

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, 23 February, 1988.

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 Minister of Employment Services and Economic Security.

HON. L. EVANS: Madam Speaker, I'd like to table the Annual Report for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1987, of Manitoba Data Services.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MADAM SPEAKER: Before moving to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery where we have from the Argyle High School, six Grades 10, 11 and 12 students, under the direction of Mr. Don Laforte. These students live in the constituency of the Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs.

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Autopac - Silver contract

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

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

While the Minister is coming in the back door, I have a question for the Minister responsible for MPIC. Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation.

More than a week ago, he promised members on this side of the House that he would table the contract that he entered into with Mr. Robert Silver, the \$90,000 contract, whereby Mr. Silver agreed to relinquish his position as president of MPIC.

Is the Minister now in a position to table that contract?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister responsible for MPIC.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, as soon as it's received from the lawyers, it will be tabled.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, the Minister indicated last week that he believed that the contract was drafted.

Is the contract drafted and signed at the present time?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, the contract is in legal hands, and as soon as it's returned, it will be tabled.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, I wonder if the Minister could indicate whether or not this \$90,000 contract with Mr. Robert Silver, in exchange for his leaving the presidency of the MPIC, has been drafted and signed by all parties.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, the contract is in legal hands. As soon as it's returned, it will be tabled.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, the Minister is obviously indicating that the contract has not yet been signed. We were promised it more than a week ago.

MADAM SPEAKER: Does the honourable member have a question?

MR. G. FILMON: Has this thing all been done in haste, and if this was a last minute effort to try and keep Mr. Silver silent, why is the contract not available? You promised it more than a week ago.

Madam Speaker, I wonder if the Minister can indicate whether or not, under this contract for more than \$90,000 with Mr. Silver, there is any provision with respect to special pension benefits.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I've indicated - and I guess I certainly wouldn't be one to go to the Leader of the Opposition for legal advice - the contract is in legal hands and all the provisions of the contract will be made public when it's tabled here. As soon as I've received it, you'll be the first to have a copy of it. It will be here in the House.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, the Minister seems to be programmed to give the same answer but he doesn't listen to the question. I've asked him three different questions. He's answered none of them, except he's given the same answer about legal hands.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

May I remind the honourable member that answers to questions cannot be insisted upon and that questions should not be repetitious. The Minister is not required to answer a question to the satisfaction of the member asking it.

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition, with a question.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, I wonder if the Minister could answer a very simple question.

Is there any specific reference to pension benefits in the agreement?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I will not deal with any portions of the agreement. When the agreement

is back from legal counsels and is reviewed by legal counsels, then it will be tabled in the House and all his questions will be answered, Madam Speaker.

Autopac - liability coverage

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister responsible for MPIC.

Madam Speaker, it's becoming clear that drivers with \$200,000 liability coverage in this province may very well be underinsured. MPIC statistics show that 88 percent of eligible motorists in this province bought liability coverage and almost 70 percent of those bought coverage worth \$1 million or more.

Can the Minister inform the House and the people of this province the number of Manitoba motorists who are now driving around with considerably less coverage?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I'll take the specifics of that question as notice in terms of the honourable member's question, but I want to tell my honourable friend that unlike Ontario, where the Consumers' Association in Ontario has indicated that there are 200,000 vehicles uninsured in the Province of Ontario - currently 200,000 vehicles - that's a third of Manitoba's vehicles - the same people who came to the legislative committee said that — (Interjection) — Madam Speaker, the honourable members don't know that that answer cannot be provided because the renewal period is not over. As soon as the renewal period is over and all the calculations are in, in terms of coverage that motorists take, then they will have those figures and those figures will be made available in committee. It will be at least approximately two weeks after the renewal date is over by the time all the accounting measures are taken in from the agents during the renewal process. At that time, some time after that, will that number be known, Madam Speaker.

Autopac - extension coverage

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Madam Speaker, the Minister takes great glee in making comparisons to Ontario. If the people of Manitoba think that there's any comparison between Manitoba and Toronto they're badly misled by this Minister. Madam Speaker, last year, 73 percent of Manitoba motorists bought extension automobile coverage which lowered their deductible from the basic \$200.00.

Madam Speaker, the bulk of those motorists paid extra for a deductible level of \$100.00. That's more than three times less than the basic deductible in this province under the present plan.

I would like the Minister to provide the House with an estimate of the number of drivers who have ceased buying extension coverage on the deductible portion of their insurance. Madam Speaker, this simply proves that the people of this province are paying more and getting less.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, the honourable member appears to already know the answer when the

renewal period is not over. He appears to be attempting to answer his own question and I can't provide him with that.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

HON. B. URUSKI: Well, Madam Speaker, it is obvious he has made up his own answers and his own questions so that at least if he gets mixed up on a question he'll try and give his own answer to that question, Madam Speaker.

But the fact of the matter is that motorists do have the option to take additional coverage if they desire or they can, in fact, go to the private sector to take additional coverage, or whatever. That portion of business on the extension insurance has been open to competition since Autopac, since 1971.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Madam Speaker, the Minister says that I have tried to answer the question for him. I at least have an understanding of the percentage of people that are not . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: . . . getting the same coverage.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

Does the honourable member have a question?

MPIC - actuarial review

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Madam Speaker, this Minister agreed to take a question as notice earlier.

Will he now agree to provide the information that he said he would table in this House from questions that were asked last week?

HON. B. URUSKI: Yes, Madam Speaker.

I took a number of questions as notice from my honourable friend, and he asked me questions dealing with the matter of the reserves - on the actuarial reserves. I want to indicate to my honourable friend that, based on generally accepted accounting principles, the adjustment lies properly in 1987. This is a requirement of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants.

Since there was no actuarial review in 1986, we really don't know what adjustment, if any, would have been required. In any case, most of the 1987 adjustment relates to the timing of adjusting and other expenses, not claims reserves.

The claims portion of 23 million claims from prior to 1987 is less than 20 percent of the total. On a pool of incurred but unpaid claims of about \$250 million, the adjustment of \$4 million or so I would say, Madam Speaker, is remarkably small.

MPIC - opinion poll

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, the other question dealing with paying a portion of its share of public opinion polling - I'm advised that the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation has conducted a variety of

market research projects over the years. The research involved three primary subject areas: traffic safety research, to enable MPIC to develop effective accident countermeasures; secondly, research-seeking public input on the operations of Autopac - that is: levels of service, coverage requirements; and research to evaluate consumer demand for the general insurance products which the corporation sells in the competitive marketplace.

Madam Speaker, I am also advised that the most recent public survey that MPIC participated in was an omnibus survey conducted in January 1987 by Criterion Research Corporation. This survey cost MPIC \$8,000 and dealt with issues relating to traffic safety, Autopac service levels, and the corporation's general insurance products.

Osborne report request

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Norbert.

MR. G. MERCIER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have a question for the Attorney-General.

Madam Speaker, the Attorney-General has indicated that part of an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the death of Helen Betty Osborne in The Pas will be released after the appeals have been completed. Could the Attorney-General indicate whether the full investigative report will be released publicly when the appeals are completed?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Yes, the report which I received Friday last will be released in full, following the appeal.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, in view of the serious public concerns that have been raised in regard to this matter, in particular the granting of immunity to one of the accomplices - alleged accomplices - could the Attorney-General indicate whether he will hold a public inquiry into this matter after the appeal has been finished?

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Madam Speaker, what we will do is await the outcome of the appeal and any possible further activity that may result and, once that is done, once the report is released, there will be further discussions with the community.

I've indicated to the Member for St. Norbert that I've been out in The Pas several times. We've discussed these issues with the communities out there and certainly, once the overall legal cases are completed, we would be prepared to discuss what is necessary to ensure Manitobans believe that the system is fair to all.

Awasis Agency - charges

MR. G. MERCIER: A final supplementary question to the Attorney-General in regard to another matter of which I gave him notice last week, privately, Madam Speaker, concerning the 14-year-old girl who was

allegedly raped last year while under the jurisdiction of the Awasis agency in Northern Manitoba.

Could the Attorney-General indicate now whether or not criminal charges have been laid with respect to that matter, or will be laid shortly, those events having taken place many months ago, Madam Speaker?

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Yes, I thank the Member for St. Norbert for having provided notice.

There have been four adults charged. Their preliminary hearing date has been set. I believe it's some time in early March. As well, there have been four juveniles charged. Their transfer hearing has also been set for a date later than that for the first four individuals.

Speed limit reduction

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Highways.

