the forests for the contribution the forests make to our environmental well-being.

The level of activity that this government has undertaken with respect to forest renewal, I think is indeed admirable, and I have to acknowledge the participation of the Federal Government in that particular program of forest renewal. I am pleased as well, as a Minister responsible for forests in Manitoba and as a member of the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers, to have participated in a program of increasing public awareness of the value of our forests in Canada.

One of the difficult problems that the forest industry has had to contend with is the matter of the counter or the export tax that was imposed by the Federal Government in an attempt to deal with a pending countervail action from the U.S. Government. The responsibility for implementing replacement measures has been transferred to the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers and they are looking at different measures because indeed the Federal Minister responsible for trade has indicated that her expectation is that we will undertake measures in our respective provincial jurisdictions to replace the impact of the 15 percent federal export tax.

It will not be a simple task, Madam Speaker, due to the variations which exist from province to province, but we'll participate in the process of discussion, maintaining all the while our firm position that we are in charge of the forest resources of this province.

We have as well had some discussion on the matter of wildlife management. Only today in question period, we had discussion on the matter of elk ranching. We are, Madam Speaker, indeed faced with a serious responsibility when we look at the competing interests for our wildlife resources. There are those who would want to explore economic opportunities as was the case with respect to elk ranching and there are others who want to continue to see our wildlife resources allocated to the traditional uses. Included amongst those are recreational hunting.

So it is not an easy matter, but it is one that we think we have addressed in a way which will ensure again that the interests of future generations will be well addressed.

In addition we have been dealing with the question of fisheries. We have an example in the northwest part of the province where the level of harvest had been deteriorating for a number of years and I was pleased

in that particular instance that we had cooperation, indeed leadership, from various groups in the area to close the lake to commercial fishing for a period of as much as three years to ensure that the stocks would be rebuilt, so that we could have a viable commercial fishery on Lake Winnipegosis.

We have as well, Madam Speaker, in the province some of the most attractive natural settings for our parks. These provide tremendous opportunities for enjoyment. They provide opportunities as well for some to pursue economic activities. Our level of support and our sharing of responsibility from volunteers is well demonstrated by the implementation of two new groups, the Friends of Sprucewoods; and only two weeks ago, I had the opportunity to visit the Whiteshell area where we had the Friends of the Whiteshell entering into an agreement for voluntary participation in the provision of services to our visitors to parks.

I am pleased, Madam Speaker, to note that the department will continue in its consultative approach to resource management. The Member for Gladstone indicated, in her presentation, that there had not been adequate consultation with the fishermen on Lake Manitoba with respect to the harvest of perch. Let me say, Madam Speaker, that I, in consultation with the president of the Lake Manitoba Fishermen's Association, received the advice that it was the view of the association that in that year, in the current year there should not be the harvest of perch.

Now I did have the opportunity to meet in my office with the Member for Gladstone, with the Member for Ste. Rose and with the Member for Lakeside, along with some fishermen from the south part of the lake, and they asked for consideration of an opportunity to harvest in this year. But, Madam Speaker, it is in consultation with the fishermen's representatives that the decision was made not to proceed in this year.

Madam Speaker, I want to indicate that in terms of the other areas, we have been having consultation with the fishermen on Lake Winnipeg. I have been having consultation with community groups with respect to the establishment of the forest reserves, and indeed, with the parks. I am looking forward to that continuing participation by the public because we are, as a department, only trustees of the resources which belong to the people of Manitoba.

So in conclusion, Madam Speaker, I would want to indicate to this House that I have every confidence that the direction provided by the Throne Speech is the direction that the majority of the people of Manitoba want to see and that it will demonstrate again that the government is a sensitive government committed to the provision of services and the responsible administration of the affairs of the Province of Manitoba.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Madam Speaker, would the member entertain a question?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister has one minutes left on his time if he wishes to answer a question.

The Honourable Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Madam Speaker, my question to the Minister is: After his declaring his pride in MACC,

if he will now intercede on behalf of those young farmers in this province who, at the end of their five-year Young Farmer Rebate Program last year, had their loans rewritten at 13.5 percent when the other young farmers in the province were borrowing money at 11.5 percent?

HON. L. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, I would be delighted, if the Member for Ste. Rose would make the information available.

I think there was earlier indication from the Minister of Agriculture, if there was a specific instance where there appeared to be some difficulty with a particular loan, that it should be brought to their attention.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Let me first off congratulate all members on their successful return to their respective chairs, and let me offer my condolences to those in Cabinet who were part of the rearranging of the deck chairs on the Titanic and received responsibilities for messes that were created by previous Ministers. We will soon find enough of those as we get into more question periods and Estimates.

Madam Speaker, I also want at this time to offer my congratulations to the Lieutenant-Governor who very studiously and very skillfully read the longest and most boring Throne Speech that I've ever endured in 10 years here. I by no means admit that we were perfect in our Throne Speeches, but that certainly was the worst I have ever heard in the House.

It offered nothing new. It offered no vision for the future. It offered no solutions to the problems. All it did was take and blame everyone else for all of the problems that have beset this government. I hope in the few moments to point out that the problems this government is facing are self-inflicted problems given to us by such notable members of the Treasury Bench as the Member for Rossmere, his four years as Finance Minister and his \$2 billion record debt that he harnessed future yet unborn Manitobans with.

Madam Speaker, this tired group over here is only in its second year of a new mandate. When pressed with some questions on Friday of last week from my colleague, the Member for Morris, the Finance Minister said something that was very alarming to me and very disturbing, and should be extremely disturbing to the people of Manitoba.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please. Could we have one debate go on at a time in the Chamber?

The Honourable Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Madam Speaker, when questioned, the Minister of Finance - and I presume he speaks in terms of policy for his government - when asked about costs and deficits and the impact of those deficits on the Province of Manitoba and the solutions that he may have to offer to the financial crisis that his government has created over the last five years for themselves, this Minister wailed and lashed back at the Member for

Morris, asking: Where would you cut? Where would you slash?

Madam Speaker, we know that is the mindset and the framework under which an NDP Cabinet works; i.e., when faced with a deficit, you do only one of two things: you either raise taxes dramatically, which they're about to do, or you increase the deficit. Then if any other suggestion is made to them, they call it hacking and slashing.

Note the Premier here over the last couple of question periods has been talking about a zero percent increase as dreadful to the hospitals in Saskatchewan, when his Minister of Education suggested a zero percent increase to the teachers of Manitoba. Is there a difference in teachers versus hospitals, one being in Manitoba, hospitals being in Saskatchewan?

Does the Premier, does the Minister of Health, does the Minister of Finance support that 8 percent bed cutback in Brandon General Hospital? Will they support a 10 percent bed cutback at the Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg, because that's what we're talking about, Madam Speaker. They decry a zero percent increase in hospital budgets in Saskatchewan, which they allege is there, but yet they stand by and watch 8 percent of the beds be cut from Brandon General Hospital, an 8 percent cutback. I mean, these people aren't consistent.

But what is frightening, and I suppose what is alarming in the Throne Speech, is we went through I don't know how many pages of prolonged agony, but there was not one mention, that I'm aware of, of introducing efficiency measures to the management of government because, in the NDP Cabinet mindset, there is no such thing as efficiency. Efficiency is not something they talk about when they want to consider options for deficit control. They only consider one thing, and that's raising the taxes. You can only take so much water out of the well before you drain it, and the Manitoba economy cannot stand to be taxed any more by this government because of their profligate spending.

Madam Speaker, they want examples. Well I jotted down a few examples last night, and I'll just run through them briefly and quickly. Example No. 1, anywhere from \$25 million to \$28 million are going to be squandered in the constituency north of Selkirk to provide a bridge to nowhere and a corridor to serve that bridge to nowhere and, at the same time, they're going to build another bridge either in the Town of Selkirk or south of it. So this bridge north or Selkirk is an entire and complete and utter waste of money.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker, C. Santos, in the Chair.)

It was a political decision by the Premier and his Cabinet to locate it there. It crossed the land of a then sitting Cabinet Minister, and it is a bridge to nowhere. There is \$28 million that could be supporting beds in Brandon General Hospital, could be supporting additional day care spaces and - good heavens, Lord knows! - it could be used to support the farmers right now. But no no, it is squandered on a bridge to nowhere, decided by the Premier and his incompetent Cabinet to build it north of Selkirk against all expert advice.

Second example, let's take a look at Crown corporations. How many millions have the Crown corporations gobbled in taxpayer dollars over the last five years of NDP administration? How many millions?

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Are we talking \$100 million? No, that's too low. Are we talking \$150 million? No, that's still too low, and the tally still runs on the Crown corporations. We're \$29 million and ticking on MTX.

We don't know how many millions of dollars the Workers Compensation Board is in deficit now that has to be paid for by Manitobans. Five short years ago the Workers Compensation Board was in a budget surplus position, and now it is at least \$60 million in deficit. What is that doing for the people of Manitoba?

Manfor - in 1981, Manfor, in the constituency of Omar Sharif of the North - that forestry complex could have been sold to a paper company called Repap.- (Interjection)- Oh, well, now my honourable friend says it could have been given away. My honourable friend from The Pas says it could have been given away.

That is the circumstance today, just as you did with Flyer when you could have sold it for benefit to Manitobans, and you had to pay now a million dollars to have someone buy it from you, plus provide \$2 million in guarantees, plus provide loan guarantees. You truly are right in that Flyer was given away by this government one year ago when it could have been sold in 1981 with a return to the people of Manitoba and you have done the same thing to Manfor in The Pas. It could have been sold at a profit in 1981 to Repap, but now it is going to be given away and I'm sorry that the Member for The Pas, the constituency wherein that Manfor is located, has confirmed that today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what are we doing when we're talking about delivery of services? I laughed on Tuesday when in question period this person, who deems himself to be the Premier of this province, said in response to a question from my leader about hospitals: Mr. Deputy Speaker, that means greater emphasis in respect to outpatient community health as against institutional care.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't know how many of the members of Cabinet watched the CBC documentary that was on about a week ago on mental health because the mental health issue was something I discussed with the Minister of Health last year in Estimates. I pointed out to them that the Saskatchewan model delivers health care to more people, deinstitutionalized, more effective, more cost efficient and better for the people of Saskatchewan than our system. That was demonstrated in spades by the CBC documentary, wherein Saskatchewan they spent \$50 million to deliver a higher quality mental health delivery service, versus \$100 million to deliver mental health through the Manitoba system located in Selkirk and in Brandon East, through two major institutions.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Premier says that proper health care means deinstitutionalization. I simply ask the Premier: Does he have the courage of one of his predecessors and mentors in the CCF who in Saskatchewan when he represented the seat of Weyburn where 2,600 mental patients were housed in one building, the then Premier, T.C. Douglas, decided that it was time to deinstitutionalize and virtually shut that major employer in Weyburn down? Will the Premier have the courage, for the benefit and the betterment of delivery of health care in Manitoba, to make a similar decision to wind down the institution at Selkirk and provide community health care? I suggest not, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because that Premier does not have

the courage to do that. He doesn't have the political will. He would sooner squander \$100 million when \$50 million would deliver better service on the Saskatchewan model.

Now you ask us, where are the examples of cost saving? They have been demonstrated to you time and time again by members of the Opposition, and time and time again, you refuse to follow them. So do not blame other people for your financial problems; you have created them yourselves and you refuse to solve them yourselves because you don't have: (a) the ability; (b) the understanding; and (c) the courage to do it. You are a tired and gutless group of would-be pretenders at government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I regret to have to say that in that strong a terminology, but that is what we have - a spineless crew over there willing to blame everyone but themselves for the financial problems of this province. Farmers will go broke because this province cannot assist them.

I simply tell anyone over there listening that in the Province of Alberta right now, because of government support programs to agriculture, they pay between eight and nine cents per litre for farm consumed diesel fuel and gasoline, as compared to 23 to 27 cents in Manitoba. That's the difference. That is the difference between a farmer in Alberta and a farmer in Manitoba. In Alberta, a livestock feeder receives a subsidy - and correct me if I'm wrong - of \$20-plus dollars per tonne for every tonne of feed grain, and what do they do that for? To support the beef and hog and poultry industries in Alberta and protect the jobs in the processing of those products in Alberta. What do we do? We bring in a beef income program that sends all the cattle to Ontario and we see Canada Packers close. That's what we do in Manitoba.

I also want to point out that in Alberta they have a reduction program on fertilizer where about \$40 per tonne basis a tonne of ammonia is rebated to the farmers. That lowers their cost of nitrogen fertilizer products significantly compared to us in Manitoba. This Minister of Agriculture and this Premier will stand there and froth at the mouth and blame the Federal Government for every ill and woe in the agricultural community when the Federal Government - Lord knows they could do more, I've said that many times - have still put in a billion dollars of Canadian grain support program. Western grain stabilization is a major drain on the Federal Treasury as is covering the deficit on the Canadian Wheat Board from last year's Pools, and this government sits and does nothing and watches farmers go broke and family farms be decimated. Then they tell us that The Family Farm Protection Act is providing a great leadership in the agricultural lending field. That will cause singly the more demise of family farms than any other piece of legislation we have seen in this House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and they sit back and say we are doing all we can. They are doing nothing except abandoning and turning their backs on rural Manitoba, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have been through a fairly consistent effort and I've tried to be as decent with the Minister responsible for MPIC as I could be. I spoke to him approximately a month ago about the problems that one of my constituents is having, namely, Carman Agri, who through various circumstances, mainly

circumstances at the control of MPIC, find themselves facing financial ruin and disaster. I tried to impress upon the Minister responsible for MPIC the seriousness of their circumstance. But, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, unfortunately the Member for Gimli, as Minister responsible, chose what I now describe as the Mackling syndrome. He decided to believe the bureaucrats and abandon another Manitoban and that's what he did. He believed the bureaucrats at Autopac and now he refuses to defend Carman Agri from a very serious financial situation because bureaucrats with the NDP come first; the people of Manitoba come second. That is the tyranny of this government. They will not listen to the ordinary citizens of Manitoba and, above all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they will not listen to problems drawn to their attention by any member on this side of the House. We have to beat them into the ground and prove that beyond a shadow of a doubt that the bureaucrats and the Crown corps are wrong before they jerkily, haltingly, take some action to stop the hemorrhage of money and the destruction of business in Manitoba.

We are now in the case of another circumstance of a Crown corporation wherein a Manitoba business is being unfairly treated, treated dastardly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the Minister responsible stands by and accepts the word *carte blanche* of his bureaucrats in Autopac.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to point out for members opposite, sort of the scenario that's happened with Carman Agri. It involves around an accident that occurred in Saskatchewan on July 3, 1981. That, Sir, is almost five-and-a-half years ago. Sometime in 1982, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Dr. Rieger, the person hit by the Carman Agri truck - and Carman Agri was at fault; their driver of their truck was at fault in the accident, there is no question about that - but sometime in 1982, Dr. Rieger, the other party in the accident, the injured, initiated a court proceeding.

At that point in time, MPIC was informed and they retained the services of a law firm in Saskatchewan to defend this claim against Carman Agri. MPIC retained that firm in December of 1982. In June 1986, June 3 or 4 to be exact, this particular claim went to trial. Now bear in mind that MPIC has been aware of this pending court case since sometime in 1982 because they retained legal counsel in Saskatchewan in December of 1982. So, in June of 1986 here we are at trial.

Now I ask you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would it not be reasonable to assume, put yourself in this circumstance, you have an accident in Saskatchewan, it's your fault, you are covered by Autopac, you know that you were at fault in the accident but nothing has transpired. You have heard nothing further from it. I'm told the people that were injured were in hospital for about an hour-and-a-half and released after the accident, so would not your tendency be, Sir, to let that be the least thing in your mind, as to whether anything further is happening? I think you would agree because it wasn't a major accident by any report I've had. There was no loss of life.

In December '82 they retain a lawyer to defend Carman Agri. In June of '86 Carman Agri finds out by phone call from a Regina Leader Post reporter that they have been sued for \$3.4 million and they don't even know they have been in court because Autopac,

MPIC, who retained a lawyer in December of 1982, prepared a case in defence of Carman Agri for three-and-a-half years and never told them, never asked them, never asked for advice on how the defence should go, never let them know they were being sued.- (Interjection)- My honourable friend, the Minister responsible says, that's the way it is supposed to be, Autopac operated the way they were supposed to operate.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wonder how many other Manitobans are currently being sued and Autopac has not informed them and they don't even know. How many other Manitobans are in the Carman Agri position, faced with the prospect with a phone call that you are on the hook for a million-and-a-half dollars, without even knowing you are in court?

My honourable friend over there is smiling, the Minister responsible for Autopac. I presume he thinks this is funny. I don't think that this is funny at all. He has tried to wiggle and twist his way out of this and defend his bureaucrats by saying, well, they sent a letter out. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is what he has told me and I have a copy of that letter and I just hope that I've got it in my file. I hope that I didn't give it to the press this morning. But at any rate, this letter is registered. No, I'm afraid I gave my last copy away. It was in quite high demand this morning.

But Mr. Deputy Speaker, this letter is sent out on June 6 by registered mail, is received June 9, 1986. Well, do you know what's going on meanwhile? The letter was mailed June 6, the trial started either June 4 or June 3 and finished June 7 with the award of \$3.4 million at the time and he is sending a letter out telling them that their \$1 million of insurance may not be adequate. And that is the first notification they have ever got from MPIC that I'm aware of, that the Minister is aware of, that Carman Agri is aware of, that they are supposed to defend themselves receiving the letter June 9 and the courts have made their decision on June 7. And this Minister considers that to be adequate warning for Carman Agri to defend themselves.

The Minister says, well, I want to assure you because we were under no pretention that there was only a million dollars of coverage. We knew it was \$2 million and he describes the error identifying the coverage in the June 6 letter to Carman Agri. I'll read what he says in his letter to me of March 4. "There has never been any confusion as to the amount of coverage being \$2 million. While the letter sent to Carman Agri June 6, 1986 showed coverage at \$1 million, this was nothing more than a typographical error."

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if they can't even get the insurance coverage right in a letter informing Carman Agri that they are being sued, which arrives after the court decision, are we now to assume that they have competently represented Carman Agri? Ask yourself that, Mr. Minister when you can't even get it right in a letter.

Are you expecting Carman Agri to believe that you and Autopac and the law firm you retained in Saskatchewan have competently represented them when you can't get information right in a letter? Now can you understand the concern that Carman Agri and Dennis Lesage, the owner, has? I have to assure you, Mr. Minister, you are putting him through emotional hell right now. And I don't know how you feel about

that but I feel a little bit saddened that a man, because of no fault of his own, finds out that Autopac never even took the courtesy for a three-and-a-half year period to inform him that he is being sued and then he gets laid on with a \$700,000 court settlement in the final judgment and you, Mr. Minister, say that they acted properly? Mr. Minister, if you were in that position I'd even be defending you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member knows that the practice of the House is to address the Chair.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Yes, I am addressing the Chair, through you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I ask you, if this Minister was in the similar situation to Mr. Lesage and Carman Agri, if he would be so forthright in saying Autopac represented me correctly. If he says that, he isn't as smart as, well, if he ever said that I would seriously question his ability to sit as a Minister responsible for MPIC. Because no person, no person could ever make the statement he's made that Autopac acted responsibly, given the circumstances Carman Agri has found themselves in.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because of this I brought this up in conversation three weeks ago without getting the media involved because I tried to work this out. I warned this Minister that his bureaucrats, I said, do not get sucked in by your bureaucrats like Mr. Mackling has in MTS, and I tried to point out to them the seriousness of the situation and I hoped that by taking it to him personally that he would do something on behalf of a citizen of Manitoba.

But it appears that this Minister has got the Mackling syndrome and he is accepting carte blanche whatever his bureaucrats in Autopac tell him.- (Interjection)- I beg your pardon? Mr. Deputy Speaker, he says I hope I don't do anything to prejudice the appeal process. I wish the Minister had had lawyers in place defending Carman Agri so we would never be in an appeal process because do you know what this Minister told me by telephone when I first brought this to his attention? He said, well, do you know what, we never contacted Carman Agri, we didn't think we had to. We only believed the claim would be \$60,000 at most and it ended up to be \$3.4 million subsequently reduced to \$2.7 million. And this is the advice that he gave me three weeks ago and he still believes those same bureaucrats are giving him straight goods? - (Interjection)- You've got the Mackling Syndrome, Mr. Minister, and unless you pay attention you are going to ruin a business in Carman.

Why do you defend bureaucrats at the expense of ordinary Manitobans? Those ordinary Manitobans you promised to stand up for? Will you stand up for them in the constituency of Pembina, as the Premier has done in the constituency of Selkirk? That's all I ask.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the circumstance that we are at right now is MPIC, because they believed this award was too high and because it was achieved through, again in the Minister's words, two surprise witnesses that the lawyer in Saskatchewan for the plaintiff brought to the court - I don't know too much about courts and court proceedings, but I think if you've got reasonable legal representation and somebody comes to trial with a surprise witness or two surprise witnesses, "according

to the Minister," and these surprise witnesses provide very damaging, obviously, information to your case - that if you're the defence lawyer, I think the first thing you'd want to do is ask for a stay of proceedings so that you can develop a cross-examination of these surprise expert witnesses, and indeed bring ones in of your own to protect your client, Carman Agri, but that didn't happen. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that did not happen.

The law firm in Saskatchewan allowed the trial to finish without a stay of proceedings and obviously those surprise witnesses, unrefuted, were very detrimental in the outcome of that case, and detrimental to Carman Agri. Now had Carman Agri known they were being sued, I offer you this circumstance - they they may well have been represented in the Saskatchewan courts by their own lawyers. Their own lawyers probably then would have asked for a stay of proceedings that the lawyer that MPIC retained did not, and given a stay of proceedings we might never be in this jam, but that's only speculation.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reason I'm asking this Minister to have MPIC cover the entire court award is: No. 1, they think they can have it reduced in the appeal process; and, No. 2, it's on compassionate grounds because Carman Agri had no opportunity, no knowledge and no ability to defend themselves. It was Autopac and their Saskatchewan lawyer, retained in 1982 December, that for three-and-a-half years, three-and-a-half years developed a case in defence of Carman Agri and never even informed them they were doing it, never even asked them for an opinion on how the accident went. I find that totally unacceptable but this Minister says, well that's normal proceedings. That is not normal, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is very abnormal.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair.)

Now, I ask the Minister to have MPIC put the entire Letter of Credit up for \$2.7 million. I submit to this Minister that if Autopac is right in that they can have the award reduced, they're not out five cents, absolutely no cost. But, Madam Speaker, what is the circumstance if they don't do that? Well, the circumstance is that Carman Agri right now is going back to Saskatchewan; they've already been out there once and they must go back, I believe, March 23, this month, and they must prove their worthiness to come up with a Letter of Credit for \$700,000, and that I have to tell you is not possible to be done. Even though they are a very successful business, very few businesses of any size in Manitoba are able to offer, like that, at the blink of an eye a \$700,000 Letter of Credit. If they don't come up with it, the plaintiff's lawyer in Saskatchewan, Dr. Rieger's lawyers in Saskatchewan, Madam Speaker, have the perfect right, legal right, to enforce the judgment and put Carman Agri out of business.

So here's the scenario, we've got the Autopac lawyers telling this Minister that we think we can win the case in Saskatchewan, have the award reduced so there's no impact on Carman Agri, the \$2 million liability will be sufficient to cover it.

But in the meantime, by not providing the Letter of Credit and taking Carman Agri off the hook, what we can see is Carman Agri bankrupted and then have the judgment reduced so they had no financial obligation whatsoever. Then what happens, Madam Speaker? Well

I suggest to you that legal chaos will break loose because there will be countersuits flying left, right and centre. And who's going to pay for those? It won't be this Minister. It'll be MPIC and the next rate increase for every driver in Manitoba.

My request is on compassionate grounds. This Minister has a moral obligation to Carman Agri because his bureaucrats did not represent Carman Agri properly in the courts of Saskatchewan. They have a moral obligation to provide the Letter of Credit which they cannot do; Carman Agri cannot do themselves. The precedent was set in 1984 by the Premier, by the Cabinet in the case of - we've got to get it exactly right because I've been misquoting the name of that firm - Daerwood Machine Works Limited in the Premier's own constituency.

We just heard in questioning today the now-Minister of Business Development and Tourism, the Minister now responsible for this - I asked her, because the Minister responsible for Autopac today says: "Autopac has no legal obligation to cover the \$700,000 debt owed to the courts by Carman Agri as a result of that judgment." He says they've got no legal obligation; therefore, they don't do it. I asked the Minister of Business Development and Tourism today: Did you have a legal obligation to provide the \$60,000 to Daerwood Machine Works Limited, a company in the Premier's constituency? And I'll paraphrase her answer. She said: "Well, our government doesn't just do only what is legal; we do what is morally correct." I appreciated that answer, Madam Speaker, Carman Agri appreciated that answer, because although Autopac has no legal obligation to cover their Letter of Credit, as the government had no legal obligation to provide \$60,000 to Daerwood Machine Works, I ask him to do it on moral grounds.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Oh no, no, the Minister of Education told you why.

MR. D. ORCHARD: He said that there were two sets of moral principles - one that applies in the constituency of Selkirk and one that applies in the constituency of Pembina - presumably because the constituency of Selkirk is NDP and Pembina is Conservative, and Conservative businessmen don't deserve the same kind of moral compassion that NDP constituency businessmen deserve. Now that's the kind of caring government that this NDP represents today. Is that where we're down to in the Province of Manitoba? That if you're not NDP you're out? Is that what we're saying?

The Minister of Culture smiles that knowing smile, saying yes, that's the way it is - that's the name of the game in NDP Manitoba. That's shocking, Madam Speaker, that is shocking.

If you read the Ombudsman's Report on Daerwood Machine Works, you will find that bureaucrats in the Business Development Branch of government provided very questionable business advice, and that led to the demise or the potential demise, or I understand the demise of Daerwood Machine Works. Although there was no legal obligation, Madam Speaker, there was no legal obligation, there was deemed to be a moral obligation to act on this matter because it could become a public issue. That is what I understand is the reason

the government moved to bail out Daerwood Machine Works.

Madam Speaker, again, I simply say that there is no legal obligation in the case of Carman Agri either, but there's definitely a moral obligation. If this government can't live up to moral obligations and apply them evenly to businesses across this province, when bureaucrats provide bad advice and do not operate in an equitable and reasonable fashion on behalf of Manitobans, then I think government has a moral obligation to correct those inequities by the bureaucracy. That's what I've asked the Premier to do. I've asked him to do it because the Minister responsible refuses to do it. He sticks by the story of his bureaucrats.

I simply want to reiterate again as I did at the press conference this morning, we're not talking about one individual in Carman. We're talking about a business that has six full-time employees, five of those employees are family men and that is their sole income. So we're talking about the support of five families in Carman. In the peak season Carman Agri provides employment for another eight part-time employees. It is a significant number of people that derive their livelihood from the operation of Carman Agri.

I put on the record, Madam Speaker, that Carman Agri, being a fuel and fertilizer and farm supply dealership and custom applicator, is a very competitive business and because of their presence in the Carman and area market, they have no doubt saved the farmers in that community untold hundreds of thousands of dollars in lowered fuel costs, fertilizer costs, chemical costs.

Now, Madam Speaker, this government doesn't understand rural Manitoba, I know, but that is significant to have Carman Agri remain as a viable business, and that's what I'm attempting to get the government to do, to live up to their moral obligation and assure that Carman Agri is not forced into receivership by a court action in Saskatchewan, which was beyond their control and influence. I don't think it's an unreasonable request, Madam Speaker.

But, Madam Speaker, I simply want to close on this note - that if members opposite in the government believe that they can run a government using two standards for moral obligation - one in Selkirk Constituency which is NDP, and another one in Pembina Constituency which is Progressive Conservative - then indeed, Madam Speaker, we have got the worst government that this province has ever seen.

If political affiliation and political presence in a riding represented by government is the ultimate consideration to receiving fair treatment and equitable treatment by government, then we no longer live in a democracy, Madam Speaker. We live in almost a dictatorship of pushing and forcing one party's philosophy on all the people of Manitoba by threat of, if you're not with us, then you're against us and you get nothing from this government.

Madam Speaker, that is a shameful state of affairs to have this beautiful province of ours come to. But I'm afraid it's here, alive and well, in the very perverse and shallow mindset that sits around the NDP Cabinet table and the way they direct the affairs of the Province of Manitoba, one set of morals for Selkirk, another and entirely different set of morals for Pembina Constituency. That, Madam Speaker, is shameful and should not be tolerated.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

HON. J. WASYLICIA-LEIS: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm delighted to be able to speak during the Speech from the Throne Debate on a day in which many women across the Province of Manitoba are marking International Women's Day.

I heard at the beginning of question period during my Ministerial Statement, Madam Speaker, comments from the members opposite that they would have liked to have received a rose as well. Well, Madam Speaker, I can assure members opposite that we will provide roses next year and hope that, with that gift and that significant mark of this important day, they will be inspired perhaps to raise an issue once around status of women and the important matter of equality between men and women.

Madam Speaker, it's clear that members opposite give very little significance to this important, historical moment. Let me remind members opposite of the meaning of this day. Madam Speaker, this day has become a symbol to women throughout the world in their efforts to ensure that the places and the provinces and the countries in which we live are ones which are organized around the principles of fairness, equity, justice and equality for all.

Madam Speaker, 130 years ago this Sunday, on March 8, 1857, women of the garment industry came out on the streets in New York and raised their banners in opposition to the cruel working conditions in the needle trade sweatshops. These women were concerned about bringing an end to the sweatshops, and they were also concerned about pay equity, and they were also concerned about child care.

Madam Speaker, 130 years later, we salute those courageous women and pay tribute to those women who carried on the battle here in Manitoba. In particular, we remember the courage and conviction of Mary Beth Dolin who fought so hard for issues pertaining to equality. We celebrate the achievements of, and on behalf of, women and we commit ourselves - I hope all of us commit ourselves - to further action on behalf of women.

Madam Speaker, the achievements in this area are not insignificant. Manitoba has a tradition for leading the way and setting national standards. On January 27, 1916, Manitoba women became the first women in Canada to gain the vote. Since that day, many firsts have been achieved. Manitoba was the first province to introduce the concept of community property in family law, the first province to direct police to lay charges in the case of spouse abuse, the first province to commit itself to implementation of pay equity and, Madam Speaker, the best record for quality, accessible child care anywhere in the country.