In October 1987, the Highway Traffic Board refused for the second time a request from a coalition of four schools, Sir William Dafoe, Montrose, Sir William Osler - excuse me, Montrose, John Dafoe, and Ramah to reduce the speed limit on Grant Avenue from 60 kilometres per hour to 50.

The Minister of Highways, Madam Speaker, does have the authority under section 101 of The Highway Traffic Act to reduce this speed limit. Why has he not done so?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation.

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

As the Member for River Heights is aware, there is a Manitoba Traffic Board that reviews matters of this nature. I did have a representative of that group meet with me and with the chairperson and the vice-chairperson of the board, and I am satisfied that the board made the appropriate decision. Therefore, it would be totally inappropriate for me to override their decision, or its decision.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: A supplementary question to the same Minister.

Madam Speaker, there are 12 schools on or near Grant Avenue. Is the Minister waiting for a serious accident or death before he acts?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: The Minister of Highways doesn't want to see deaths anywhere, whether there be 12 schools or 2 schools. The fact of the matter is that experience has shown that simply putting up a sign regulating the speed to 50 kilometres an hour does not necessarily mean that the motorists will drive at 50 kilometres an hour. The problem is not one of signage. — (Interjection) — While the members opposite laugh at the reality, the problem is not one of signage or of decreasing the speed limit, but a matter of enforcement, and the individuals involved who have

petitioned the Highway Traffic Board have been so advised to seek assistance from the City of Winnipeg.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: As a final supplementary to the same Minister, Madam Speaker, his logic is the same as the Traffic Board that said because everyone went at 64 k's, there was no need to reduce it.

Will this Minister reconsider his lack of decision and act on behalf of the children who go to these 12 schools and have to cross this avenue four times a day?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: Madam Speaker, as I've indicated, I have had a number of meetings with the Highway Traffic Board on this issue. I am satisfied that they have made an informed decision, and therefore I have no intention of overriding a decision made by that board. However, I would hope that the parents who are concerned - and certainly I share their concerns - would take it upon themselves to speak to their city councillor and city officials and see to it that there is a greater degree of enforcement at the pedestrian corridors, and that there is a greater degree of enforcement with respect to speeding. The answer does not lie in lowering the speed limit to 50 kilometres an hour.

Bighetty report request

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

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

It's been reported that her department is investigating the Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba as it relates to the death of one John Bighetty. I'm wondering if the Minister will be tabling that report in its entirety and original form in this House when it is completed.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Community Services and Corrections.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Madam Speaker, I'm expecting to receive the report from the agency within the next week or so, and after we've received that, the department will be able to complete its own report, at which time I'd be quite happy to share the information with the members of the House.

MR. C. BIRT: Madam Speaker, that's what concerns me. If this government can make an announcement as to mineral production at great length in this House . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Does the honourable member have a question?

MR. C. BIRT: . . . I'm not interested in sharing information, I would like to have the report of the department, as well as the agency, tabled so that we can know exactly what the problems were, and what steps, if any, should be taken to correct the matter, so would she table both reports in this House?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Madam Speaker, we will be following all the standard practices and procedures for

providing information. The only caveat that I would include is that when you are dealing with matters of child care and information about families, there is, under The Child and Family Services Act, some requirements for confidentiality, and when we're releasing information to the public that must also always be taken into consideration.

MR. C. BIRT: I'm prepared to accept that there be exclusions on confidentiality. What I would like to get are the original reports with that caveat in it. I don't want a press release or a doctored report from the Minister's office.

MADAM SPEAKER: Does the honourable member have a question?

MR. C. BIRT: I would like to know to know if the Minister would table the original reports.

Feedlot program

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Virden.

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

The Minister of Agriculture has indicated that he's prepared to enter a feedlot stabilization program following a series of producer meetings in the province, Madam Speaker. At these meetings, there are two basic principles that farmers need to discuss, Madam Speaker: one, whether it would be a provincial plan; or, secondly, whether it be a tripartite plan involving the Federal Government.

Madam Speaker, the fairest way to get honest discussion at these meetings is to have the meetings conducted by his Economics Branch with the Beef Commission there to present the provincial proposal and the Manitoba Cattle Producers there to discuss the tripartite proposal.

I would like to ask the Minister if he's prepared to set the meetings up in this fashion.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

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

Clearly, we are following a format which is going to provide for public discussion. We've indicated that we will be incorporating the discussions on the expansion of the feedlot program with the meetings that have been held in previous years to share results on the Manitoba Beef Commission program. We do not see that these would be closed meetings, and we are not going to suggest that one particular view can be provided with respect to tripartite. In fact, when I met in Ottawa with the Federal Minister and the other Provincial Ministers, I invited them to participate in any discussions that we had in Manitoba and they could feel free to have their representatives at our meetings.

I think for the Member for Virden to suggest that somehow the process will be stacked in favour of the provincial program is misleading. I have indicated it to the department and it has been the practice, in fact, in previous years, aside from discussion on tripartite,

that the regional directors from the department would be involved often in the chairmanship of the meetings. I've indicated that would be my direction for this year.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Madam Speaker, at no time in my questions had I indicated a preference for one particular plan.

I would like to ask the Minister: Is he saying that he will refuse the Manitoba Cattle Producers the opportunity to be included in the program to present their point of view?

HON. L. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, when I indicated that these would be public meetings, clearly, they are open to anyone who is interested in attending. I am not going to indicate to any one group that they can or cannot attend. If they are public meetings, surely it is understood that anyone who is out there who has a view on the matter should attend. I don't know that it should be limited only to producers. There are various people in the communities who have views and comments and can provide constructive advice as to how the program should be structured.

Clearly, Madam Speaker, they are open meetings with no indication on my part that there should be specific selection of representations as seems to be implied in the comments of the Member for Virden.

MR. G. FINDLAY: To this point in time, Madam Speaker, only contract holders of the Beef Commission have had any notice that these meetings are in place.

How is he planning to inform the other cattle producers of this province that they are welcome at these meetings and that open discussion will occur?

HON. L. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, the notice that went out to contract holders with the Beef Commission indicated that there would be a process for reporting to them as has been the case in the past with respect to the performance of the Beef Commission. We have now put in place a program where we said, rather than having separate meetings on that same agenda, we would have the report of the Beef Commission. We would as well, at that time, table our proposals for the alternate feedlot plan.

The notices with respect to the meetings will be in the various community papers - whatever process is used, as determined by the department, whether it be communication on the radio, the local newspapers - but I can assure him that there will be adequate notification. In fact, the dates have been set, and I would be pleased to table in the House a listing of those dates and locations.

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

MR. G. FINDLAY: Yes, Madam Speaker, if I'm not mistaken, those meetings are to start the 2nd of March, which is next week, and I wonder how he is going to get that information to the other producers so that they can be there and informed as to what the discussion is going to be about.

HON. L. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, I will check with the department to see what communication has already

been undertaken in the public forum; but if that has not been done, I hope that some who will be viewing this Session, some who will be listening to the proceedings here, would note that the meetings will be starting as of the 2nd of March, and I will table in this House tomorrow a complete listing of dates and locations and I will ensure that there has been adequate publication on that as I am sure there already has.

Home Care Services - appeal

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. W. PARASIUK: Yesterday, I took under consideration some questions raised by the Member for River Heights regarding home care. She had asked me when will the appeal process for home clients be in place.

I have been informed that there is currently an appeal process. If the person receiving home care is not satisfied with the home care worker, or the number of hours that are assigned to them, they have the right to call or write to the supervisor, and then on to the regional home care supervisory level and ultimately to the Minister if they are not satisfied. It may be that procedure is not well-enough known and I think that would be better communicated.

The second question asked was why didn't the external review undertake a survey of home care clients as part of their review.

I thought there had been some, but I checked on that, and there was a telephone survey of a random sample of home care clients undertaken by them as a part of their review. I understand that they contacted some 1,001 people as part of this random sample, which I think is a very large sample in terms of getting a response.

I hope that provides the information that the Member for River Heights is looking for.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Ellice.

MR. H. SMITH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health.

Over the last few months, this ad has been appearing in national magazines: If you are facing baldness, you should know the facts . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. H. SMITH: Would you show this to the Minister? Does the Health Minister have any details of why an unnamed company paying for this ad campaign would want to encourage people to see their doctor for baldness?

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

The question is not within the administrative responsibility of the Minister.

The Honourable Member for Ellice with a question.

MR. H. SMITH: Yes, I am wanting to know if the Minister knows where this ad, who put this ad in . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

That question is . . .

MR. H. SMITH: Okay, I'll ask another question then. You know, Madam Speaker, you have to have a little preliminary . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

The honourable member has the floor to ask a question which is in order.