Madam Speaker, my colleagues and I are proud of our accomplishments, but we are not here to boast. We are not here to take all the credit, and we're not here to say our work has been done. Madam Speaker, we are here, at least on this side of the House, to advance the status of women, because it is intrinsic to our beliefs and because it is our hope for the future of our society.

We are here to recognize, today in particular, that the real push for change has come from women themselves. We are here, Madam Speaker, to say we don't necessarily have all the answers. We do have more to learn; we have a lot more to do. We may make mistakes. We may sometimes take a step backwards but, Madam Speaker, we are intent on moving steadfastly and steadily forward toward the goal of equality and toward a society where every individual, irrespective of sex, shall have the same practical opportunities, not only for education and employment, but also in principle the same responsibility for his or her own maintenance, as well as a shared responsibility for the upbringing of the children and the upkeep of the home.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair.)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not only the Member for River Heights who is listening to the people of Manitoba. Mr. Deputy Speaker, members on this side of the House have a solid record for listening and consulting with the people of Manitoba. All of my colleagues have been across this province on many tours. I've followed in those footsteps and completed a tour of rural Manitoba, meeting with women's groups and recreation groups throughout Manitoba in the Towns of Carman, Dauphin, Brandon, Portage, Thompson, Beausejour, and the list goes on.

By listening, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a very clear understanding and appreciation of the needs of rural Manitoba, the needs of farm women. Through that process of listening and consulting, we will continue to do our best to put in place programs and policies that respond to the needs of those Manitobans. Now that may be, in the mind of the Member for River Heights, rather dull and boring, but I would rather be dull than disinterested, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I believe that the achievement of equality requires dogged persistence, requires commitment, determination and conscious deliberate action, and it requires the collective action by all members of this House.

That's why the silence of members opposite, particularly from the Official Opposition, on issues pertaining to the equality of women is so worrisome. I get worried when the members opposite seem to be more interested in asking about roads than people. I get worried when, even on a day like today, marking International Women's Day, not a single question was raised on matters pertaining to equality. I get worried when the Leader of the Opposition's Address to the Speech on the Throne - if my arithmetic is correct - is over 13,000 words in length, but nowhere, not anywhere in that lengthy address does it include the phrase equality for women.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a place in the Leader of the Opposition's speech where he touches on issues pertaining to women, where he refers to the Advisory Council on the Status of Women's Report on the Jobs Fund and quotes directly from it, but concludes that all of the money in the Jobs Fund should be directed to farmers. Not one mention, not one suggestion that resources be directed and programs be put in place to meet the needs of women. I think that's appalling and disgraceful on the part of the Leader of the Opposition.

I wonder at times like this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition is afraid to mention the phrase, "equality for women," for fear that it will remind the people of Manitoba of his membership in a squash club that excludes women. Even more problematic than that, is it because members opposite don't have a policy on equality, or is it because such a concept is the very opposite of the philosophy of conservatism?

I hope, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that someday soon, and the sooner the better, that we will hear a policy statement from members opposite on the issue of equality. I hope that soon both members of the Official Opposition and the Member for River Heights will provide us with a clear and unequivocal statement in support of pay equity. I hope, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this Session we will hear for once some positive suggestions from members opposite for advancing the status of women.

We, on this side of the House, are certainly counting on the support of all members of the House. The women of Manitoba are counting on it and the future of our society depends on it.

To start with, let me make a suggestion for members opposite where they might be able to help in advancing the status of women and improving the situation for all Manitoba women. To start with, members opposite could join us in fighting the random slashing of the Federal Government and specifically the 5 percent cutback to women's programs under Secretary of State; a cutback, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which has resulted in a 5 percent cutback to the Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba, a similar cutback to the Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women, and the list goes on and on.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if members opposite are committed to the issues pertaining to women and to achieving equality in our society, I hope they will join us in fighting those cuts and in calling for national action and legislation in the areas of labour policy, spousal abuse, day care and the list goes on and on.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we, on this side of the House, have been calling upon the Federal Government and all other provinces across this country to join in a concerted effort to improve the status of women. To date, our efforts have produced little results, but I'm sure that if members opposite join with us we will perhaps be able to move the Federal Government in a positive direction that will benefit women across this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am proud of the fact that this province and our Premier was the only Premier in this country who refused to endorse a meaningless, shallow document purporting to be a framework for economic equality for women tabled at the First Ministers' Conference in Vancouver last November.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to table that document so that members opposite may find it a useful resource in their efforts to understand the issues and join with us in fighting the trends that are now so apparent in this country and ensuring greater equality.

Maybe the Member for Kirkfield Park and the Member for River Heights would find the document particularly useful as they develop their strategies around status of women issues. Mr. Deputy Speaker, if members opposite would be interested in reading this entire document, I would be happy to provide more copies.

But let me read, Mr. Deputy Speaker, briefly from this document to illustrate the difficulties we have had in moving the Federal Government to a policy of reasonable and progressive approach to women's issues. To quote from page 2, Mr. Deputy Speaker: "A significant action plan is needed to build upon the commitments and strategies outlined in a paper previously presented to the 1985 Halifax First Ministers' Conference." This progress has not, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in Manitoba's views been achieved.

"To retain credibility with the women of Canada, First Ministers must endorse and commit themselves to action, not to repeated assessments of the status quo, followed by infinitesimal policy changes in a limited context."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, members on this side of the House support a comprehensive and coordinated strategy for dealing with the position women find themselves in our society, unlike every other government in this country. Whether if they be Conservative or Social Credit or Liberal, we have stood firm against a policy that has been empty in terms of action and limited to a single-focused approach to this very serious issue.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ask members opposite how they can sit back and let other governments in this country, to which they are affiliated, propose a strategy for dealing with the situation facing women that does not deal with the issue of child care in this country? Given the rhetoric that we have heard from that side, given the talk about increased spaces, let us hear for once from members opposite how they will join with us in fighting for a national child care action.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this week I had the pleasure of introducing, for First Reading, legislation to entrench the existence of the Manitoba Advisory Council on the Status of Women, legislation that would establish its permanency as an advisory body to government on matters of concern to women.

I remind members opposite that the Advisory Council has had a very successful three-year record in recommending to government on policies, programs and legislative matters. It also has a very solid record in concerted efforts to consult on an ongoing basis with the women's community throughout the Province of Manitoba. I urge members opposite to read this Triennial Report which provides very useful information and a detailed account of the important role that this council provides on behalf of all Manitobans.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitoba women have a long history of effective community organizing on behalf of all women, and the continuing presence of the council in the community, along with a truly representative and committed council membership, has certainly been a prime example of effective leadership.

The integration of women's concerns on the agendas of all policy-making processes is a goal upheld by this council, and I look forward to the day in this society when equality of status and opportunity is afforded to all of our citizens and when, in effect, the work of the Advisory Council and the Advisory Council itself has become superfluous.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the fact of the matter is that separate efforts, concerted special plans and separate women's organizations are going to be needed for a good while yet. We only have to look around this Chamber, Mr. Deputy Speaker, eight women in total.

Such underrepresentation by women in the political life of this province is truly a sad commentary on our political system, and I believe must be addressed by all political parties and by all members of this House.

I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I hope all members in this House will share this, that more women in this Chamber brings with it the hope of new ideas, higher decorum or greater decorum in the House, and a higher calibre of politics. You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a saying that true equality means women can be as mediocre and as incompetent as men.

MR. D. SCOTT: Look at Margaret Thatcher.

HON. J. WASYLICIA-LEIS: Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would never in my wildest dreams suggest that anyone in this House is incompetent or mediocre, but I would suggest that you will find as a rule that women in this House have a great capacity for listening before jumping to conclusions, for respecting different opinions and for avoiding name calling and rude interruptions - (Interjection)- Mr. Deputy Speaker, I said, as a rule.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say, as I said in my first address to the Speech from the Throne, that we are proud of the fact that we have at this point in our history the only woman Speaker in any government across this country. We are encouraged by her determination to achieve some order, decorum and human courtesy in this House. I hope that she will never hesitate to remind all members in this Chamber that this is not a neighbourhood sandbox.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Speech from the Throne is about human decency, about justice and fairness. It's about fairness, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for all Manitobans: fairness for women, fairness for visible minorities, fairness for all disadvantaged groups. It reflects our determination to build a society that is truly rich with our diversities, truly open to all opportunities, and truly free of intolerance, racism and sexism.

Just as I was disappointed that members opposite have said little about equality for women, I am disappointed that they have said absolutely nothing about the issues facing our ethnocultural communities. I hope that absence of any comment, a failure to raise the issues of those important communities at any point since this Session opened is not a reflection, is not an indication, that members opposite believe that our cultural diversity, our heritage, is not important. I urge members opposite, if that is the case, to reconsider their approach and to consider the words of a Manitoba author by the name of Maara Haas. To paraphrase her, let me say the following. Forget your heritage never. It goes where you go. It sleeps where you sleep. Brush your teeth, and the memory stays in your mouth. Wash your hands, and it's there in every pore of your body and soul.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's our commitment to respect the cultural diversity of our province, and to remember that it is impossible to forget our roots and our heritage. Our commitment to changes which will benefit all of society must include our assurance that, when our visions and our voices are raised in the economic, social and political decision-making processes, all of our visions, all of our beliefs and all of our voices participate. I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this is one of the great challenges of our time.

The nature, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of the debate on a multicultural society has changed dramatically in recent times. Manitoba communities, in particular the Manitoba Intercultural Council, have emphasized that multiculturalism means much more than festivals, museums and artifacts, and recognizes the importance of the preservation of our history and our heritage, but asserts that all of us are committed to ensuring equality of economic and social opportunity in every aspect of our society.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a day does not pass in this country when we do not hear of some incident of racism, when we do not hear about anti-Semitic gestures, generalizations about Native peoples, broad sweeping statements about Filipinos, Chinese or Vietnamese or about immigrants taking away jobs from Canadians. I'm sure members opposite were as appalled as I was this week when one of our "leading newspapers" headed an article that ethnic clubs, in very general terms, were involved in illegal gambling.

We reject that kind of broad-sweeping generalization, and call upon all institutions in our society to respect our cultural differences and to translate that respect into action on all fronts. Because knowing that racism does exist provides the challenge for all of us, for government, for the ethnocultural community and for society as a whole, to raise those issues to the top of our political agendas and to ensure that special and sensitive programs and activities are put in place to address them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in that context, my colleagues and I are deeply distressed with the federal news of a tightening up of Canada's immigration policy. This movement to close our doors to the many refugees who looked to Canada as a country with an exemplary reputation for taking in those people in our global village who require refuge from political or economic prosecution is a disheartening regression in Canadian history.

This new federal policy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has once again resurrected those myths I had believed were long buried, the attitude that an open-door policy only takes jobs away from Canadians, and the fact that the ever-present veneer of racial intolerance is never very far below the surface.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Government of Manitoba has long recognized that Manitoba, like the rest of Canada, needs people and that our immigration policies should recognize the success of those who built this country and eased the way for new arrivals who will help us shape our future.

The challenges facing all of us are awesome, but what gives me great encouragement is that in tackling the task ahead we have a solid foundation already in place here in Manitoba, a solid foundation upon which we can build.

We have come to recognize the government's responsibility in all of this policy area is to ensure that we in Manitoba have a defined and a meaningful multicultural policy. With responsibility for multiculturalism in this province, I believe that the development of this policy begins with a basic commitment to a shared understanding of a multicultural society, and demands based on cultural, racial and linguistic diversity, as well as a commitment to economic and social integration.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as members opposite will know from the Speech from the Throne, our government is committed to a provincial, public multicultural policy, and the development of such a policy will be a priority for me and for all of my colleagues in this coming year.

Our commitment to meeting the needs of all Manitobans, particularly with those who are disadvantaged, begins with the provision of basic social services and a commitment to maintain and expand such services in the face of out-of-control slashing by the Federal Government. But our commitment goes beyond this, and it gives equal priority to the quality of life in Manitoba, for we know that the women of this province, the ethnocultural peoples of this province, and every other disadvantaged group in this province, they fight for bread, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but they fight for roses too.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, quality of life is an issue that this government is committed to. It is committed to enhancing the quality of life for all Manitobans, but particularly for those who are more vulnerable to deeply engrained discrimination; and my portfolios, in the areas of Culture, Status of Women, and Multiculturalism present very important challenges in this regard. Strengthening the community identity in Manitoba through the recently announced Community Places Program is one of many examples of this government's commitment to quality of life initiatives.

In the recent tour that I just mentioned at the outset of my remarks, an underlying need was expressed for better facilities, for more attention to the quality of life in our province, and I am pleased that the Community Places Program provides a solid response to those concerns. As members opposite know, Community Places is a four-year \$40 million commitment which has been designed specifically to improve the quality of life and provide community benefits for all regions of our province.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair.)

Madam Speaker, it is based on the premise that Manitoba's communities are strongest when people can work together to build better places where they can go to learn, to be cared for, to work, to play and to grow. The tour that I undertook throughout the province a few months ago also enabled me to gauge public opinion, attitudes and concerns, in preparation for a provincial policy statement on recreation which, as members opposite will know, was also outlined in the Speech from the Throne.

While many of the members of this House may understand recreation in terms of fun and games, it is our intention to broaden that definition and to indicate very clearly that recreation and quality of life is very strongly related to the health and well-being of all our citizens. In our view, recreation must be seen as a social service in the same way that health and education are considered social services. A provincial policy statement on recreation will benefit all communities throughout Manitoba by providing a clear understanding of what recreation and leisure encompass and will assist in developing local issues which can be prioritized by the public.

Last May, I had the privilege of announcing the proclamation of The Manitoba Heritage Resources Act,

an act which provides for greater protection in Manitoba's heritage resources. The joys of heritage preservation are that they make information about Manitoba's heritage and opportunities to learn firsthand the value of preserving our cultural environment and to ensure that it is accessible to all. The joys of heritage preservation are that they make information available to everyone and encourage the maintenance and preservation of our past, our roots, our history.

Part of preserving and strengthening our communities ensuring that citizens have access to all programs that enhance the quality of life, whether they be museums, whether they be archives, whether they be libraries; and in all areas my department is committed to improving services and strengthening programs.

In particular, let me indicate to all members opposite that my department is clearly committed and my colleagues are clearly committed to improving the standard of library services in both rural Manitoba and in the City of Winnipeg.

Madam Speaker, let me touch on one other issue before I conclude. I look forward in this coming year to the establishment of a Canada-Manitoba Cultural Industries Development Office. This joint federal-provincial initiative has been three years in the making and, once established, will foster increased production in Manitoba's cultural industries.

Initiatives such as this will assist all Canadians as we continue to strive to protect our identity and our culture. But in that regard, Madam Speaker, I am becoming more and more alarmed every day by the apparent trend in the free trade talks with respect to culture. As a nation, we cannot afford to make any mistakes, for if our carefully established support structure to cultural industries finds its way onto the bilateral trade bargaining table, the very existence of our unique cultural identity is on the table as well. I am proud to be part of a government which consistently has taken the position that there must be nothing in a trade agreement which threatens or weakens Canada's cultural endeavours. I hope all members opposite will join with us in indicating strong opposition to the Federal Government in this regard.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I continue to be a proud representative of St. Johns, a constituency which thrives on its diversity of cultures and backgrounds, a constituency with an exciting mix and a fine example of how communities can share and grow from cultural and linguistic diversity.