MHSC - treatment coverage

MR. H. SMITH: Does Medicare, does his department pick up the cost if a person goes to the doctor to see about baldness?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. W. PARASIUK: Madam Speaker, as someone who is sliding quickly down the same slippery slope that the Member for Ellice has already slid down, I paid some attention to this ad, but I didn't look at it carefully.

But I do want to indicate to the member that this particular drug, which is not referred to in this ad - I think the ad is somewhat misleading, trying to induce extra Pharmacare costs and trying to induce extra Medicare costs - in fact, the drug has been delisted by the pharmaceutical committee. It has indeed been delisted and we are taking a look at whether in fact this type of advertising by a pharmaceutical company to get people to visit a doctor, to get a prescription for a cosmetic drug is indeed being covered by Medicare, because that would be a bad use of Medicare. It would take away money from Medicare that could be used for other more essential services.

I think it is a very valid question by the Member for Ellice, and I will certainly look into it in great detail.

Airstrip purchase - God's River

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Emerson.

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

I wonder if the Minister could indicate whether his department has completed arrangements to purchase the God's River airstrip. If not, what arrangements are being made to provide that kind of service for the people in the area?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Madam Speaker, this issue is now being arranged and discussed with the Minister of Northern Affairs, and he will respond to the question.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs.

HON. E. HARPER: Yes, we've been talking with the band and the Federal Government in arranging to settle

this issue. We've made arrangements with the Federal Government to cost-share in resolving this issue. The agreement that I have with the Federal Government is that any kind of announcement we would do jointly, so we are in the process of doing that.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Madam Speaker, to the Minister of Northern Affairs then.

Can the Minister indicate what the cost will be to the taxpayers of Manitoba in terms of the agreement?

HON. E. HARPER: Yes. I want to cooperate with the Federal Government in announcing this joint resolution to the problem. I will be announcing the cost as soon as I have completed the arrangements.

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

Can the Minister indicate when that announcement will be forthcoming?

HON. E. HARPER: I will be discussing that thing this afternoon. I believe the Minister responsible for the NDA and Mr. Valcourt are being advised of the date, whether we could do it today or tomorrow. I will be in a better position to know that later on this afternoon.

Special education needs

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Roblin-Russell.

MR. L. DERKACH: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education.

Parents of children with learning disabilities have been experiencing some incredible difficulties and frustrations in getting information with regard to their children - information such as diagnostic testing, the results of that testing, placement of students and the support those students are receiving.

Can the Minister indicate to the House what policies this government has in place that will ensure parents timely and appropriate and complete information on their children?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. R. PENNER: Madam Speaker, yes, there is an issue there. It is a matter primarily at the moment within the jurisdiction of the school divisions. My understanding is there is one school division in which it, at least in the past, has been a problem. But because there is a problem of general application, I have this matter under very active consideration and will likely be bringing forward some legislation to deal with the particular question of the availability of such information to parents - information that is in the possession of school divisions that relates to just general performance and special needs as well.

MR. L. DERKACH: Well, Madam Speaker, it's a well-known fact that the frustration that parents have been experiencing has led to some parents removing their children from the school system and doing home

schooling with their children. Other parents have taken their children out and enrolled them in the Laureate Academy and gone to such extremes as even mortgaging their homes to ensure that these children can receive the appropriate education.

I ask the Minister whether he is prepared to act in a responsible and early manner so that more students are not subjected to this kind of treatment in the future?

HON. R. PENNER: Madam Speaker, I'm always prepared to act in both a responsible and I hope a prompt fashion on issues that are addressed to me in my present or any portfolio. I think that I have that record, Madam Speaker; in fact, I know that I do.

Madam Speaker, Manitoba education is known throughout Canada for being in the lead in dealing with special needs. We take second place to no one in this country in dealing with special needs. Having said that, we are by no means satisfied or prepared to rest on our oars with respect to special needs. Indeed, the former Minister of Education, the Honourable Jerry Storie, the Member for Flin Flon, present Minister of Energy and Mines, appointed a special advisory committee on special needs a year ago composed of representatives from every major special needs group.

I met with that group, a very dedicated group. That group will be reporting to me in June of this year, at which time the report will be made available to this House. I would be prepared in taking a very careful look at the recommendations, to act on those recommendations which are within our jurisdiction and within our resources.

Having said that, and I conclude, Madam Speaker, it will never be the case, regrettably, that the school system, the public school system can meet the needs of every individual student. We will try our best; we are mainstreaming. We've got consultants; we've got an advisory committee that will be reporting. We will do the best we can, but there will always be some students whose needs are so special and so different that we cannot, nor would we want to, prevent attempts by their parents to find some other avenue of recourse.

MR. L. DERKACH: Madam Speaker, although the Minister indicates that we have a very fine school system in our province, I have to point out to him that over the last few years, we have had parents raise some very real concerns that have not been answered. As a matter of fact, Madam Speaker, just lately we saw a parent remove his child from our school system in Manitoba and take him to Ontario where his child is receiving the appropriate education he requires.

But I'd like to ask the Minister, Madam Speaker, how many students are there in this province who are like Devlin Stevens, who are placed into a Grade 10 classroom and are functioning at a grade level that's well below the placement of them?

HON. R. PENNER: I'll take that question as notice, but having taken that question as notice, it may not be easy to ascertain the number. I expect that it is not very large.

One of the problems, Madam Speaker, that we're addressing in mainstreaming - and it is this government that has grasped the nettle of a very thorny problem

in mainstreaming and has achieved more since the election of the Pawley administration in 1981 in mainstreaming than any previous government - that, in doing that, we still have a number of problems to resolve and it will be the case that in attempting to deal with those special needs, the number of happy and satisfied children who otherwise would have been condemned to a black existence has increased exponentially in our system and we're proud of that fact.

It will still be the case that some of these special needs children will not, in every respect, of course, measure up to the general level of academic achievement in the particular class in which they are placed. How in the world could you reasonably expect that? You are attempting to place a burden on those children which those children ought not be — (Interjection) — asked to bear.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

Manitoba Chiefs' Secretariat - formation

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have a question for the Minister responsible for Native Affairs.

Madam Speaker, recently, the Minister announced a Manitoba Chiefs' Secretariat, of which he has placed \$100,000 of Manitoba taxpayers' money.

Madam Speaker, the question to the Minister is why did he not consult with the chiefs prior to making that announcement and the establishment of that secretariat?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Northern and Native Affairs.

HON. E. HARPER: Yes, I've had several meetings with the chiefs and there's always going to be a conflict between the chiefs themselves. There's been consultation made on this and we've supported the chiefs in organizing a Chiefs of Manitoba Secretariat in which they can present information and also help us in dialogue in relation to many of the issues: self-government, taxation, some of the issues of the treaty rights.

It is an investment that I recommend to my colleagues and to this Legislature in terms of support because there's been a lack of support for aboriginal people in Manitoba, and it's about time that we start looking into the areas of Indian people and their issues and the poverty and the chaos that exists in the communities.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Madam Speaker, I have no argument with the Minister in that regard; in fact, I've pressed him to have legislative hearings throughout Manitoba to look into the problems of the Native community and to discuss self-government.

I ask the Minister, Madam Speaker: Did he consult with the chiefs, the Chiefs' Secretariat, in the selection of Phil Fontaine as the interim coordinator? Were there full and open discussions as to who would be their best coordinator for the organization?

HON. E. HARPER: The chiefs have decided that. I don't question their decision-making process in terms of who they select, and that decision rests with the chiefs.

MADAM SPEAKER: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

MADAM SPEAKER: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for St. Vital, the Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

MR. C. BIRT: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's a pleasure to rise and to take part in this debate. I've now had an opportunity to speak on a number of issues over the last three or four years that I've been in this House, and it gives me great pleasure to partake in a debate that has had perhaps more substance, more feeling and more direction than the Speech from the Throne that we are attempting to address. In fact, one wonders, when one reads it carefully, why it was even introduced.

But before I get into my major comments, I would like to make some preliminary remarks. It's been a year since I've had an opportunity to address this Chamber. I trust that the ensuing time has been good and kind to all members of this Legislature and those who serve this Chamber, whether they be staff or the press. It's been a rapid change in time for myself, and I hope that the time has been extremely rewarding to all other members who are involved in this Chamber.

To you, Madam Speaker, I wish you wisdom, careful interpretation of the rules, and I know you have a difficult job in trying to control the government in exceeding the rules, but with our help, we will work together to make sure that this is an orderly Chamber.

Last night, I had the privilege of being involved in, shall we call it the feeder of the absurd where everyone arrived to see an event take place that really was a nonevent, because the event, though height had taken beyond great borders of this province, really amounted to nothing. In fact, it was rather interesting to note that the audience that arrived to see the defeat of the government was much larger than the audience that participated in reading the Speech from the Throne.

I know these mikes are sensitive, but I don't think the comments were heard from the gallery, because the important thing is when the Member for St. Vital decided to side with this rather inept government, there was a groan throughout the audience in the upper Chamber. I think we should put that on the record that more people came for the hanging than actually came for the celebration.

The other interesting aspect is - and I see I've touched a rather sensitive nerve. — (Interjection) — Well, yes, we have many leaders over here. I'm glad the Attorney-General recognizes that there is no leadership on the government side and that's what my colleagues have been attempting to display and show to the public for the last two years.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: Other members have had an opportunity to participate in the debate.

The Honourable Member for Fort Garry has the floor.

MR. C. BIRT: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Some four months ago, I was made critic of the Community Services and Corrections portfolio, and I would like to touch on some of the issues, but I've not had an opportunity to extensively get to know all of the aspects of that particular portfolio.

I've had the privilege of attending at the Manitoba Developmental Centre at Portage la Prairie. I met with the staff, had a tour of the facilities, and considering that it was some 20 years ago that I had last attended at that institution, I found it quite a remarkable place, and great strides have been made.

I'm also aware that a number of the people who were in that institution could never leave that institution and it's a pity but, even with the Welcome Home Program that is being sponsored today and encouraged and supported by the public, there are certain people there who will never be able to leave it. I think it's important that one gives every effort that one can to that.

It's interesting, I know in the debates of last year, there were a great number of numbers bandied about as to the number of people who would be leaving that institution, who would be going to homes or to care situations outside of the institution, but when I was going through the place, one physiotherapist and six aides were attempting to provide physical stimulus for some 85 patients or inmates. That amounted to less than 15 minutes of physical activity per day.

I know that the former Minister had indicated that the number of employees would be reduced in the Developmental Centre and they would find jobs in the outside community. I've been advised that is not the case and, in fact, I would urge the government that if they wish to reassign some people, they should concentrate on the area of physical fitness and activities for those who really can't help themselves. Because really, 15 minutes of activity per day with the limited resources that they have is not sufficient. This activity, of course, would help these individuals enjoy a better life. So my plea to the Minister is to consider perhaps reassigning some of those positions to look after those people.

I've also had an opportunity to visit some of the homes where the people are now residing. In particular, I've had an opportunity to visit a number of the homes operated by Winserv in the City of Winnipeg. I note that the Minister has been invited to attend at these homes and view them, become involved in their operation, but perhaps her schedule is such that it has not permitted her to take advantage of this invitation. But I would urge her to do so in the not-too-distant future, because they are quite remarkable in what they're attempting to do.

The concern that one has though in the Welcome Home Program is those who are now offering this service are being strained by financial constraints. There are a great number of people trying to provide care. The funding and the financial formula that goes into supporting these programs were set several years ago and are not adequate to today's costs.

As a result, a lot of these people and institutions are forced to raise funds on their own. This fund-raising

activity has been curtailed with the government's move to restrict, in fact eliminate, some of the money-raising sources that they've had in the past. This is unfortunate.

What is now happening, and we've seen reports from some of the rural home operators, that they are now using bank financing to fund the shortfall in these homes. This cannot continue because, if it does, these people and these institutions will be placed into bankruptcy or the government will have to devise an alternate method of delivery of care. Therefore, I would urge the Minister to look seriously at this area.

I caught the tail end of the comments made by the Minister of Community Services about the federal day care program. I noted that she had more criticisms than support for the program. As I understand that program - and she's a better expert at the criticism than I - but as I understand the thrust of the federal program is that it's attempting to put money in the hands of parents to allow them to make decisions for their children. This, I gather, is not acceptable to this government or this Minister.

Granted, the program that the Federal Government is trying to devise may not be perfect, but when you consider it's trying to provide a program of support in this area for all of this country, one can see why perhaps there are some shortcomings from certain regional points of view. But certainly, the government could not entertain the program that this government has urged upon it, because we just do not have the billions of dollars the government seems to think is needed for this program.

In fact, I think it is time now to take a rational look at the whole day care program and its delivery of same, because the Minister referred to studies as to which was a better form of delivery of the service, and, quite frankly, I don't think those studies have really compared apples and apples, but in providing apples and oranges.

What are the true legitimate number of people out there who require spaces? Is it everyone who has a child or is it in fact a limited number and those same people are applying in different areas, in different day care centres, who, when tallied up, give you a number that is perhaps unreal? Maybe it is time that we review the whole program of delivery and take a look at possibly using our dollars a little wiser.

The one thing that I found sadly lacking in the Speech from the Throne this year, though there was mention last year, was any attempt to deal with the concerns of the elderly. My leader, some three years ago, raised this question about the rights of seniors in this House.

At that time, the then Attorney-General said that they were well protected and that the Public Trustee had all of their concerns in hand. But unfortunately, as we continue to press - in fact we introduced a motion dealing with the rights of the elderly - it became clear that the government wanted to do something, and last year's Speech from the Throne indicated that there would be some rights and protections given to them.

This year's Speech from the Throne was silent on that particular issue. Why? I've recently done a survey of my constituents dealing with the whole issue of the elderly and the questions and concerns that they raise and bring forward to me are indeed important. I think it points out the whole question of being sensitive to the needs of the elderly, whether they deal with abuse,

whether it's physical, financial, mental, the caring for them, the delivery of services for them, the question of housing, the question of providing services to them in their homes.

All of these are very sensitive and important, yet we have nothing on the Order Paper to indicate that some steps are going to be taken to alleviate or deal with some of their concerns. I would urge this government, if they're not prepared to, we certainly will, introduce some legislation to protect and guarantee the rights of the elderly.

I've had an opportunity to review The City of Winnipeg Act, recommended changes, that the Minister of Urban Affairs has put forward, and it leads me into a rather interesting thought pattern, because it was constituted by a number of people to review the proceedings of the City of Winnipeg.

All the people who took part in that review, I respect highly. I question, though, whether or not the people who sat down and discussed and dissected the City of Winnipeg really understood how the City of Winnipeg operates today. The chairman, who sat as a member of City Council - his time goes back to when he was a member after amalgamation and dealt with the problems of consolidation - the gentleman, Mr. Macdonald, who was involved, also comes from that era of consolidation. The other academics who were involved in it are students of city government but have never participated in it.

Therefore, I find it very distressing to find and consider a recommendation being put forward by this government in its position paper that they develop some sort of party system or mayor-power at City Hall. What we have at City is a very delicate balance of powers, checks and balance, an organization that is sensitive, on balance, to the community needs, yet it is being interfered with by the Provincial Government, setting its priorities that impact on the city.

The principle question that the review team came up with was the question of accountability. The solution seems to be, well, let's create a Mayor with his appointees to have a power structure down at City Hall. Well, this to me brings out the worst aspects of power politics at City Hall. I think of some of the old regimes, whether they be in Chicago under Mayor Daley, or even latterly under Drapeau in Montreal where the Mayor could appoint and control the levers of power down at City Hall. That is not, to my mind, accountability. Nor is it sensitive to the nature and needs of the community.

So, therefore I would recommend that the government give serious consideration to ejecting this whole idea of Mayor-power down at City Hall, because I do not think it will serve the City of Winnipeg well, and in time if you have an entrenchment - and we seem to go for long-serving Mayors - it will give us a type of government that probably would not suit, in fact I would be willing to bet, that it will not give any benefit to the City of Winnipeg.

But it's interesting that the government decided to deal with a review of the power structure and the delivery of service at the City of Winnipeg. We also had, some three or four years ago, a reform of the parliamentary system in Ottawa. This reform gave more authority to the backbenchers in the government. It created a parliamentary committee system.

This system gave authority for bills to pass through and to be reviewed by these standing committees. It allowed them to travel across the country and take public input. It also allowed them to have experts on staff and also to summon experts to give testimony before the Legislative Committees. These committees have done a great job in a number of areas.

So we've had a reform and a change of the power structure at the federal level, giving more input to the MP's. We are now looking at possible reform, and I have some qualifications on that at the City of Winnipeg, yet we have not grappled with the issue that I think is important to this Chamber. It is the reform of the power structure here.

I would recommend that the government give serious consideration to a setting up of the same type of committee system here in the Province of Manitoba, staffing it on a regular basis, giving it standing authority throughout the year, giving it experts to call, and expert support people. In this way, we can deal with matters on an annual basis that go beyond this Chamber, and in fact we can be more current.