Madam Speaker, the people in my constituency have a true sense of community, of collective action and of respect for individual differences. They enrich this government's commitment to a vision of Manitoba where economic and social life is grounded in the values of ecological balance, justice and equity for all and, like them, Madam Speaker, I wish for all Manitobans, peace on earth and good will to people.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Virden.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's indeed a pleasure to rise and speak to the Speech from the Throne.

First, I'd like to congratulate all members for returning to the House for this Second Session of the Thirty-

Third Legislature. I would particularly like to congratulate the new Lieutenant-Governor who I am sure will serve his office with dignity and pride, as he did serve in this Legislature many years ago.

I noticed that in the Throne Speech, on the first page, they highlighted the visit of one Mr. Rick Hansen, the Man in Motion Tour. And I will tell you, Madam Speaker, it was a moving experience for me to be in the Winnipeg Arena when he arrived there and everybody stood and acknowledged the tremendous feat that this young man was undertaking, the perseverance, dedication, his ability to draw to the attention of everybody the plight of the disabled. I was also fortunate to be in the Virden Arena on the night of February 1 when he arrived there, and the community, through various organizations, presented him with some \$11,500, a very strong effort on the part of that community, and a community that should be congratulated for raising that kind of money.

But I was somewhat disappointed the next day, in Elkhorn, February 2, when Mr. Rick Hansen was leaving the Province of Manitoba. I was proud to be there, many other people were there, and we were very proud to participate in that farewell from Manitoba. But I was disappointed in the fact that nobody showed up from the government to wish that man farewell from this province.

A MEMBER: We were at the opening, . . .

MR. G. FINDLAY: You were at the opening; the Deputy Premier was at the entrance to Manitoba . . .

A MEMBER: Why weren't you there?

MR. G. FINDLAY: It wasn't in my riding. In my riding I attend, and I am not the government. On the program, the Minister of Urban Affairs was scheduled to be present that day. The Minister of Urban Affairs did not show up for the ceremony, but they quickly had a press release out on the wire that he couldn't leave the city because there was a bit of a storm on. But that didn't stop a small plane with four people from the City of Winnipeg, who were organizers of that tour, including one Peggy Hayes, who is a paraplegic, coming from Winnipeg on a plane that day and participating in that farewell.

Madam Speaker, in the first question period this Session, I raised a question to the Minister of Agriculture about the crisis in agriculture. He acknowledged that there was a crisis, Madam Speaker, but further on in the questioning he refused to call the Agriculture Committee into session. Subsequently, we called for emergency debate which you refused; we called the question and the government voted against this emergency debate, and I find that very distressing, Madam Speaker, because our agriculture community is, indeed, in a crisis situation.

The Minister acknowledged that the net realized income of farmers will drop 21 percent this year, and this was calculated by Agriculture Canada before the Canadian Wheat Board announced that because of the outlook for world prices of grain the initial price should drop an additional 20 percent. And my leader, in his response to the Speech from the Throne, indicated that - and he's very right - if any other segment of society

was to face this sort of reduction in net realized income there would be a hue and cry, the Legislature would be in turmoil, the government would be acting. But, since this is agriculture they sit back, fold their arms, bash the feds, say we do nothing, and think that that's an adequate answer. Excuses, excuses.

Madam Speaker, all we called for was to have a debate about bringing the Agriculture Committee in this Session so that the farmers, the affected people in the Province of Manitoba, could come forward. I called for the opportunity for farmers to speak, their organizations, the Chamber of Commerce from the small towns, and the small businessmen the opportunity to come forward and express the situation that they are in.

Yesterday, the Minister responsible for Natural Resources made fun of the fact that I said the Chamber of Commerce should come forward because, certainly, at some point in time in the past the Chamber of Commerce, a couple of years ago, said agriculture didn't need any support. But I defy him to go out and say to any Chamber of Commerce in rural Manitoba that they wouldn't support agriculture today, given the opportunity to speak for them, and I find that deplorable that any Minister would take that position, especially when he represents a rural riding.

Madam Speaker, after all the members on the government side voted against that motion, after that, the Member for Lac du Bonnet in his address made some statements, very similar to what I was mentioning when I suggested we needed an emergency debate, and I would like to quote what he said: "Agriculture is an industry that we are very proud of; agriculture is at the crossroads. The loss of the family farm is a serious thing. We, as a society, must find a way to restore the vitality of the most important industry. While prices have dropped, input costs have not." Madam Speaker, those are the things that we've been saying.

The Member for Lac du Bonnet agrees that that's the problem, yet, he votes against the opportunity for people to come forward from the rural community and speak to us.

Later on in his address he highlighted the point that he has just lost his last implement dealership in his riding. Madam Speaker, that's really where the crunch is. The farmers are in trouble and everybody knows that. The farmers will find a way to survive, but will a small businessman in our small communities, and the jobs that they create, will they survive? I think not, Madam Speaker, not in sufficient proportion to keep the economy of Manitoba healthy. And I will assure you, Madam Speaker, as I will all members of this House, that the Member for Lac du Bonnet has no implement dealers; I still have nine in my riding now and I am fighting to keep those nine there because they supply very valuable service to all the residents of my riding and the surrounding area.

Madam Speaker, when I talk about the agriculture crisis, really we're thinking of jobs, jobs that are out there now that we're trying to retain. And in the Speech from the Throne there was a mention made of wanting to create more jobs. What we are trying to bring forward is a mechanism to get the province involved with the Federal Government, as our other provinces in Western Canada become involved in trying to retain the existing jobs, not let them disappear and then try to come up

with some innovative way of bringing them back on stream. There are a lot of people out there under severe stress and they want to be looked after now, not after they lose their jobs.

As I said earlier, all we're hearing this Session is really the same old tired rhetoric we heard last Session of fedbashing, and looking into the past. When the Minister of Agriculture spoke the other day he didn't give us any opportunity to look into the future; he just went back to 1980 and started looking at the things that had happened in the past. And, as we look through the past, agriculture was in a reasonably good state. We are in a terribly different situation today. In 1985 we started to see the decline, a substantial decline in grain prices; '86 a 20 percent drop; '87 a projected 20 percent drop. And I would think that the Minister, being responsible, should come forward with some vision into the future, not looking into the past and continuing to fedbash.

I ask you, Madam Speaker, does that Minister show leadership? I think not. He seems to find a great amount of glory in just bashing the feds and saying somebody else is responsible for the things that he is put in charge of. Does he bring forward any new ideas or initiatives? We haven't seen any. He hasn't even indicated whether he's got any strategic analysis under way to determine if there are better ways of looking after our agricultural community. Does he offer to meet with farmers in a comprehensive fashion so that they can express their opinions? No, he votes against it.

Last November, in Brandon, the Marquis Association had a meeting called "Looking Into The Farm Crisis." The Minister of Agriculture was invited, as was I, as was Lee Clark, MP for Brandon-Souris, as was Mr. Vic Althouse from the NDP. We all showed up with the exception of the Minister of Agriculture. He sent an Executive Assistant who certainly couldn't speak on behalf of the Province of Manitoba or the office of the Minister of Agriculture; he was there only to receive input.

I'll tell you, some people were there that were very upset with the fact that the Minister of Agriculture didn't want to hear from them talking about the crisis in agriculture - not only the men, but the women, too. The women were there to talk about the family crisis, the stress.

And a Dr. Jim Walker from Brandon University gave a very good lecture on the effect of stress on the family unit that lives on the farm today and identified very clearly that the family farm is the greatest, the most stressful occupation in Canada today. I am going to talk some more about that later on.

Madam Speaker, did the Minister of Agriculture sign the National Agricultural Strategy when eight other Ministers of Agriculture did it in Ottawa? No. He waited two or three days simply to highlight that he's difficult to get along with. The agricultural strategy doesn't say a lot, but it's a symbolic situation of not being cooperative up front. He wanted to create a controversy with the Federal Government on all issues. Does he want to hear producer opinions? I think not.

The Manitoba Cattle Producers' Association had a checkoff and when he became Minister of Agriculture, he removed that checkoff. He doesn't want an organization of producers to come forward and present ideas. Does he allow the Keystone Agriculture Producers to get their checkoff?

In last Session, we talked about a checkoff legislation. He said he's drafting one, he'll take it to Cabinet, he'll do this, he'll do that. There were numerous reports in the press over the last few months that he's looking at it, he's drafting something, he's taking it to Cabinet. But is there any mention of it in the Speech from the Throne? No mention at all. He shoved it under the rug again, because he doesn't want an organized voice of producers out there. He knows full well that, if these producers have to go out and collect their memberships every year, eventually their organization will be in difficulty with funding. But will he come forward and help that organization get a sound funding basis? No.

Madam Speaker, I must remind you that there are a number of other organizations in the province that are automatically funded, and those are under the marketing boards. Why should those commodities that are not under marketing boards be treated any different?

In the end of his speech, Mr. Uruski calls for constructive debate in the future. He wants some new approaches for keeping the farmers on the land, some new ideas in the months ahead. But when he makes comments like he did about a letter that I sent to him last September, what he's really doing is attempting to stifle any communication in the written form. He's trying to prevent us from expressing our points of view.

I will tell you, Madam Speaker, that letter that he referred to dated September 29, and I will read the critical paragraph: "That the Provincial Government could certainly help the situation of farmers by delaying the payment date for MACC and MCCI payments for three to six months with no interest penalties." I used the word "delay." He used the word "moratorium," and he said, we had spoke against the moratorium in Bill 4, and here I was calling for a moratorium. I don't even see the word "moratorium" in this letter. The word is "delay." He tries to read something into the letter that isn't there.

Then he goes on to say, well why should I only ask the provinces to do such things. I didn't ask FCC or anybody else to delay payments. I would like to read the letter that I wrote on the same day, Madam Speaker, dated September 29, exactly the same day as the letter to the Minister of Agriculture in this province. I addressed this letter to the Honourable Charles Mayer, and the same operative paragraph: "The Federal Government could certainly help the farmers' situation today by delaying the FCC fall payment date for three to six months with no interest penalties," exactly the same request, because I felt that the farmers were in a situation of low income at that point in time and a delay would be very helpful on the part of both levels of government. But the Minister of Agriculture isn't interested in asking whether a similar letter had been sent to the Federal Government. He just assumes it isn't and then says it's not, and takes a very negative position just after he's asked for some cooperative activity.

So I wonder, Madam Speaker, if he's really genuinely interested in the farmers in Manitoba or are we always going to be politically posturing when we're trying to wrestle with a very difficult situation?

I'd also like to make the House aware, Madam Speaker, of a letter that we sent on April 9 to the Honourable Charles Mayer, asking the Federal

Government to do four things: "increase the domestic wheat prices from \$7 to \$10, ask for an immediate payout from Western Grain Stabilization." We asked for removal of federal sales tax off farm fuels and, No. 4, "other measures to address the current pressures on the farm community such as a deficiency payment concept." I'm very proud to say, Madam Speaker, they acted on all four. I will re-read No. 4, request for deficiency payments. The letter is dated April 9, and they followed through and did it.

Now I ask you, Madam Speaker, did the Minister of Agriculture make equal representation on behalf of the farmers of Manitoba, or did he just stand up and fedbash when the Federal Government finally announced the program?

Further on, Madam Speaker, on August 6, we also wrote to the Prime Minister of the country, told him that: "The Manitoba farm community, consisting of farmers, small businessmen and employees, is facing severe financial problems in the months and years ahead." And the operative paragraph: "On behalf of my Progressive Conservative colleagues in the Manitoba Legislature and especially on behalf of the Manitoba grain farmers, I strongly urge you and your colleagues to come forth with a deficiency payment so that our farmers can be competitive producers of wheat and other grains in the world market." This is August 6, just before the announcement was made.

So we've been trying, Madam Speaker, to work at both levels of government for the good of the Manitoba farmer, the Federal Government and the Provincial Government. May I remind you, as I've said along the way, the Federal Government has brought forward some very strong initiatives? They've acted to meet the emergency that we're in. Farmers aren't asking for handouts. They're just asking for a fighting chance within the economy of Canada to be good citizens, something they always have been.

The Minister went on to say in his speech that we didn't bring this issue up. We didn't identify agriculture as a crisis until the beginning of this Session. I would like to take him back in a little history about what was said at certain times last Session.

On May 9, first question period last Session, the question I raised to the Minister, some 230 bankruptcies over the past four years in the Province of Manitoba indicate a financial crisis is certainly getting worse, as many farmers have voluntarily left the industry and many others have wound up their operations and they're selling off their assets. That was a year ago. It's certainly even more true today. It's something that we continually bring forward to the Minister, and he doesn't seem to want to act on it.

We mentioned a year ago that the Federal Government had brought forth some substantial programs, and we asked the Province of Manitoba to do something similar to the Province of Saskatchewan and Alberta. We highlighted, Madam Speaker, on the same day that the Province of Saskatchewan was putting out money at their tune of \$25 per acre at 6 percent interest to all farmers, and wondered if the Province of Manitoba would do the same. The Minister didn't really answer the question.

Later on, Madam Speaker, I said, "I would remind the Minister of the absolute urgency of this situation and the input costs are the real problem at the farm

level. Is he prepared to reduce education costs for farmers in Manitoba?" Again he didn't answer, and we're still asking those same questions a year later, Madam Speaker, a whole year later, still no action on the part of this Minister of Agriculture or this government.

To further highlight the situation of the Manitoba farmers, Madam Speaker, between Sessions, we've put out three press releases. I'd like to read the operative paragraphs from these press releases, just in case some other members over there wonder if the issue died between the Sessions. December 11th, Madam Speaker, press release: "We offer the following proposals for farm assistance: providing operating loans at 6 percent interest up to a maximum of \$25 per acre; provide fuel rebates to our farmers of 4.6 cents per litre on farm-consumed fuel; and third, reduce the education burden on farm land by 50 percent." We call for those same things today, Madam Speaker, some five months later.

Further on, on January 8, Madam Speaker: "Our purpose today is to demand that the NDP call a Standing Committee on Agriculture." The Minister said in his speech that we never called for it before. January 8, 1987: "Call a Standing Committee on Agriculture, and have the Minister of Agriculture and senior officials of MACC come forward to explain what action this government is taking with regard to protecting the family farm." Today when I asked the questions about MACC, he really didn't answer again.

On February 12, a little less than a month ago, we put out another press release, asking for action to assist the many Manitoba grain farmers who are facing severe financial crisis. It called for subsidies somewhat similar to Saskatchewan and Alberta. Those subsidies Saskatchewan and Alberta are getting from their provinces give them a tremendous competitive advantage over all our Manitoba farmers, Madam Speaker. Again, we highlighted some actions that this government could consider: removal of education tax from farm land, low interest operating loans, fuel rebates - and we put a fourth one in then - fertilizer rebates.

We concluded by saying if the Manitoba Government cares about agriculture as it continually says it does, the NDP should stop turning its back on our family farms in their hour of greatest need and prioritize farm aid with the immediate implementation of some new emergency programs, Madam Speaker. Our farm community is still out there waiting for some action, waiting for some action to indicate that they have some hope for survival in this economic crisis they are facing.