The Ontario government has established a partial form of this committee structure, and in fact they have created their own permanent committee dealing with Crown corporations and the staffing of same. In fact, they have gone as far as allowing these committees to review the appointments and comment on them, much like the American Congress system does in the United States, that any appointment to any chairman, or board of the Crown corporations, must first be reviewed and commented on by these committees, and then passed on for approval or disapproval.

I would recommend that type of committee system be adopted here in the province because it brings me to two areas of concern I have that I don't think the province is being serviced well by this government: one area is in Meech Lake; the other area deals with the issue of free trade.

Meech Lake was an attempt to draw the Government of Quebec, or the people of Quebec, into the Confederation network that we have called Canada. They refused to become a signatory of some earlier documents and it is symbolic that they be welcomed into the bond of Canada. I think legally they were, but emotionally, spiritually and any other way you want to look at it, they did not consider themselves part of Confederation.

This Meech Lake process of extending an invitation to Quebec to join us was long, went through several discussions, and the unfortunate thing was that we had a Premier who was on again/off again about this whole process; in fact, from my point of view, lacked leadership in attempting to grasp the concept and the whole idea behind Meech Lake. Eighteen months later, we get something from the Speech from the Throne saying we will now be dealing with a committee - a committee that will have input - and it's almost a lukewarm endorsement of the Meech Lake proposal.

Now there are some concerns being expressed about what Meech Lake does or doesn't do. If you were a Trudeauite who believes in a strong central government, then the Meech Lake Accord will give you problems. But is a strong central government the only basis on which this country can be governed? Remember, his strong central government gave rise to the separation movement in the Province of Quebec.

He also dealt with the idea of "let you sell your own wheat in Western Canada; we don't care." We also had the national energy policy dealing with a strong central government. Well, it's interesting. That so-called strong central government had no sensitivity for the various regions of this country. Anytime that you want to create problems, give all power to one and let it corrupt.

We have economic matters; we have social matters; we have all kinds of concerns - a strong central government. Who's to say that something that was crafted a 100 years ago is fitting for today? There is an appearance of some shifting of powers under the Meech Lake Accord, and everyone is saying we are going to fall apart, there is going to be no more central government. This country of ours has a split jurisdiction - certain powers to the Federal Government, certain to the province - and this has blurred from time to time.

In attempting to accommodate a cultural group, mainly the Francophone community in our country, a hand was reached out. Quite frankly, I was disappointed in our Premier in trying to water down his whole approach, his reluctance to become party to and strongly back the inclusion of the Francophones in the Canadian culture. For that, I was extremely disappointed. Now he has allowed 18 months to go by before we even attempt to come to grips with this issue; and, in fact, if some reports are believed, he's prepared to trade this particular document for something on free trade. Well, I am interested to know why he is prepared to trade off the rights of a certain group in our society for some economic gains on his own behalf or some political gains on his party's behalf.

So I would recommend that if we'd had this strong parliamentary committee system, that Meech Lake Accord would have gone right to the committee. We could have then held hearings across the province; we could have had people come before us; we would have then had a vote in this Chamber on the issues. Now we have this issue reluctantly being dragged in by this government. What are they afraid of? I am disappointed because I think they are hurting those in the Francophone community because of their reluctance to get involved with this issue.

The other area that seems to cause this government some great concern is the whole debate on free trade. I'm not one of those that see it as the panacea for all. I don't see it as the solution to every problem we have in Canada; nor do I see all the negatives that are being advanced on the other side. In fact, everytime a series of problems are raised, they are met and they are not resolved, or they are dealt with and they then go on to another area.

I'm surprised at this issue of free trade which was in the works for some two years. We asked for reports commissioned by the government; we asked for studies done, polling done. This government did not produce them. We asked to have a standing committee prepared and hold hearings in the province. This government would not do it. If we'd had the change in committee system and if we had some real courage from this government, they would have started this whole question of the free trade debate years ago - at least a year if not two years ago.

Now the intriguing thing is we don't know why they are opposed to it. There are no specific reasons for

it. Some would say that it's a protection for Mr. Broadbent. I'm not prepared to go that far, but one wonders when they've had an opportunity for over two years to set out their reasons for opposing free trade . . .

HON. W. PARASIUK: We didn't know what the agreement was until Christmas.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: It's on the Order Paper for tomorrow.

MR. C. BIRT: It's on the Order Paper today. But it's only been in the works for some 18 months to two years. Yet then we have here . . .

A MEMBER: Oh, Charlie, do you remember the election, the last federal election?

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. C. BIRT: Oh, they're now squirming because suddenly it's their only reason for opposing this.

A MEMBER: Don't you talk about bringing something in that wasn't mentioned on the platform.

MR. C. BIRT: That's right. Let's talk about 4,000 positions in day care. After the election only 400 were announced and they said, well, it will take us a decade to provide it, we need federal funding, and suddenly the back pedalling that went on. So let's not hear about what was discussed in the election or not.

After the election, the issue of free trade was a serious question. The Minister was involved in it on several occasions throughout this. And who was afraid to discuss it? The Minister across; every Minister. They're afraid of themselves.

I read one section from the Speech from the Throne. It says they believe this deal, which is the Mulroney deal, will have significant impacts on Canadian culture, our cultural sovereignty, and our national identity.

Tariffs have been reduced in this country in the last 40-odd years from 100 percent down to 20 percent. We're dealing with the abolition of some 20 percent of the tariffs. We're talking about trying to prevent the imposition of tariffs and countervail duties. And in this time, our culture has flourished. We're not American. Individuals who have been trained and raised in Canada are creating books, plays, film work, and they're being supported by the public, whether it be through tax dollars or through straight financial contributions through the purchase of their work. They are flourishing. In fact, they are just beginning to take off. This will not be hurt. I can't see why anyone would say we're second-class. We can't afford to trust those people to continue to have an input into the improvement of our cultural life.

I'm very disappointed that the government has refused to involve the public in any meaningful way in this whole issue of free trade because it has an impact, it will have an impact, but it will not have the devastating impact that the government seems to think it will have.

The Member for Kildonan says which government? It's the government that he's been a member of. It's

been afraid to involve itself in discussions with the public since Day One. In fact, his own leader has been vacillating back and forth: I'm for it; I'm against it; maybe. Well, who knows. That is not leadership; it's an abdication of responsibility.

Madam Speaker, in closing, there are a number of issues in the field of education that I would liked to have dealt with, but I will save that for another day. It is just that I would like to say in passing that there are a great many problems facing the field of education. It's time for some fundamental changes. I had hoped that the High School Review would be making some solid recommendations in that area. Well, from what I'm hearing, it's a little disappointing and I don't think we're going to come to grips with the whole issue of "what does the public want" as far as the public educational system is concerned. I will wait for the final report, but from what I'm hearing, I'm a little disappointed that they're not prepared to come to grips with the whole field of education.

This government is not looking at a national or provincial research policy as it relates to our institutions, whether they be at the university or otherwise. It is not looking at the whole question of educational funding and the role that the land-base tax system will play or should play. — (Interjection) — Well, the Minister of Education says we're looking at both of them. In fact, that's been the same response that every Minister has given since this government was elected in 1981.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I drove some 200 km. to be present for the reading of the Speech from the Throne. In fact, I had to exceed the speed limit on occasion to make it here on time. — (Interjection) — Well, in this room, we're sacrosanct, we can make these admissions, and they'll not be held against us.

The question I had to ask myself, after 45 minutes of the pomp and ceremony, was that perhaps if they had mailed it to me, I might have been able to enjoy it where I was because it certainly was not worth the effort of even the limited number of guests coming here. It really represented an abdication of - really no indication of - where this government is going.

In fact, their whole idea is if you can't do anything positive, let's blame someone else. It really was a pity that they didn't mail a copy of the speech to everyone and have saved us a lot of time, trouble and expense for showing up to listen to a rather disappointing document.

Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

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

I am pleased to have this opportunity to participate in the debate on the Throne Speech; and given that a decision was rendered last night on the amendment, I only have to address myself as to the question of speaking in support of the Throne Speech.

I think this is an important opportunity, Madam Speaker, to set on the record my comments with regard to the record of this government and the path that has been charted through the Throne Speech.

I must indicate that perhaps I should restrain my comments slightly and soothe some of the wounds that

were inflicted by the members opposite - by the Member for Dauphin - last night. Having been subjected to that verbal lashing, Madam Speaker, and subsequently having come to grips with the reality that they could not topple this government as they had been indicating, they are in somewhat of a depressed mood today. So I will restrain my comments to a degree.