Just as a little bit of history to compare where our Manitoba farmers are at in terms of competition with Saskatchewan and Alberta, and this is the one statistic that drives most Manitoba farmers up the wall. Last year, in 1986, because of fuel rebates in Saskatchewan and Alberta, a farmer in Alberta paid a net cost for fuel - this is a net cost after his provincial rebate and his federal taxes are taken off - of 10 to 12 cents per litre. In Saskatchewan, the same farmer is paying 17 and 19 cents per litre, and in Manitoba, Madam Speaker, our producers have to pay 24 to 26 cents per litre. How can you compete when you're paying more than twice the cost of fuel of the farmer in Alberta? We're put in a very non-competitive position, Madam Speaker, and the farmers in Manitoba need some help

and I don't know what we have to do to make this government realize the crisis they face out in rural Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, how much time do I have left?

MADAM SPEAKER: A little better than 19 minutes.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We have tried to highlight, in a dramatic way, the amount of input that the treasuries in Saskatchewan and Alberta have put into agriculture. I won't go through all the programs, there isn't time, but just suffice to say, and repeat it for the umpteenth time, that Saskatchewan put in 1.64 billion last year into agriculture; Alberta 515 million and Manitoba - it's hard to figure out what Manitoba put in because today we got another figure from the Premier when the question was asked by my leader.

I must give you a little history on the figures that are thrown around, Madam Speaker. The Western Producer reported that Manitoba Agriculture put in last year \$21 million into agriculture, and the reason they printed this article is because they felt - and this is a Saskatchewan publication, Western Producer, January 1. They indicated that Manitoba was not doing their share of supporting agriculture, \$21 million they reported. The Minister of Agriculture was upset with that figure, so he wrote a letter to the editor of the paper and gave them a list of money spent in agriculture. Now, Madam Speaker, the list totals \$106 million. Included in that list of \$106 million is \$6.5 million for the special farm assistance under Bill No. 4 or under The Family Farm Protection Act, which wasn't even proclaimed until February 9, so I don't know how he spent that in 1986. So I don't give him credit for that in '86. He also included in that \$64 million of MACC repayable loans - that is not a gift, that is not a subsidy, that is not direct help to the farm community - so we end up really, if you subtract the amount of money that really wasn't put into the farming community, I end up with \$36.5 million of actual support that the Manitoba Government gave to the industry of agriculture.

Madam Speaker, today when my leader asked the question, the Minister of Agriculture told the Premier that's \$160 million. Now what is the figure? His only letter says 106 at maximum, and now he says 160. Do they even know how much money they spent in supporting agriculture? I question it, Madam Speaker. So why do we always have to be defending and giving excuses? Why not come forward with some new initiatives and people will forget about situations like I'm unfolding?

HON. J. STORIE: Spend more.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Madam Speaker, the Minister of Education says spend more. He offers his teachers a zero percent increase, a zero percent increase in salary. Madam Speaker, the farmers would love a zero percent increase. Man alive, would we love it! A minus 20 percent last year, minus 20 percent this year. We'd love a zero percent increase; that would be a nice program if we could have it.

Madam Speaker, the Minister for Energy and Mines tabled in the House here on March 2, two new programs

for the Manitoba petroleum industry. These new programs, and I read, ". . . are designed to secure 200 existing jobs in the petroleum industry. The oil producers are being offered a royalty tax free volume." Madam Speaker, the reason that the Minister of Energy and Mines brought these proposals forward is to make the producer of energy in the oil patch area of Manitoba more competitive with Saskatchewan and Alberta. That's a very good initiative. Because there are 200 jobs there, many of which are in my constituency, and many of them are people who are trying to farm and have to take off farm jobs. But he's taken the initiative to make that industry competitive with Saskatchewan and Alberta. What about our Minister of Agriculture? Does he come forward with the same initiatives to make the farmer competitive in Saskatchewan and Alberta? No, Madam Speaker. He sits there and gives his excuses and gives us a lesson in history of the things that have happened in the past, things that happened when agriculture was in a lot better shape than today.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to quickly mention a few of the things that were brought forward on page 8 of the Speech from the Throne. Under Agriculture, there's mention of supposed initiatives that are going to take place in this Session, and the first mentioned is The Family Farm Protection Act. That is an old initiative, it happened last Session; it's already proclaimed. I don't know what that means in terms of a new initiative for this Session. The second one is the Farm Start Program, under MACC. Again, it's a bill that was passed last Session; it's an old initiative; it's in place and I don't know whether there's been any loans approved under it yet or not, but it's nothing new. The third thing that is mentioned is to look at the role of input cost, Madam Speaker. The Minister calls for - he says we have repeatedly called for a national inquiry into the pricing of farm chemicals. Madam Speaker, he is asking the Federal Government to do this.

In the Speech from the Throne, Madam Speaker, the Federal Government initiated this in January of 1987 and has the Input Price Review Commission in place moving across Canada now. This Minister still doesn't realize it's in place, he's calling for it. It's only rhetoric; we've heard this many times before. He says that, No. 4, the area of patent protection for plant breeders - again, it's another old statement. It's something that is a philosophical hang-up with this government, whether it's passed or isn't passed isn't going to seriously affect the survival of the family farm, which should be the most important issue that is addressed in this Speech from the Throne but isn't.

No. 5, they mention to endorse amendments to The Crop Insurance Act, which will streamline its operations. Again, Madam Speaker, I ask you, will that save the family farm from the financial crisis it's in? Madam Speaker, I think not.

And the last one, The Surface Rights Act, which will clarify and improve procedures affecting the rights of landowners and occupants. Madam Speaker, The Surface Rights Act has been in place for a long time, and the landowners have had a serious problem with the way that act has been acted upon by the members appointed by this government. The Minister for Municipal Affairs came to a meeting in my riding about a month ago with the association and got some very direct input to base his resolutions that they passed.

Madam Speaker, I'm glad to see that initiative is taking place but it's long overdue.

Madam Speaker, one other thing I would like to touch on very briefly is the impact of Bill No. 4, The Family Farm Protection Act. We argued about what that act would do to the family farm if it was proclaimed, and we have seen through various press releases from organizations and in talking with directors of credit unions what is taking place. For the majority of family farms the reality we addressed last Session is happening. There is an increased cost in credit for those under highest risk. There is a reduced amount of credit available. The Minister of Agriculture says that's due to market forces. I agree, it's partly due to market forces, but it's certainly due to legislation that restricts, especially the credit unions ability to collect on collateral. Without question, the directors of credit unions have told me that it has decreased the appraised value that farmers can borrow for on a mortgage.

Madam Speaker, the government seems to have lots of money to spend on full-page ads in The Co-operator of February 12, saying there was new help for the Manitoba farmers in financial crisis, The Family Farm Protection Act. But, Madam Speaker, when you read this, it says: "Farmers who are facing foreclosure will now receive fair and consistent treatment. A financial situation cannot bring a foreclosure proceeding on a family farm without first applying to the court. When the board is not able to negotiate a solution, the case will then be referred to the courts." A person reading that who is in financial trouble will say, oh good, I'm going to be protected. There's no way they can get me now.

What the ad fails to tell them, Madam Speaker, is that The Family Farm Protection Act applies only to land. It doesn't protect them from losing their equipment or livestock. Then I ask you, Madam Speaker, what happens if the courts decide to grant the institution leave to continue the foreclosure? That is not mentioned in the ad. So there is a bit of false advertising as to what power The Family Farm Protection Act has to protect people in all instances.

Madam Speaker, could you give me my time again, please?

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member has 10 minutes.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Very quickly, I would like to give you some facts and figures as to what the Manitoba farmer really is facing today as he tried to prepare to plant a crop in 1987. If we look at the history of grain prices - and I take the average grade that most farmers can produce in Manitoba, No. 2 Red Spring Wheat. In 1980, when you took the initial plus final payment that farmers received, they got \$5.63 a bushel; '81, \$5.05 a bushel; '82, \$4.77 a bushel; '83, \$4.80 a bushel; '84, \$4.65 a bushel; '85, \$3.80 a bushel; '86, \$3.00 a bushel; '87, it looks like \$2.60 a bushel. Madam Speaker, that's a 51 percent drop in the export price of grain. When you look at the ability of farmers to survive under that, you've got to give them a lot of credit for having survived this long.

We have gone through a period of five to six to seven years of declining wheat prices, so this is no new

emergency, Madam Speaker. It's been a developing thing over a period of time, and I've tried to outline today that we have repeatedly tried to bring this to the government's attention.

When I look at publications from Manitoba Agriculture, when they try to tell farmers, look at your costs. Figure out your costs of producing a bushel of wheat, growing an acre of barley. When you look at the operating costs that they put forth on paper - and most farmers would agree that these costs are darn accurate. These are put out by economists from Manitoba Agriculture. The operating costs are around \$80 an acre for such things as seed, fertilizer, chemicals, fuel, crop insurance and so on.

But those farmers also have to live. They have to have something to live on. They have some certain depreciation on land and equipment that they've got to worry about. They've got taxes to pay, and they may have to pay rent on that land or a small amount of mortgage on the land that they operate. Those fixed costs are at least for an additional \$40 an acre. So there they've got a cost of production of at least \$120 an acre, and I'm not putting all the costs in for depreciation.

If you take a basket of grain that the average Manitoba farmer can produce this year and take the projected prices that appear to be fairly realistic now in terms of what we're going to get from the world market, the best the farmer can hope to gross from his farm is \$80 an acre, Madam Speaker. He is way short of coming to a break-even point. Without doubt, I can say that at least 80 percent of our farmers stand to lose money on pretty well every acre of crop they grow this year. That is a depressing situation.

It's going to have a lot of impact on all the people they buy goods and services from: the fuel dealer, the chemical dealer, the fertilizer dealer, the farm implement dealer, because what are farmers going to do? I can assure you, Madam Speaker, they are going to find a way to survive. They are going to do things to make their farm operate, but it's going to cost jobs in all our small towns. It's going to cost jobs in the City of Winnipeg, and I think there needs to be some real recognition of this serious situation.

Before I wind up, Madam Speaker, I would like to draw your attention to the actions of the Manitoba Beef Commission since last Session. On September 23, 1986, the Manitoba Beef Commission sent this letter to all their 5,000 contract holders. I will read very quickly. This is to all MBC participants, all 5,000 people received this letter:

"It is becoming evident that a small number of contract holders . . . - now the reader is wondering, obviously, they are talking to me - ". . . are attempting to avoid paying premiums into the Manitoba Beef Stabilization Fund, now that favourable cattle prices preclude a deficiency payment." And in big bold letters, "This practice will not be tolerated," a threatening statement if ever I heard one. "A system is now in place to ensure this minority group will not weaken the plan that has proven so beneficial to Manitoba's cattle producers." In big bold letters, "We now have the legal authority to act." Madam Speaker, they sent this to 5,000 contract holders.

Let me read the statistics that came back some four months later to indicate how many farmers out of the

5,000 were really defrauding the system, and I'll give you some quick figures: "The Manitoba Beef Commission, after checking the records of Manitoba's auction marts and meat packers, turned up 302 farmers who at first glance may have bent the rules. After further review, 180 of those 320 farmers were absolved of any infractions and 47 cases were put down to a minor misunderstanding." So now, Madam Speaker, out of 302 cases that were apparently defrauding, only 227 of them are obviously not causing any trouble.

Further on, Madam Speaker: "An additional 42 cases have been viewed as having serious payment problems and have been asked to pay back premiums." The bottom line, Madam Speaker, is only 33 farmers out of the 5,000 are actually being charged as violating the procedures of the Manitoba Beef Commission, 33 out of 5,000. Yet this letter is sent to every participant, every one of the 5,000 members of the Manitoba Beef Commission and, Madam Speaker, the letter isn't even signed.

Now, all farmers take serious reaction to a letter like that. When you're called a crook before anybody makes any effort to determine whether you are or not, I think it's deplorable. The Minister of Agriculture responsible for that kind of letter, although he didn't sign it, the person who sent it out, the Commission that sent it out was totally appointed by him. I think, if he was acting responsibly, he would remove some of those people from that Commission. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I would like to read some comments - (Interjection) - three minutes? - that I have received in a questionnaire we mailed out recently. We asked a question about whether the Manitoba Government should be putting more support into the farm community of Manitoba. About 80 percent of our respondents say, yes, 80 percent. In the City of Winnipeg, it looks like around 70 percent may well support additional money to the agricultural community.

But I would like to read some comments that were written in, Madam Speaker. These people are people who feel very strongly about what they are saying. "The support level the NDP Government of Manitoba has shown towards its farmers is a disgraceful situation. If the Manitoba Government wants to keep its young farmers, it had better pick up their socks and act fast."

Another comment, Madam Speaker, teach people some facts of life: 1) where does food come from, include beer with it; do not sacrifice young farmers to feed the professionals and organized labour who set their own wages; a third one, with the agricultural profession in such a difficulty right now, high-paid professionals such as teachers should take a second look at their salaries and consider where their next meal is coming from.

Madam Speaker, the last one from a young farmer who lost his brother because of a tragic health problem this past year, is faced with a serious problem in trying to carry on the family farm. His question is pretty straightforward. "Is there nothing that the Provincial Government can do to help farmers as far as interest rates are concerned," - pretty straightforward, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, we're trying to draw attention to a crisis in agriculture. I'm very disappointed that we couldn't have the Agriculture Committee meet to hear

the problems of the farmers. I think that we would be serving the Province of Manitoba a lot better as legislators if today, right today, we were sitting listening to farmers, their organizations, small businessmen and, yes, members of Chambers of Commerce. Tell us what is going on in rural Manitoba. Tell the city members what's going on in rural Manitoba. If we were sitting listening to them today instead of here, carrying on in this tradition that we're carrying on, I think we'd be serving the members of that community a lot better than what we are today.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. M. SMITH: Madam Speaker, I am very happy to rise in my place and take part in the Throne Speech Debate. I'm pleased to welcome a new Lieutenant-Governor and wish him well in his term with us.

I particularly want to congratulate you, Madam Speaker, and note that the wearing of the yellow rose today stems from a tradition which you acquainted us with several years ago. It is a mark of the women achieving the vote many years ago and we are endeavouring to carry on the spirit of that particular event.

I congratulate the Mover and Seconder of the Throne Speech. I thought they combined a general interpretation of the government thrust with a personal perspective from their particular ridings, one, a rural riding where the problems of farm families and the farm situation received particular emphasis, and I think will lead significantly into some comments I'd like to make later.

What is a Speech from the Throne? I was struck, in some of the comments in response to the Speech from the Throne, and found myself reflecting, now just what is a government doing in a Speech from the Throne? I decided that there are sort of three major ways that a government communicates its program to the public. One is the Throne Speech at the opening of a Session; one is the Budget Speech which outlines the fiscal and monetary policy of the government and the general outline of expenditure and revenue; and the third thrust is of course the detailed Estimates based on each department's program.

It's only by looking at those three parts of the government thrust that we can come to a full understanding of what the Speech from the Throne is intended to be. It is intended to be a statement of general direction of a government. It is expected to set the context within which the Government of the Day operates and I think most importantly, though not dramatically perhaps, it sets the values by which the Government of the Day makes its decisions. People seem to expect a Speech from the Throne to have a great deal of pyrotechnics and dramatics. They make fun of the value statements; they forget that a government that takes the values on which it makes its decisions very much to heart, says them simply and straightforwardly and means them, Madam Speaker, such values as fairness, caring, sharing and standing up for Manitobans.

What is the general direction of government policy? This government is not adopting a sudden new

direction, a sudden flurry of saying everything that's gone before is wrong, and everything that's going to come is going to be perfect and better. No, it's a policy, a direction, that has been built over the past few years. It's a multi-pronged policy direction; it's a stabilizing policy direction and it's a constructive policy direction, because I think nothing typifies a Throne Speech of a government more than saying that it's giving the blueprint for how to build towards a vision, towards a fairer, stronger province, linking social and economic policy and preserving farm communities.