Madam Speaker, again, I am pleased to be able to represent the concerns of the constituency of Swan River in this Legislature. It is a constituency of which I am very proud, because in many ways it represents features of the entire province. It is a constituency whose economy is diversified, built on agriculture and the natural resource base, and indeed, the heritage of people is, as well, very diverse. It is that strength that comes from the diversity of its people and the natural resources of the economy, of the area, which makes it just an excellent area in which to live. I think it is very much, as I said, typical of the community of the province at large.

Madam Speaker, the Throne Speech, as I said, indicated a direction that I, as the MLA for Swan River and as a member of this government, am very comfortable with. It's a direction that I think most Manitobans would want us to follow. It's a direction, Madam Speaker, that they would want from a sensitive, responsible government, indicating our concern about health care, indicating our concern about an economy which is built on a sound cooperation between the private sector, the public sector and the cooperative sector. It is an economy, Madam Speaker, which objective observers, people who are not politically aligned with this party have recognized, is an economy which leads much of Canada and it will continue to do so.

I want to focus my comments to some extent, Madam Speaker, in the area of agriculture. I am pleased to be able to have these new responsibilities in this the Third Session, Madam Speaker, having enjoyed the opportunity to deal with issues of Natural Resources. I am pleased to see them now in the capable hands of the Member for Dauphin, but if I do have any regret it is that I will no longer have the Member for Emerson as my critic. I say that, Madam Speaker, if there is any doubt, in the complimentary fashion. It seems to be misunderstood by the Member for Emerson. I truly enjoyed working with the Member for Emerson, disagreeing with him on a number of occasions and I hope that the Member for Virden can provide the kind of challenge that the Member for Emerson did.

(Mr. Acting Speaker, C. Baker, in the Chair.)

Agriculture in Manitoba is indeed an important part of the economy. It is different in many respects than the agricultural economy of some of our neighbouring provinces, particularly as you look to the provinces to the west, of the agricultural economy of Saskatchewan, and the agricultural economy of Alberta. Agriculture in Manitoba is very much diversified, and that has been a strength of the agricultural economy in Manitoba. It is built on various sectors, taking advantage of the natural features of the province in terms of the natural resource base, the soils and the climatic conditions that we have, growing grains and oilseeds in some portions, relying on livestock production in others and looking to special crops in other areas.

Given that particular blend, we have been able to withstand some of the swings that have occurred in the agricultural incomes of other provinces. Nonetheless, even with that diversity, there has been a cyclical element in the income of Manitoba farmers, as has been the case of farm incomes throughout Canada. But we in Manitoba have been able to enjoy some of the benefits that come with that diversity because when one sector is down, another sector would be up and there would be a balancing that would take place.

I want to share with the members in this House - just to illustrate that point - that if we look at the year of 1986, the average farm income in Manitoba was in excess of \$18,000 compared to Saskatchewan with an average farm income of slightly in excess of \$12,000 and that of Alberta slightly in excess of \$13,000.00. Now when we go to 1987, there was a slight reduction in Manitoba's income to \$17,742, but still in excess of the average farm income of Saskatchewan at \$16,700 and that of Alberta at \$15,100.00.

I share that information, Mr. Acting Speaker, and I wish to have it read into the record to point out that that is often overlooked in the debate that takes place, and the statistics that are quoted in various locations, sometimes erroneous information passed out to indicate that the farmers of Manitoba are doing well relative to the farmers in our neighbouring jurisdictions.

That is not to suggest in any way, Mr. Acting Speaker, that we are satisfied with those levels of income. We must all work to ensure that there is an adequate return to the farming community and as we look at the community of Manitoba at this point in time we see some sectors where there is a record high level of return.

If you look, Mr. Acting Speaker, at the sector dealing with the cow-calf operators, that sector has not in history realized the kinds of return that they are realizing at this moment in time.

As we look at the benefits of diversity, Mr. Acting Speaker, I think it is clearly demonstrated that there are sectors that are doing well, but at the same time we recognize that there are sectors that are indeed facing severe difficulty, and that of course would be the grains and the oilseeds sector, which is being subjected to significant pressures from the international market.

But we are encouraged by what we see in terms of support programs from the federal level. It is generally accepted that in terms of supporting the price of agricultural commodities, that that is where it should be. The reason for taking that position, and it's one that I'm comfortable with, is given that the benefits of agriculture accrue to the entire economy, then if there is need from time to time to support those prices, surely then the cost should be spread over the broadest possible tax base, which would be the national tax base.

It distresses me, Mr. Acting Speaker, to hear from time to time, the members opposite suggesting that what we should in fact be doing is welcoming with open arms the opportunity to be participants in the tripartite programs.

Now we have been put in the position where, due to the insensitivity of the Federal Government in not wanting to see sectors fail, we have stood by the farmers of Manitoba. But the members opposite, when they

say that we should further relieve the Federal Government of its responsibility with respect to price support are saying in the same breath, though rather quietly, that what we should be doing is putting it to, or socking it to the provincial taxpayer, rather than relying on the national tax base.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I have great difficulty with that kind of logic. What they are saying is let's be apologists for the federal level that is backing away from its responsibility and shift that on to the provincial tax base. I want to state categorically that I disagree with that kind of an approach.

As we look at other sectors, Mr. Acting Speaker, I think the future of Manitoba agriculture is indeed bright. I am pleased that we were able to include in the Throne Speech, Mr. Acting Speaker, a commitment from this government, supported by members from this side - and I want to acknowledge the input of the Minister responsible for Industry, Trade and Technology - in bringing forward a combined approach which would recognize that the benefits of agriculture go far beyond the farm gate. We want to see that there would be further benefits for the processing industry in Manitoba.

We recognize that there was a problem in the feedlot sector currently not being available to those producers who did not have their own cow herd. We have to recognize, we must recognize, that 75 percent of the cow herd in Manitoba - it was as high as 80 percent, I think it's 75 percent of the cow herd - is enrolled in the Manitoba beef plan. Therefore, 75 percent of the production is really eligible for a feedlot program, if you like, or a finishing program. They are eligible for stabilization on fat cattle if, in fact, they chose to exercise that option. Given the programs that were put in place in our neighbouring jurisdictions, many of the calves were being bought at very attractive prices in Manitoba and the benefit of that was accruing to the cow-calf producer.

So, what we have, in fact, Mr. Acting Speaker, is the cow-calf producers in Manitoba enjoying some record high prices because the producers in some of the other jurisdictions were prepared to pay these extremely high prices for calves. We are not content to stand by and see the loss of those animals and we've committed ourselves to putting in place a stabilization program which will see a greater degree of finishing in Manitoba.

I know, Mr. Acting Speaker, that there was some controversy in the previous year on the matter of premiums charged to the plan. I would ask members opposite that they reflect on their comments of last year - in light of some of the suggestions that are being made - that in another stabilization program handled by the Federal Government, that there's some indication of some very significant increases in premiums and, given their comments of the previous year, it will be interesting to see how they respond to what might be coming in that area.

I want to talk about the issue of trade because that is an issue that has been highlighted in the Throne Speech. It is an issue that we have worked on with the public of Manitoba to ensure that they have information available, and I was surprised to hear the member opposite suggest that what we had done was failed in some way to make that information available to the public. It should be clearly understood that this is an initiative of the Federal Government, a deal being

proposed by the Prime Minister of Canada and jointly with the President of the United States.

If it is the Federal Government's deal, surely the responsibility for putting the information out, to have the public understand the deal, would rest squarely on the shoulders of the proponents of the deal. There was clear indication from the public of Manitoba that they did not have sufficient information and, again, we were not prepared to stand by and let the chips fall where they may. We said that, given that shortfall on the part of the Federal Government, we would provide the information that we had. We would enter into dialogue with the public to ensure that they had a basis on which to make a decision and to provide some feedback to the Federal Government. We undertook a round of public meetings for which we were criticized by the members opposite. They said, on the one hand, there is not sufficient information; then, when we undertook the public meetings, they said we are taking out a road show.

Only a few days ago, the members opposite were suggesting that what we were doing is spending too much money in terms of making this information available. Little do they say about the millions of dollars being spent by the Federal Government to promote their point of view. Little do they say about the Government of Saskatchewan and the promotion that has been done in that province.

Given my riding, which borders Saskatchewan, we are subjected to information by way of the media, the electronic media and the print media, wherein the Government of Saskatchewan praises the initiative of the Federal Government with respect to free trade. I would at any time be prepared to compare the expenditure on promotion or of discussion on this issue with Saskatchewan and Manitoba. I think clearly, we in Manitoba, would be the losers in that. The Government of Saskatchewan would have spent far, far more in that.