We've heard a lot of talk about farm communities; again the suggestion being that somehow this side of the House doesn't take seriously the current threats and pressures. As I reflect on that, Madam Speaker, I can't help but think of the numbers of policies, the impassioned speeches made in this House by the Minister of Agriculture as he's attempted to share with all of us what the current problems are in the agricultural sector, what solutions are within the grasp of the Province of Manitoba, and what ones must rightly be shouldered by a Federal Government.

Madam Speaker, the Throne Speech also talks about preserving vital services. There is a myth, a feel, that somehow when governments are in tough times and deficits are a fact of life, that what we should do is cut the services to people, that somehow they're a frill, they're unimportant, they're secondary, and that we must get the economic growth going again and then we'll think about those frivolous things called services.

Madam Speaker, the Throne Speech says very clearly, very strongly, very straightforwardly, that that is not our approach, that we see the vital services and the economic development as equally important, and in that steady-as-you-go, stable, purposeful movement that we see throughout all the programs, that is the approach that we are taking.

People talk about fairer tax somehow not being appropriate in a Throne Speech. But if you think why do we talk about fair tax? Why do we talk about the context of federal-provincial relations and how taxation fits into that? It's because, Madam Speaker, realistically dealing with the problems, the policies of a Provincial Government, we must acknowledge that we live in a federal state, and that in a federal state some of the power and responsibility is at the national level, some is at the provincial level. It would be foolish of us just to ignore what went on at the federal level, not to have any ideas as to how that policy could improve or be better, and just keep our blinkers on and our eyes down and our nose to the grindstone just looking at our own little bailiwick, because the context within which we live today, Madam Speaker, is not just a provincial context.

Anyone concerned about the agricultural issue and the farm plight must know full well that there are only some parts of that issue that are really amenable to action at the provincial level. Many of them require federal action, but a good many of them require international change, international action, and it's foolish of us to look at any of these issues in a narrow or a shallow way.

Madam Speaker, the tax issue relates to how the total country raises enough money to do what is necessary and how it distributes that money. It would be remiss of anyone who was a serious politician not

to talk about what we think is the fair way to raise tax and to spend tax. We believe that in Canada today the growing disparity between the poorer members of the community and the better-off members of the community has been growing at a rate that is not understood, that is invisible, but that threatens to jeopardize the very gains we have made in this nation of ours.

Madam Speaker, we have had a lot of programs and we have had a Federal Liberal Government who for 40 years talked about using the tax system not just to fund vital services and to bring about balanced development across the country, but to redistribute wealth, to see that everyone had some basic floor of services. What has been the result of 40 years of a Liberal approach? Quite frankly, when I look at the distribution of wealth and income of families in Canada and look at the extent to which it has not improved - as a matter of fact, it's gotten worse in 40 years of Liberal rule - and it certainly is accelerating in that widening of the gap under a few years of Progressive Conservative rule.

I think it is the No. 1 issue for us to speak about as a New Democrat Government in the provincial setting because if we don't get change at the federal level in the way taxes are raised and the way they are targeted back to people in necessary programs, we run the risk, Madam Speaker, of increasing percentages of our people opting out or being dropped out, pushed out of participation in our community.

Talk of hunger, talk of the homeless, talk of people who suffer from poverty - I hear a lot just on the issue of abuse - and people think that somehow we can solve all the abuse in society without dealing with the poverty issues. But, Madam Speaker, one of the prime causes of abuse between people is the disillusionment, the hopelessness, the frustration and the anger that come out of living in poverty circumstances.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to just read some figures into the record about the income and wealth distribution in Canada, just to demonstrate how grossly unequal Canada has become - Canada, the country that we have all prized as a place where the ordinary person gets a fair deal and surely no one has ever talked about absolutely equal distribution - but, Madam Speaker, when you see the maldistribution that's occurring, and the screams of outrage from the people who have access to the greater wealth whenever we talk about a tax or a program or a credit or something that is going to help the people at the bottom; maybe it's minimum wage, maybe it's social assistance rates, maybe it's subsidized public housing, maybe it's social services, howls of outrage from various groups like the Federation of Independent Business and some of these groups that can never see the overall issue.

Let me just give you these figures, Madam Speaker. If you take straight income, the bottom fifth of the Canadian population have 6.1 percent of the income; the next fifth, 12.3 percent; the middle group, 18 percent; the fourth group, 24.1 percent; and the top group, 39.5 percent, Madam Speaker, of income.

What's the picture in relationship to wealth? Wealth is that cumulative power that an individual has to influence their opportunity and their access to so many things in our community. Madam Speaker, when you look at the wealth maldistribution, instead of the bottom

20 percent getting 6.1 percent of the total pie, they are at minus .3 percent. That means they're in deficit position. That's the situation some of the farm families are finding themselves in, not for precisely the same reason but they are somewhat connected.

The second group, Madam Speaker, 2.4 percent of the total wealth; the middle group, 9.3 percent; the fourth group, 19.8 percent; and here is the shocker. The top 20 percent of the population of Canada controls 68.9 percent of the wealth.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Ranting, raving socialist.

HON. M. SMITH: I welcome that epithet. If calling for justice and a fair distribution of our common wealth is a ranting, raving Socialist, I'm proud of the label because I find this kind of maldistribution links to every social problem that I have to deal with. It links to the abuse problems; it links to the child and family problems; it links to the farm problems and the farm family problems that we have heard so much about already.

We've talked again about the importance of looking at federal-provincial relations to understand the context. It's not a question of blaming the feds. It's a question of realistically understanding the Federal Government or country that we live in and what is the appropriate responsibility at the respective levels? Now what do we find with our current government and their approach in trying to get balance and fairness and regional development into the country?

Here is a breakdown of the procurement by the Government of Canada throughout Canada in the years 1983 to 1986, just to give you some notion of their sense of fairness, and government procurement is one way that a government can influence development in the different regions. B.C., .3 billion; the Atlantic provinces, 1.45 billion; Ontario, .45 billion; Quebec, 1.93 billion; and lumped in with all of the others, .1, that's where Manitoba is, somewhere hidden in that tiny little amount.

Now that sort of figure, granted you'd have to compare it to what predated it and what the capacity of the different regions were to supply, but I suspect if you go into those types of issues, you're going to find that the possibility was there for much more fairness and fair distribution of that procurement across this country.

Madam Speaker, the context within which we operate and I hope that the agricultural people pay due account to this, it's also an international context. We hear a lot of talk about trade. We hear a lot of talk about trade vis-a-vis our partner to the south. But how much do we hear, Madam Speaker, about the total trade and finance system within which we operate internationally? Are we trying to just corner our little bit of security and forget about what happens to everyone else? How often has this north-south, continental-type of trade deal in North America ever been related to what's going on in the rest of the world? I think that it behooves all of us to try to develop some kind of perspective, work on the same notion of trying to bring the very poorest nations up and not bankrupt them all with debt. It's sort of wealth redistribution on the international plane.

Now people say that's a crazy theory, but the way I figure it is if you have the nations as well as the people

closer together in income, these people here are going to be able to purchase more and these people are going to have markets for what they produce and the total volume of economic activity and benefit will be larger, Madam Speaker. To me that's sensible economics and I think that if we could take those kind of models and apply them internationally, nationally and in our own province, we would be further ahead. I think it's that type of balanced fairness that we are trying to build into our social and economic programs to the extent a Provincial Government can. Let us not mistake the fact that when you're a province in a federal system like Canada, there are some things that you cannot do alone.

Now if members opposite choose to interpret our dealing with those issues as fodbashing or blaming, they are making that interpretation. From our point of view, we're trying to set out the realistic information as to what the real opportunities and threats or barriers are to running the business of the Province of Manitoba and then we're deriving our policies from that information.

I don't know that I have much confidence that the Federal Government is heading in a direction that I choose to go in. So far, the tax reform we've seen has been to free up more monies and resources for the people who already had the lion's share and progressively, by de-indexation and increased rates of tax, removing the capacity of the people at the lower end.

Madam Speaker, given that crazy direction, that unjust direction, a province like ours has to steer the best course it can, but of course we could do better if the Federal Government came to their senses and developed fairer, more balanced programs throughout the country.

It's very interesting that even the repentant Liberals in their struggle for national power - and I'm sure they're going to be working very, very hard up to the next election - are still choosing to talk about senate reform and guaranteed income, not bad notions in and of themselves, but I haven't heard one word from them.

I haven't heard one word from their leader, Mr. Turner, on tax reform. It was Mr. Turner's tax reform in the early Seventies that started to get us into the deficit path at the national level; in the early Seventies by moving the tax brackets up with inflation, he did nice things for the people who had to pay taxes because their rates didn't take bigger and bigger chunks of their income and that looked just great. Unfortunately, he forgot to consider that the expenditures were inflating, and you all remember that period of 1982 when what was going to close the gap? Huge revenues from the oil sales in Alberta. Talk about putting all your eggs in a mega-basket! And then we know what happened there. Because of an international change, that whole economic and financial policy fell apart. Madam Speaker, to this day, I haven't heard any recognition of that factor, or of the inequality that developed in Canada under Liberal rule in any of their political statements.

Madam Speaker, what do we hear from our Opposition? Are we getting response to our Throne Speech that is thoughtful, critical where appropriate, but which offers real alternatives? Madam Speaker, I haven't heard it. I do recall the general pattern of

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approach to the affairs of the province. Wasn't it during the last election that we were getting that policy of spend more, tax less, and cut the deficit? Do you remember that formula? It was a great-sounding formula. The trouble was, it never could work; it never would work.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair.)

We heard a speech about the agricultural crisis. Where have you been for the last years when our Minister of Agriculture has been talking about the plight of the poor farmers and developing appropriate programs? He has been talking about, well very basic, soil and water quality. He has been talking about credit and the problem of the little farmer; he's been talking about the cost of input. He has been talking about crop insurance -(Interjection)- talking and developing the programs. We have a program for each one of those issues. When you add up the so-called Alberta and Saskatchewan contributions to agriculture, you know, the great \$1.2 billion from Saskatchewan spread over four years, loan, it's really an interest subsidy that nets out at \$600 per farmer. Do you know that the Interest Rate Relief Program alone was a \$5,000 grant and a loan apiece.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm sure that the Minister who is just speaking would not want to leave on the record what she has just said. The information that she is providing about Saskatchewan is absolutely inaccurate.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: No member should interrupt any speaker on the floor unless it is on a point of order.

HON. M. SMITH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think the painful truth is really not too comfortable. When you start to compare the Manitoba record in dealing with this depression we've had, changing world conditions, a Federal Government that hasn't been giving us economic leadership and, you know, you like to compare us to the other two provinces to the west. Wait till you see their balance sheets in terms of deficit and expenditures and revenues. The management and the level headedness and the balance in social and economic programs that you have here in Manitoba should make you very proud to be a Manitoban.

Now we do have a very severe farm crisis, particularly for the third-lowest group of farmers. What do you suggest? Is it another question of, give money when times are tough but no input when times are back? What do you think we've been talking about for years about beef stabilization, hog stabilization, marketing board supply management, all the things that would acknowledge that all those ups and downs are there and that the farmer is a sitting duck for having to absorb the pressure. We've been trying to build in income support and stabilization programs so that they were not as vulnerable.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, now we're facing a problem that has never been faced before by Canada. We are faced by the fact that our traditional grain markets, for good reasons, are drying up - for good reasons. India and China are now food self-sufficient. From their point of view, that's an excellent achievement. From

our point of view, it means major crop diversification, reorientation -(Interjection)- well I think it's nice to hear some fresh thinking and some new approaches. But seriously, there is not going to be just a temporary holding game in this case. We can't count on those same markets coming back, so it's going to take your input as well as ours, markets and prices, prices that help to cover the cost of input.

I thought you were interested in the farm crisis. I thought you were worried about how a third of the farmers in Manitoba are finding that their inputs cost more than what they get. Somehow, we want to keep those farm communities alive and that we, as public policy people, want to find the best way to do it. Don't you care about that group of farmers? -(Interjection)- and what are you proposing as constructive programs?

I was interested to hear the Leader of the Opposition quoting something about leaner, meaner, in relationship to our government or our Premier. It was interesting to speculate on where he got those words from, not from any actual statement, not from any factual information, but from a newspaper headline. That's the level of analysis and criticism we are getting opposite.

You know, we talk about fairness and caring, and we talk about sharing and challenges and trying to stand up and meet them. They are nice words, but we mean them -(Interjection)- all right, we mean them, and I think you grossly underestimate the kind of thought and policy development and expenditure plan on this side of the House if you think we don't mean them. We do mean them and, if you look at program after program, those are the value criteria that we are using in designing our programs.

The Leader of the Opposition talks about who will be disappointed by our particular Speech from the Throne, but he only mentions one or two groups. Now the problem we have on our side is we don't see it. We don't see the fairness as only serving one group, rich farmers or businesspeople. We see farmers and businesspeople as very important, but not the only people who are important. What we're trying to do is package the programs so that they are targeted to all the groups that we get the best we can overall for the province for all the groups.

I must say, when I heard the shallow sarcasm of the Leader of the Opposition with regard to our new member of Cabinet, I was absolutely shocked. The sensitivity to the problems that the Native folk face in our province reflected in that type of commentary, if it's indicative of the approach to Native people and to their problems and the challenge they present to all of us, whether it's on the social side or the economic or the constitutional, I'm shocked if that's the approach. I really had hoped, on that particular issue, for better.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair.)

We heard talk about the agricultural crisis and, when we heard about the so-called \$1 billion from the Federal Government to help western farmers, when we found out a lot of it was going to eastern farmers, I didn't hear anyone standing up and saying, is that really a western program? -(Interjection)- not a lot of it, but a significant portion is going to the east.

When there was the delay in the payment, we didn't hear a word. We heard from our farm member, Madam

Speaker, raising the issue of the western farmers. What is the solution to changing markets and lowering prices? What is the solution? Is it some guaranteed income floor for farmers? Is it permanent subsidy? Is it farm community depopulation? Is it diversification? What are your ideas for solving these very real problems? Because they are very real problems and they are not going to just succumb to the normal ups and downs of the traditional farm economy.

Madam Speaker, I was interested that the report by the Manitoba Advisory Council on the Status of Women, on the impact on women on the Jobs Fund, indirectly found its way into the speech by the Leader of the Opposition, but he had not even taken care to get the right name of the organization. He called it a report from the Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women. I think that some of the members on his side could perhaps set him right. This was the report that brought the impact of the Jobs Fund and the fact that the traditional industries where the quick jobs are available do not employ women in equal numbers.-(Interjection)- The Advisory Council was established - I only know is the report came from them. What year it was established? - I think it was '80.

The Member for St. Norbert is wondering if I recall when the Advisory Council was established. I was commenting on a study they did, not whether they had been established or when they had been established. But I was still surprised that the Leader of the Opposition didn't acknowledge their correct name and label. So maybe he was part of establishing it, but maybe he doesn't remember that it's there. Anyway, I think it points out our challenge to both sides of the House and I think it's something I would welcome their constructive ideas on.