If I recall correctly, Mr. Acting Speaker, the Federal Government spent some 12 million on the initial publication of materials related to this initiative.

This is an important issue, Mr. Acting Speaker. There are some who would want to stand back from it and say, this is a political issue and we should discuss it only on economic grounds. I will be quite prepared - I have been quite prepared - to enter into debate on it; and I don't apologize for addressing it as a political issue because that is indeed what it is. It is a major policy proposal by the Federal Government which has implications for the future of Canada. I don't mind, for one moment, stating that I do have a vision of Canada which does not coincide with the vision or the future of Canada that I see being influenced by this particular agreement.

Our position, I believe, has been misunderstood, because in questioning it there are those who would suggest that what we are doing is opposing trade. Trade is clearly important for Manitoba. And again, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology heads a department where one of their primary initiatives is to secure additional trade opportunities.

My own department has a branch, the marketing branch, which pursues trade opportunities. We have been very successful in that respect, Mr. Acting Speaker. I think it is incorrect for members opposite to suggest,

because we question the specific proposal that is before us, we are opposed to trade. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Let me share some information with you, Mr. Acting Speaker, and other members of this House, information which will show that this is not a concern that we alone have as the Government of Manitoba. I want to share with you some information which relates specifically to this portfolio, to the important industry of agriculture.

There is a particular section in the document, and members opposite have this document, it's section 701.3. The Canadian Egg Marketing agency wrote to the Federal Minister seeking clarification on what exactly was the meaning of that section, which, and let me quote to you, states that neither party, including any public entity that is established or maintains, shall sell agricultural goods for export to the territory or of the other party at a price below the acquisition price of the goods, plus any storage, handling, or other costs incurred by it with respect to those goods.

The Canadian Egg Marketing Agency said, "Clarify for us, Mr. Federal Minister, what this really means, because from time to time we acquire surplus eggs and we do sell them at less than our cost." They wanted to know. Now, let me share with all members, Mr. Acting Speaker, this bold response from the Federal Minister which demonstrates clearly that this issue has not been thought through by many departments of government as has been demonstrated only yesterday by concerns related to the clothing sector.

But this is the response, Mr. Acting Speaker, to the reinquiry from the Canadian Egg Marketing Agency. Listen to the courage. It says - and this is the Federal Minister - "At this juncture, it is probably best if the visibility of this issue is kept low. A request for an exchange of letters with the United States would only raise the profile of the issue and may prompt a negative response. Moreover, as Mike Gifford suggested to you earlier, it is not clear whether CEMA's current export pricing practice would be considered to be a breach of the relevant free trade provisions. You may, therefore, wish to consider continuing operations as in the past, but give some thought as to how you could modify your operations in the future."

Well, let me say to you, we suggest the working committees - Mr. Acting Speaker, the inquiry from the Canadian Egg Marketing Agency is dated in February, though I thought the work of the agency has been done. I think what this demonstrates very clearly that in their rush to put together an agreement, which I maintain was designed primarily to save the political hide of the Prime Minister and the federal Conservative Party, it was rushed into without clear consideration of what would be happening elsewhere.

It is a concern, not only a concern to the producers of eggs. Let me share with you a letter from the Dairy Farmers of Canada that says that the Dairy Farmers of Canada wrote to the Premiers of all of the provinces indicating their concern. It says - and I will be quite prepared to table the document: "The removal of all tariffs will create a serious gap in the underpinnings of the Canadian Milk Supply Management Program, and the action must be taken to close this gap before the agreement is signed." — (Interjection) — Let me say that I heard members opposite suggest, well, maybe we shouldn't be so concerned about those involved in supply management.

Well, 10 percent of the farm income in Manitoba is from supply-managed commodities. What they seem to be suggesting, and I would be surprised, particularly the Member for Emerson's, the Member for La Verendrye's constituencies, in which there is a concentration of those particular commodities, that they would stand by when members opposite suggest that what we can do is write off that particular sector. They have no concerns.

Now, Mr. Acting Speaker, if what they could do is demonstrate to me that there were some advantages to be gained and that they would be prepared to sacrifice the supply-managed commodities, then I'd be prepared to look at it. But what are those? What is to be gained? What are they going to gain in the hog market? Yes, we could ask the hog producers. We could ask Mr. Bill Vaags; we have asked Bill Vaags. We have asked Bill Vaags to clarify what this means. We asked Bill Vaags to clarify why was pork excluded from the definition of red meat. It was not there. He could not provide us with an answer and we still await an explanation of that.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we are now accessing that market very well. It is an important market and we've never suggested that we should somehow give up that market. We are doing very well in that market without a free trade agreement. We are doing well in that market even with a countervail. The countervail exists. There is no indication that when the free trade agreement is signed that the countervail will be removed. That is all still going to be in place. There is nothing to indicate that they will not initiate new countervail measures.

Then in the area of grains, what will happen as a consequence of this agreement? We hear from a meeting in Winnipeg that the Canadian Wheat Board is viewed by some of the observers in the U.S. as being a subsidy. Clearly if the only view that those observers have is that this is a subsidy, I think that raises some very serious questions as to what the role of the Wheat Board will be in the future.

I do not apologize for one moment, Mr. Acting Speaker, for suggesting that what we should be doing is working very hard to retain those approaches to marketing, the Canadian Wheat Board Supply and Management, to bring stability, to retain stability, as has indeed been brought by these particular agencies. But what we have is some of the members opposite and their federal counterparts who are saying let's throw it out to the market, let the market determine what is best. Let the market determine what is best for the Canadian farmer.

Why was the Canadian Wheat Board put in place? It was put in place because farmers were being taking advantage of and members opposite will know full well the history of that particular issue and they need not be reminded of it.

What we see by their particular approach is a diminished role for some orderly mechanisms. It is correct that the agreement states that they can retain the supply and management organizations. It states that they can in fact introduce new ones. But having them there as nominal agencies with a diminished role, I maintain will not serve the interests of the farmer, and clearly there is indication on the part of those who are involved. I want to indicate that for our part we think it's a firm position to be taken, that we should

understand very clearly what the impact will be before an agreement of this magnitude is entered into.

I want to comment briefly on the question of tripartite participation. Again, there have been some suggestions that we are not prepared to become involved in tripartite. As I said earlier, we feel very strongly that the responsibility for price support rests with the Federal Government. Therefore, we will resist them offloading to the provincial taxpayer. But we are involved in tripartite. We are involved in tripartite in hogs, we are involved in tripartite in sugar beets, and we feel that the final stages of concluding an agreement will see our participation. We offered to participate in the bean program to provide stabilization but the Federal Government is yet to agree to the terms that have been provided. So our position is clearly on the record.

I want to address as well the issue of plant patent legislation, Mr. Acting Speaker. We have, on this side, said that we have to concern ourselves with input costs, and we are attempting to address that. Again, as a combined initiative with Industry, Trade and Technology, we announced only last week that we were entering into a contract with UMA Engineering to look at the question of a generic Roundup, if you like, to make the active ingredient of glyphosate available to farmers at a much reduced rate.

It is interesting to note, Mr. Acting Speaker, that I had a call from the media and the media was indicating to me that the response from the company currently manufacturing that product was that the province shouldn't concern itself because when the patent expired, the price would come down because others would be entering into it.

Well, clearly, what are they indicating? They are indicating there is room for the price to come down. They are indicating that what the farmers are being charged now is not a function of cost of production, but it is a function of what will the market bear given that they have a monopoly. I was not surprised because I really didn't expect that we would receive much encouragement from the company currently manufacturing that product. But I think it is an initiative that will serve the farmers well.

Now that is not unrelated to the question of plant patent legislation, legislation that was introduced at the federal level previously by a Liberal Government and withdrawn, and now being brought forward by a Conservative Government. I maintain, Mr. Acting Speaker, that this has as much potential for saving money for the farmers as did Bill C-22 have the potential to save money for the consumers of pharmaceutical drugs.

What we are seeing, and there is in a sense a contradiction, we have the Senate calling for a reduction in the length of the patent on farm chemicals and we have legislation being proposed which would bring forward patent legislation for seeds and plants. I think this has nothing positive to serve the farming community, Mr. Acting Speaker. It will serve only to increase their cost of input by way of royalties on seeds and plants. In addition, what it will do, through restricting the number of outlets through which the supplies of these are available, is it will reduce the competitiveness.