It's true that when women look at economic development problems or trade initiatives or whatever, they look at the impact on women because they've been concerned about equity and access. They have not been as traditionally involved in the economic development: how you get more jobs; how you get manufacturing, as the Member for Sturgeon Creek is often talking about and quite rightly so; or agricultural jobs; or the advanced knowledge service type of jobs. They've been traditionally more concerned about equity. So we women have a lot of work to do to pay due attention to how you get economic development, but that isn't to say that you should go the other way and say that you only want economic development and to the back of the bus women, disabled, Native people, visible minorities.

What we're pleading for as women and what I am proudly hearing my government talk about is balance between social and economic, between economic growth and equity. As we go, we must build in opportunity and equity; that's where programs like pay equity, like affirmative action -(Interjection)- are so vitally important.

Madam Speaker, I do hear a word from the back on the other side from the Member for Portage la Prairie suggesting that I don't understand pay equity. Madam Speaker, I challenge him to a debate on that issue any day, any time.

Madam Speaker, perhaps an associated issue - we're going to have a lot of time to talk about support services to families. I know the members opposite will be pleased

that the home economists who are now working out of the Department of Agriculture are working very closely with consultants in that department to build a capacity to counsel farm families, both on the social and the economic side, because we acknowledge that the stress and strain of trying to cope with today's economic threats do impact very negatively on the family and they are going to need all of our support, all the support that we can engender.

Madam Speaker, I'd just like to comment a bit on the issue of child care and the vital support that it provides, again, back to the notion of equity as we try and get economic development. As you know, we are engaged in dialogue with the Federal Government to develop not only an arrangement between us and Ottawa, but for all of Canada in this very vital issue of child care.

Madam Speaker, the amounts of money involved to develop a child care system that truly is accessible and affordable are quite staggering. Madam Speaker, care of young children in a group setting or in a family day care home is not inexpensive. It runs in the neighbourhood of \$4,000 per family per child. Now, Madam Speaker, any remedies or any programs that are going to be offered at the federal level to assist in the cost-sharing and assist in the healthy development of child care must understand the depth of the problem. It's not a problem that you can throw a couple of hundred dollars per family at. It is a challenge where almost a whole new social service system akin to public education and Medicare are crying to be developed.

Now, I trust, Madam Speaker, that we are going to hear full support for a well-funded system. We are not going to hear the old saw that we can't afford it and that we don't want to pay taxes in order to afford it. Because, Madam Speaker, if we have sympathy for the farm family and the farm people who are very negatively affected by the current economic pressures, for goodness sake, let us see the connection between that and pressure on child care, on families trying to care adequately for their young children.

So I look forward to full support from the members opposite and perhaps they will be doing their individual lobbying and promotion with the Federal Government.

Just a word about the Liberal leader, the Member for River Heights, she comments on day care that there are no new initiatives. Madam Speaker, the child care system in Manitoba is structured and going somewhere. Madam Speaker, we don't need great reforms in the system, we need added amounts of money, and once again, I would think that the Member for River Heights would have been here long enough now to know that Budget announcements come not in the Throne Speech, but at a later point.

Madam Speaker, in closing, there was one other issue raised by the Member for River Heights and it's related to the agriculture field - the Plant Breeders' Rights. Now, she was supporting that from the perspective of promoting research and that somehow more research is going to provide the answers in agriculture. Madam Speaker, I am not a biologist or a botanist, but I do understand enough basic science to understand that some of the dynamics that are at work in developing seeds and in maintaining diversity of genetic material so that we can keep alive the earth's storehouse of

genetic material to produce the varieties and so on for the future, that that is vitally important. It's probably second only to trying to keep the world free of radioactive hazards. Because, Madam Speaker, the genetic storehouse of plant material that is found in seeds is not readily replaceable and to treat it in terms of efficiency and specialization and standardization as though it were a mere factory produced item and not something that is evolved through many, many generations of plant evolution I think completely misses the point. Research, yes, but to go the route of plant breeders' rights patenting and legislation I think really is showing a woeful lack of knowledge about the basic issues involved.

I guess I'm asking members opposite to give the same depth of analysis and serious attention to how we solve the problems, not just to picking off peripheral issues and going at them in a very haphazard way.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Charleswood.

MR. J. ERNST: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased also to rise and debate on the Speech from the Throne.

I want to firstly offer my greetings to you, Madam Speaker, on your return as Speaker of the House, and I wish you well in the exercising of your impartiality in that Chair. It is a difficult task, I agree, and I look forward to that firm and impartial hand throughout the rest of the Session.

Madam Speaker, I also want to offer my congratulations to Dr. George Johnson, the new Lieutenant-Government for Manitoba. Dr. Johnson has had a long and distinguished career in both public and private service, Madam Speaker, throughout his lifetime, and I am certain that he will exercise his own impartiality and duties with great dignity and aplomb and something that we will all be proud of.

Madam Speaker, I also want to offer my congratulations on the appointment of Mr. Justice Sterling Lyon to the Court of Appeal of Manitoba. Mr. Lyon was the Member for Charleswood for a great number of years and in prior times in the House in fact represented that district under a different name, but certainly the people of Charleswood respected Mr. Justice Lyon for his service to the House, both as a member and as Premier of the province. I wish him well in his endeavours now with the Court of Appeal.

Madam Speaker, I wish all of the members of the House an opportunity to work hard and diligently for the betterment of all Manitobans and to hopefully break through the log jam of misunderstanding and inability to comprehend the problems of Manitoba by the members opposite, so that we have an opportunity to do something for all of the people.

Madam Speaker, I want also to tell my constituents of the community of Charleswood that I am here at their beck and call. I am here to represent them in this House, as well as to make whatever contributions I can for my own accord. Certainly, I'm available for them at any time and they are well aware of that, but I think ought to be once again reaffirmed perhaps at the start of each Session.-(Interjection)- That's correct, Madam

Speaker. I might add that I'm in the process - I'm not quite finished - but in the process of building a new home in the constituency of Charleswood, so that I will be even closer to my constituents and even more ready to help them with their concerns and their problems.-(Interjection)- No, I'm moving there as a matter of fact, as opposed to moving away. Some of the members opposite have moved away but I've moved there.

Madam Speaker, the Throne Speech, of which we have heard precious little from members opposite, I must say, the Throne Speech is tired, not only tired, it's exhausted. It's intellectually bankrupt, Madam Speaker, it's hanging on, clinging, if you will; clinging to the coattails of other programs that have gone on, initiated by others and of which they are attempting in their speech to take some credit. It's unfortunate but they are still clinging to those coattails in a vain attempt, I think, Madam Speaker, to let people in Manitoba think that they somehow had some gracious and large input into that particular program. Madam Speaker, they're simply along for the ride on a great many programs initiated by others with some idea and some vision.

But, Madam Speaker, I'm ashamed, quite frankly. I'm ashamed that the members opposite would shame the names of such great Canadians as Steve Fonyo, as Rick Hansen, as Terry Fox; trying to compare their government with those great Canadians and the intestinal fortitude that those gentlemen all provided for Canadians here. I'm ashamed that they would try and stoop that low to use that in their speech, Madam Speaker.

On top of that, the Premier stood up at an event where I was with Mr. Rick Hansen and said, "We want to give you a grant from the Province of Manitoba." \$10,000 from the Province of Manitoba, Madam Speaker, \$10,000, when McDonald's Restaurant gave \$65,000.00. They took the money from lottery funds. It wasn't taxpayers' money. The Minister responsible for lotteries is sitting on \$20 million in a slush fund she hasn't expended and they gave the princely sum of \$10,000.00. I was also ashamed, Madam Speaker, that that's all that our Premier could see fit to extract from that slush fund they've been holding in the lotteries account.

But you know, Madam Speaker, it's amazing what they can do with computers these days. Computers are the latest technological thing today. The Minister of Education has them all over his schools. They have an informational technology centre where you can go and learn how to operate a computer, Madam Speaker, but what they've done; they've taken a few tired old ideas, a few tired old programs, a few programs which were initiated by somebody else and they ran them through a computer and what did they do? They produced 22 pages of a Throne Speech. Just amazing, Madam Speaker, that that could occur out of that technology.

I think one of my colleagues indicated earlier that what it was was pabulum and drivel, Madam Speaker, but it's amazing -(Interjection)- the Member for Kildonan says, "That's very childish." Madam Speaker, let me say one thing, that I have sat here listening to the debate on the Speech from the Throne. I haven't heard one government Minister from the bench opposite, not one, get up and defend the Throne Speech, Madam Speaker,

not one. We've had them stand up and talk about the CF-18 airplane; we've had them talk about the Federal Government hasn't done this or hasn't done that; we've had fedbashing; we've had federal Tory bashing; we've had provincial Tory bashing, but not one of them has the guts, Madam Speaker, to stand up and defend their own Throne Speech, not one of them.

But, Madam Speaker, why? Why haven't they got up and defended the Throne Speech? Madam Speaker, because there's nothing there to defend. There is nothing there to defend. They have absolutely nothing to speak about, so they have to resort to the age-old adages, Madam Speaker, over the last Session or two, and that is bash the feds, blame the feds, everything that is happening is the responsibility of the Federal Government. Madam Speaker, no defence of their own programs, no initiative.

But I want to address, Madam Speaker, firstly the section that says, "We're committed to a stronger Winnipeg." Normally, Madam Speaker, that would be a great sounding phrase, committed to a stronger Winnipeg. Here we have the capital City of Winnipeg, we have better than 60 percent of the people in the whole province situated Madam Speaker, in the City of Winnipeg. The capital city should be strong. We should have a Provincial Government committed to make it strong, so that the statement, in itself, Madam Speaker, would lead somebody to believe that yes, maybe there is that commitment there in amongst the members opposite. After all, they have more of their members, Madam Speaker, that come from the City of Winnipeg than they do from rural Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, let me read what it says in the Throne Speech again so that members can focus on it. "It is my Government's intention to maintain its strong commitment to ensuring the economic, social and environmental vitality and health of the City of Winnipeg. It will continue to develop, coordinate and administer programs and policies that are designed to meet current and future needs of the residents of our capital city and to maintain Winnipeg's rightful role as a Canadian city." Very laudable, Madam Speaker, and as the Deputy Premier has indicated, statements of intention are great and certainly I would support that particular statement if, and only if, it was backed up with any kind of action at all.

But what do they talk about in this section of the Throne Speech? Firstly, they talk about the Core Area Initiative, now a very laudable program, the Core Area Initiative. Okay, I support the Core Area Initiative, but let me tell you who started the Core Area Initiative. It's the Member for St. Norbert. He was the Minister at the time; he was Minister of Urban Affairs and he was the one that brought in the Core Area Initiative, not you guys over there, Madam Speaker, but it was the Minister, at that time it was the Member for St. Norbert and he ought to be lauded for that particular action.

Madam Speaker, under the Core Area Initiative again, the members opposite are simply along for the ride. They have no vision, Madam Speaker, simply along for the ride. Now they fooled around with the Core Area Initiative, Madam Speaker, to a point where they kind of botched several areas of it, that we had . . .

MR. J. ERNST: Well, I'm going to get to that, as a matter of fact. One of my favourite topics, Madam Speaker, is how the Core Area Initiative and certain portions of that area have been botched by the members opposite. They don't like to admit that it was botched, Madam Speaker, but in fact it was. But let me tell you that they wasted millions of dollars of the taxpayers' money by fooling around internally with the Core Area Initiative.

What did they do? Well they set out on a grand goal of creating employment programs. Now, in itself, employment programs, Madam Speaker, are wonderful and I would support them wholeheartedly. But, Madam Speaker, again, because they don't know what they're doing, they created a whole new agency outside of the Federal Department of Manpower, which has been carrying on with employment programs for many, many years and has a great amount of expertise. They said, no, we don't want that. We're going to start our own, so they did. They started their own employment program. They hired somebody who had absolutely no experience in employment at all to be the manager because, of course, it created a job, Madam Speaker, to have that agency and to put that person into the job. But, Madam Speaker, they spent over a period of four years, \$28,000 per job to create the 200 or 300 jobs that came out of that program, Madam Speaker. It would have been cheaper to pay individuals a reasonable wage of \$20,000 or \$25,000 and it would have employed more people than this entire program did. It would have had more benefit in the long term because the end result of the jobs was pretty limited, indeed.

But then they decided that the people who knew the core area - there's a fellow by the name of Tom Jauch who was very experienced in housing in the Core Area Initiative and is one of the leading people in Canada in terms of dealing with those kinds of issues, one of the leading people in Canada. He's used as a consultant by the Federal Government, both the previous Liberal Government and the present Conservative one. He is used as a consultant and as a lecturer at a number of Canadian colleges and universities dealing with those kinds of problems. He's a very expert person, Madam Speaker, and he recommended that the entire North Logan area be bulldozed. He said it is not worth saving; it is not the right place to put housing; it should be bulldozed.

When they had a public hearing with respect to that, Rossbrook House, Sister MacNamara came forward and said - and Sister MacNamara was a big supporter of that area and we all respect greatly her work in that area, on behalf of Rossbrook House and their Board of Directors - the whole area should be bulldozed; it's not worth saving; and it is the wrong place to build housing.

My goodness, if they want to move the CPR Yards, Madam Speaker, why would you want to build new houses right next to it? It doesn't make any sense. Those people came forward and said - among many, many others - "Don't build that housing there." But no, members opposite said, "That's not right; we're going to disregard all of that information and we're going to build houses. We're going to build new houses and we're going to renovate old ones." The net cost of that program came to an excess of \$100,000 per

A MEMBER: How about the houses?

house, sandwiched between the CPR Yards, the Salter Street - now the Slaw Rebchuk Bridge - the Main Street industrial area and Logan Avenue, a great neighbourhood to have \$100,000 houses.

On top of that, and coupled with that particular program, came the sale of those houses, which the best they could do was \$35,000.00. So, Madam Speaker, let them not take any great credit. The program was initiated by a Conservative Government in Manitoba, supported by and directed by the Member for St. Norbert; and the changes that were made by the members opposite, in fact, created more problems than they solved.

Madam Speaker, Core 2 has come along, and the Minister for Urban Affairs has announced that particular program and, again, it is a laudable program as far as it deals with those problems in the core area and it remains to be seen whether we're going to see the kind of botch ups under this particular core program that we saw under the past, and we'll have to wait for a while to see if that occurs.

But then they decided, and they claim in their Throne Speech, as well, that the North Portage Development Program - and there's a beautiful, big building under construction all covered with hoarding and there are very nice roofs coming out of that construction, and everybody's I think excited that we're seeing something happen on the north side of Portage Avenue; and that is in the Throne Speech as a great program of the members opposite.

In case the members opposite weren't aware, that program came out of an attempt by the then Minister of Transportation, the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, Member of Parliament, by his action to try and force a new arena in downtown Winnipeg, and it was the City Council of the City of Winnipeg who actually turned that program around, got Mr. Axworthy again onside, where he really had no other opportunity to go, and asked the Provincial Government to come along again for the ride, which they did. But they can't claim that this was their initiative; they can't claim that this is their great program, Madam Speaker, because it wasn't. They're simply along for -(Interjection)- the ride.

The Member for Kildonan indicates that it's not true, but I lived at that particular issue from start to finish, and so did the Member for Ellice. The Member for Kildonan knows not of what he speaks and ought to keep quiet on the issue, Madam Speaker, unless he does know something of the facts.

Let me say that the government opposite has no understanding of the problems of urban Winnipeg. They have no initiatives in their Throne Speech to solve them; they have no ideas to improve the situation at all; they have no vision for the city and its 600,000 people. They're simply along for the ride.

The next item we deal with, Madam Speaker, is the East Yards development. Here's another great initiative claimed in the Throne Speech by the Provincial Government. First of all, in case members opposite aren't aware, this issue's been around for 10 or 15 years. This is not something that just sort of happened overnight. This issue has been facing Winnipeg for a long, long time. Certainly ever since I've been in politics, which is now 14 years, we faced the situation of what to do with the East Yards. It happens to be a Tory Government in Ottawa and it finally had enough

initiative, finally had enough clout with the CNR to say, look, we're going to do something with that.

The Liberals sat on it for years and years and made lots of commotion and a lot of platitudes, but it was a Conservative Government in Ottawa that had took the initiative and said we're going to make something of the East Yards, we're going to grab that chance of a lifetime. We're going to tell the CNR they can't have the property and we're going to create something of great interest and wonder for the citizens of Winnipeg.

It was Jake Epp, the Minister of Health, and the senior Minister for Manitoba who took the initiative, the same Minister and the same Federal Government that the honourable members across the way continue to bash on a regular basis. All throughout their addresses to the Throne Speech, all they could talk about was bashing the same government who is putting in the programs and funding those programs that they're trying to take credit for; so I find it's a little incongruous, the actions of the members opposite.

Next they talked about, they want to contribute to orderly reassessment in the City of Winnipeg. Madam Speaker, as I have indicated on two or three occasions in this House already in the early days of the Session, confusion, misunderstanding and fear reigns among the taxpayers of the City of Winnipeg over this entire issue. This is not a laughing matter. They don't understand the six - now, after the Minister's announcement of yesterday - eight classifications of property. They don't understand that, Madam Speaker. They don't understand differential mill rates; they don't understand 1975 levels of value; they don't understand the reassessment process; they don't understand how tax bills are calculated. All they know is that at the end of May they're going to get a bill that they have to pay, and that, Madam Speaker, they don't know what it's going to be, because of reassessment, and that frightens them greatly.

I don't blame them, but this is the first time that most homeowners in the City of Winnipeg -(Interjection)- When the kiddies are finished, Madam Speaker, I'll continue.

Madam Speaker, this is the first time that many people, in fact most homeowners in the City of Winnipeg, have ever experienced reassessment. As a matter of fact, it hasn't been done for some considerable time - 25 or so years - and those who had it done previously I'm sure have forgotten what the whole situation was like. They've had public information meetings in an attempt to explain to those people what reassessment means to them, and at every single meeting the taxpayer stands up and says, "Tell me what my taxes are going to be. That's what I'm concerned about. What are my taxes going to be?"

Madam Speaker, they are unable to tell them because all they can deal with is the question of reassessment. We've gone through the appeal process question, and I understand, from an announcement made by the Minister of Urban Affairs yesterday, after I'm sure considerable prodding by members on this side and after considerable prodding by the City Council, have finally acted at the last minute - because differential mill rates were in fact going to be set yesterday - now to create new classes of property, and to say to the taxpayers of Winnipeg, yes, we'll give you another opportunity to appeal your assessment, and will

hopefully, Madam Speaker, and it's not clear, but hopefully that will be after they receive their tax bill so they know what kind of impact the reassessment has had on their home.

Madam Speaker, this is the single largest asset that most people will ever own in their entire lifetime. They devote more money, Madam Speaker, to the payment for that asset than any other expenditure over their entire working career, and they're afraid. They must be given the assurance that they have the opportunity to see if they're going to be taxed out of their homes or not, and to see what else can be done to meet that situation.

Madam Speaker, today will see the end, the final appeal date for 65 percent of the taxpayers of the City of Winnipeg and within two weeks they'll all have had their appeal period expire unless the Minister of Urban Affairs brings in that legislation. So I'm hoping, Madam Speaker, that if we continue the process of keeping up the pressure that the Minister will, in fact, bring in that legislation, and will, in fact, give the people of Winnipeg an opportunity to appeal their assessment once they know what has happened.

I asked the Minister of Municipal Affairs last Friday, Madam Speaker, on the second day of the Session; I asked the Minister at that time could he please tell me what their actions were going to be with respect to this assessment appeal issue, and here's what the Minister said. The question I asked him was: Can the Minister advise the House if he has been monitoring this assessment process with respect to those appeals? And the Minister said: "I will indicate there has not been any hue and cry from the public to our office about the 21-day period that is allowed for appeal after notice of assessment has been received." He further said, Madam Speaker, "I do believe the 21 days that is being allowed to consider the matter should be sufficient." That's what the Minister of Municipal Affairs said last Friday - "should be sufficient."

Madam Speaker, the next day, or a couple of days later, the Minister of Urban Affairs says there's a problem and we're going to deal with it and we thought of it first.

On Tuesday last, I moved a motion, a motion for urgent debate, emergency debate on this particular issue. The Government House Leader stood up and claimed: "There's no need, there's no need." The Minister of Municipal Affairs said: "There's no problem." The Government House Leader stood up and told the members of this House: "There is no need for concern, they're doing something about it." They're doing something about a problem that the Minister of Municipal Affairs doesn't know anything about, but they're going to do something about it, they thought of it first, it was their members who came forward and pressured members of the Cabinet to act on this issue when the Minister of Municipal Affairs said he didn't see there was any problem at all.

I don't know whether the Minister of Municipal Affairs didn't attend the caucus meeting where all this was raised. I don't know where the concerns were two or three days before, Madam Speaker, but the Government House Leader had said they thought of it first and it was their MLA's who had created the problem.

It reminds me, Madam Speaker, of the Russians of the early 1960's during the Cold War when they

indicated that every time a new invention took place they invented it first - they invented it first. Madam Speaker, maybe there is a little genetic throwback in there, considering the philosophy of the members opposite as espoused from time to time, Madam Speaker, maybe that genetic reversion is coming forward. We might have to have certain genetic breeders' rights there too, Madam Speaker, perhaps at some point in the future.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to know and perhaps at some point in the future someone from the members opposite can tell me who speaks for the government. Now the Minister of Municipal Affairs said there isn't a problem; the Minister of Urban Affairs has said we've got a problem and we're going to deal with it, and the Government House Leader said we thought of it first. Now, I just don't understand, Madam Speaker, how there can be two or three different positions.

Madam Speaker, again they had the question of the very substantial increases in assessment on golf courses, and that was going to impact severely on golf courses and would have put them out of business. But then again they had the whole question of, what about urban open space? If we put the golf courses out of business then we might run the risk of losing urban open space; they might run the risk of the plan that was approved by the former Minister of Urban Affairs, the Member for St. Boniface, that committed no development to golf courses in Winnipeg, that they were going to remain as urban open space.

Madam Speaker, on the one hand again, the Minister of Municipal Affairs said that he has no plans to legislate relief for golf courses facing tax increases of up to 255 percent; he had no plans of doing that at all. He said the city can provide grants, and that way it would indicate clearly and I believe the quotation is, Madam Speaker: "Indicate clearly which level of government believe golf courses deserve special treatment." That was going to be placed on the shoulders of the city. That was the Minister of Municipal Affairs. A couple of days later the Minister of Urban Affairs said he had great sympathy for golfers and golf courses, that they had to do something about that. I want to quote, Madam Speaker, from the Minister of Urban Affairs who said: "And don't forget most of the members of our caucus play golf - not well, mind you but most of them play golf."

Now is that the reason, Madam Speaker, that they finally now changed their mind and are now going to give golf courses a special classification in the reassessment process; that was announced yesterday. Again, we have one Minister saying one thing, and one Minister saying something else and some actions hopefully that occur in some other form.

But I want to make note, Madam Speaker, of the comments of the Government House Leader. In my debate on the emergency motion for debate the other day in the House, the Government House Leader stood up and went to great lengths to personally attack me, and to say that I, Madam Speaker, had during another reincarnation at City Hall, not taken any actions with respect to reassessment, that in fact I had sat there for all those period of years and had not done anything about reassessment. I heard the same thing from the Minister of Government Services. The Government House Leader, Madam Speaker, had said that, and then

I heard the same thing from the Minister of Government Services just a few minutes ago.

Well, let me tell them both, Madam Speaker, that they know not of what they speak, which is not surprising, given everything else that has gone on in this House and everything else, or I should say, nothing else that was contained in their Throne Speech. Madam Speaker, he indicated that it was my fault because I had not taken any action when I was in City Hall. Let me say this, that bills passed in the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba froze assessments for the year past 1980, froze assessments for the years 1981 and 1982, pending the finalization of the Weir Report, Madam Speaker, which was looking into the whole question of province-wide reassessment.

Now, Madam Speaker, members opposite, both the Government House Leader and the Minister of Government Services should have known that, surely. But then, Madam Speaker, Bill No. 33 was brought in by the former Member for Ste. Rose, the then Minister of Municipal Affairs, in 1982, which froze assessment after 1982 indefinitely, forever, exactly, Madam Speaker.

As a member of the then City Council, as a member of the then official delegation of the City of Winnipeg, we lobbied the then Provincial Government, members opposite, to not do that, to not pass that bill, to not freeze assessments for that period of time and they chose to ignore those pleas, Madam Speaker, and did it anyway. But the members should have known that. Both the Government House Leader and the Minister of Government Services know not of what they speak and ought to hold, Madam Speaker, their comments until they find out the facts and bring them before the House then.

Not only that, Madam Speaker, their orderly and controlled system of assessment - they rushed in a bill at the last minute at the last Session in order to provide for classification. Unfortunately, it was not a planned program. From the very beginning of the Session, Madam Speaker, when I came to this House, crutches and all, I stood up here and I questioned the Ministers at that time as to whether they were going to deal with that whole question of tax shifts in the City of Winnipeg, and it took them until September before they did any action at all.

A MEMBER: It was tough to stand up then, too, wasn't it?

MR. J. ERNST: That's right, certainly, for 40 minutes it was tough to stand.

Madam Speaker, in addition to that, they had the White Paper. They've a stronger commitment to the City of Winnipeg as they bring forward a White Paper to deal with the whole question of action.

Now, Madam Speaker, there was a Committee of Review appointed two or three years ago, I believe, to deal with this question, and they went through public hearings and they had meetings and they met with people and they produced a very nice report which has been largely ignored in the White Paper. But, in any event, they went through the motions of trying to deal with change, with adjustments that are long, long overdue.

As a matter of fact, Madam Speaker, I stood up in this House during the Urban Affairs Estimates and

during question period in the last Session, and urged the Minister to deal with at least part of those recommendations immediately because the 1986 Municipal Election was coming. But, no, it was not dealt with, and what has happened now is that we have a White Paper and the fact that those problems which should have been acted upon immediately have, in fact, now been deferred virtually for another three years.

Even at that time, they could have had the option of extending, Madam Speaker, the term of the City of Winnipeg Council for a further year in order to implement those things, but they chose not to do that and chose to let those inequities carry on for another three years, and I think that doesn't really demonstrate a strong commitment to a stronger Winnipeg.

Let's look, Madam Speaker, at the basic tenets of the White Paper. Now, the first of those tenets is "autonomy to determine its own administrative structure." Now, that sounds real good. That sounds like all of a sudden they are going to be let out of the barn, they are going to be off and running, and they'll be allowed to deal with all of their problems.

But, Madam Speaker, they have been doing that for some considerable period of time, in case anybody didn't really notice that the City of Winnipeg, by and large, operates under its own administrative structure now. Madam Speaker, there isn't anything a great deal different about it, but maybe it fits in with the whole concept of the Throne Speech which really isn't very much of anything anyway.

Madam Speaker, they also talk about a clear responsibility for planning and zoning matters. Now, normally that would be a strong position. The City of Winnipeg should be clearly responsible for planning and zoning matters on their own. Certainly, they should. Normally, it would be a strong position, strengthened control by council, and recognize their knowledge and ability. No, Madam Speaker.

But then they slip in a little hooker on the side - pardon the expression. Madam Speaker, they slip in a little hooker on the side that says, "only if it's okay with the province." Now, on the one hand, they say we're going to have a stronger Winnipeg and we are going to give you planning authority and we are going to let you do your own thing; and, on the other hand, they say so long as it's okay with us. So, Madam Speaker, what kind of a commitment is that? It's not much of a commitment.

Later on, it says, "The province plans to strengthen its role regarding growth and development in the urban area," Madam Speaker, and it also says, "The government proposes to develop land use and environmental policies for the City of Winnipeg," and at the same time says, "clear responsibility for the City of Winnipeg in the planning process." Madam Speaker, they're talking out of both sides of their mouth.

The government proposes to assume a more active role in the development and approval of the Greater Winnipeg Development Plan. They want to control suburban development. On the one hand, we have the Minister of Urban Affairs, the Minister of Finance and other Ministers stand up in the benches across, Madam Speaker, and say, "We're happy that economic development in Manitoba is going along so great. We've got all these housing starts, business is booming in Manitoba, and we're doing well." On the one hand,

they're saying we've got all these housing starts; but, on the other hand, they're saying we're going to control the area that they're building these houses in to a point where perhaps we'll force the only development that's taking place in the city trying to force it back downtown, which won't work and has never worked in any jurisdiction that has ever tried it. So, Madam Speaker, again, we have the members opposite talking out of both sides of their mouth.

Madam Speaker, I lived for five years the Greater Winnipeg Development Plan, and I went through three different Ministers of Urban Affairs in that process. We went from a plan that had been advanced, prepared administratively and then advanced to public hearings. We had heard input from hundreds of people and citizens across the city. We sat on seven or eight different occasions at different public hearings throughout Winnipeg to hear those inputs. Then we had the then-Minister of Urban Affairs, now the Minister of Finance, come along and suggest, at the last minute, we should have 18 changes, many of which were of serious magnitude, Madam Speaker.

We went through that. We went through the former wife of the Member for Kildonan who was then-Minister of Urban Affairs. We had a number of discussions there and managed to whittle away at this list of changes until they finally finalized the agreement with the Minister of Health, then-Minister of Urban Affairs as well.

So, Madam Speaker, the input and the control by the Provincial Government over city planning is something that I think they mean committed to a stronger Winnipeg. If they really mean that, then they ought to relax their control on their planning process, not increase it.

The next issue, Madam Speaker, the White Paper says: "The city should have responsibility for day-to-day planning and provision of services such as sewer, water, roads, police and fire protection." Well, whoopee!

Madam Speaker, did they just discover that the City of Winnipeg was responsible for sewer and water and police and fire protection? Has that all of a sudden occurred to the members opposite, that all of a sudden these were the things that the City of Winnipeg did, and they ought to let them do them? Did they have to hire the commission, headed by Mr. Cherniack, in order to find out these things, or did they discover them all on their own? I can't, Madam Speaker, understand whether they did that or whether they didn't.

Perhaps they needed, Madam Speaker, a primer. You know the little reader that the young kids get in Grades 1 and 2. They could say, "See the yellow grader plow the snow." Maybe the members opposite would understand then those are the kinds of things that the City of Winnipeg does. Maybe they could say, "See the policeman catch the crook?" Madam Speaker, the problem is once the policeman catches the crook, the judge lets him go.

It's six o'clock, Madam Speaker. How much time do I have left? I am having so much fun, I thought I'd like to continue tomorrow.

MADAM SPEAKER: The hour being 6:00 p.m., I am interrupting proceedings. The honourable member will have one minute remaining when this item is before the House.

The House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 10:00 a.m. tomorrow. (Friday)