We, on this side, maintain that the question of plant breeding should remain in the public domain and it is through public funding that we should continue that kind of effort.

The final area that I want to comment on, Mr. Acting Speaker, is the question of the Rural Development Institute. I was pleased that we were able to provide in the Throne Speech again an indication that we will be entering into an agreement with Brandon University for a Rural Development Institute. I think it is an interesting approach which is being mocked by members on the other side. I don't think that they respect the need for input from the public.

What we are saying is that the Rural Development Institute with the Brandon University, which is highly regarded as having close contact with the rural community, will be used as a vehicle through which there will be opportunity for the public at large to provide input into questions of policies of an economic and a social nature which will lead to shaping rural Manitoba in the future, because we recognize fully that though agriculture provides the framework over which much of what happens in rural Manitoba is built, the needs of people in rural Manitoba go far beyond that. It is for that reason I am proud that there was reference in the Throne Speech to the question of health care in rural Manitoba.

There is need to address other issues of social services in rural Manitoba in the long term. The demographics of rural Manitoba are changing, Mr. Acting Speaker, and we feel that there should be an opportunity for people in rural Manitoba to participate in shaping those policies that will give direction to all of society in the longer term. Residents in rural Manitoba have a clear understanding of the needs of their communities. They should be provided with an additional forum in which to communicate those needs.

In conclusion, Mr. Acting Speaker, I want to indicate that I'm pleased to be able to participate in the Throne Speech Debate. I look forward to other issues that we will have to address during the course of this Session, and I'm particularly pleased to be able to speak to the issues related to agriculture, which forms the backbone of much of what happens in Manitoba.

Thank you very much.

MR. ACTING SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Virden.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Mr. Acting Speaker, the Minister, in his presentation, indicated that he would table the two documents he read from. I would like to ask him to do that at this time.

MR. ACTING SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister.

HON. L. HARAPIAK: Mr. Acting Speaker, I have the documents here; I will have them copied and tabled - the one concerned about the impact on their industry, the concern of the dairy farmers; and the concern, a document which indicates that the average income of Manitoba farmers is higher than that of Saskatchewan and Alberta.

I will also table a document which indicates that the level of the per-farm expenditure in Manitoba is higher in Saskatchewan and that over the last three years the level of expenditure in Manitoba has increased. In the last three years, it has decreased in Saskatchewan and in Alberta. I will copy them and table them.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Would the Minister entertain a question?

HON. L. HARAPIAK: Sure, I will.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Mr. Acting Speaker, the Minister indicated that 75 percent of the cow herd in Manitoba was stabilized through the Beef Commission. Given 180 thousand calves have left the province out of approximately 280,000-300,000 calves raised in this province, I wonder if the Minister would tell us what percent of the total calf crop is actually stabilized through to market?

HON. L. HARAPIAK: Mr. Acting Speaker, 75 percent of the production is eligible for stabilization. For every one who is enrolled, they are eligible for stabilization at different levels. The operators can choose to sell those at different levels. They can sell them as calves; they can sell them as yearlings or they can sell them as finished calves. That was in the design of the original plan, that the farmer would have the flexibility to sell the animals at any one of those three stages of production. That is still there.

Clearly, what has happened - in the last year in particular, and it began the year previous - is that those operators were choosing to exercise their option to sell as calves, because the prices were so attractive. What we have proposed by way of the feedlot plan is to bring another feature to the plan which will provide an option for those who do not have their own cow herds.

And I could just share with the member that, I believe today, we just received the federal statistics on livestock on farms and in the different stages of production. I could share that document with him as well.

I think it will show, Mr. Acting Speaker, that the figures of the movement of cattle from Manitoba to our neighboring jurisdictions has not been as significant as has been suggested. It is significant, but I think the figures that have been used have been somewhat exaggerated.

MR. ACTING SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Turtle Mountain.

MR. D. ROCAN: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

I welcome the opportunity of addressing the Third Session of the Thirty-Third Legislature.

My freshman speech outlines the privileges of representing the constituency of Turtle Mountain for the first time. It was with great anticipation and much promise that I felt very confident that my constituents would be well represented.

In my sophomore year, I was a little less naive, recognizing that not all promises are meant to be carried out. Now, as I enter my third year, I would have liked to have been able to bring congratulations from my constituents to the Government of Manitoba. However, there is nothing to congratulate them for. They have promised everything and they have delivered nothing and it has cost everybody something.

What kind of government is this? What am I supposed to do? Congratulate them for the massive losses in MTX, the total disarray at the Workers Compensation and the losses that have been incurred there, the

increases in the Autopac rates? Mr. Acting Speaker, if congratulations are in order, let me offer my sincere congratulations to a government that has totally mismanaged the affairs of this province. Outstanding examples of this ineptitude are MTX, WCB, MPIC, to name just a few for starters.

I can only report that my constituents are very impressed with this government's track record. The light at the end of the tunnel is an oncoming freight train, and what a bright future that spells. The people that I represent are tired of being described as ordinary. They are unique individuals, each with a contribution to make. They are being hampered or hindered by a narrow-minded, short-sighted group of individuals who hold on to power by appealing to the herd instinct - cataloguing their flock as ordinary. Even the gays don't consider themselves out of this flock, thanks to this government's point of view.

Not only are they bankrupt in the financial sense, but they are completely bankrupt of ideas, morals, scruples, ethics and so on. Only in this government does incompetence pay rich rewards. Patronage, I can understand; stupidity, I cannot.

What has the Throne Speech given me? What do I have to take back to my constituents to cause them to be positive about their future? The answer, simply put, is nothing.

Is there nobody on the other side of this Chamber that understands what reality is, what their behavior is doing to all of us? Programs designed to make work and deliver very little mean nothing to people living outside the Perimeter. Those people do understand that to do these things on borrowed money will ultimately lead to disaster. This NDP Government is like a granola bar - some fruit, some nuts and the rest flakes.

From my constituents' point of view, mismanagement is a key problem. Taxpayers are being expected to willingly fund stupidity. A litany of examples includes Limestone, MTX, WCB, MPIC, and the list goes on and on. The Member for the Interlake would like to soar like an eagle, but he and his cronies are still turkeys. The public can't be fooled any longer.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the Premier of this province has embarked on a campaign to discredit the Free Trade Agreement, only to deflect criticism from various government departments whose mismanagement has become obvious to the people of Manitoba. Give it up, Mr. Premier. People want accountability and some actions, not your worn-out baffle-gab. Do Manitobans a favour and step down. A professional athlete is encouraged to know that he should quit before he experiences a serious decline of his talents. This case is different. The First Minister never had any talents.

People of Manitoba at some point thought that they were doing something right by electing the NDP. Never did they consider that their great-grandchildren would be paying the price for that mistake. Your spending spree has touched the pocketbooks of every Manitoban to the point where we are regarded by some as a Third World province. We thank you from the bottom of our empty pockets.

In the Throne Speech, there was reference to the procurement policies of the Federal Government. Mr. Acting Speaker, I'd like to list a few of those. I happen to get a subscription to Supply and Services. For the

month of January — (Interjection) — you got that right, Dave - rocket launchers, Mr. Acting Speaker, awarded to Bristol Aerospace, \$3,407,993 — (Interjection) — you got that right, there's more to come, Vic - crude degummed canola oil, contractor-CSB Foods, Winnipeg, \$845,570; space heaters, Mr. Acting Speaker - and these are some of the best space heaters in Manitoba - contractor-Aerotech International, \$87,160 - and the list goes on, Mr. Acting Speaker - publications, contractor-Kromar Printing, \$74,828; Kromar Printing again, \$66,063; a preliminary list of electors - and that we thought for sure we'd use after last night - Kromar Printing, \$55,195.00. The Minister of Industry and Trade should be interested in this one, Passive Solar Design Seminars, Increasing Prairie Provinces Design Awareness, E.J. Fiorucci (phonetic) and Associates of Winnipeg, \$63,284.00.

Mr. Acting Speaker, there is even more here again. Public Opinion Survey, The Future of Canadian Transportation - this one, we gave it to the Grits - Angus Reid and Associates, \$64,950; Extreme Cold Parkas, Peerless Garments, \$782,270; sleeping bag components, G III Ltd., \$403.62; military tents, canvas sections, Manta Industries, \$96,201.00.

Mr. Acting Speaker, now we'll come to regional procurements. I've got lots of them. We've got these guys dumping all over the feds, but there's never anybody congratulating them.

Data processing equipment, Digital Equipment, \$80,173; office furniture, Business Furnishings, \$47,090; manufacture of prototype and production unit — (Inaudible) — Mr. Acting Speaker, custom stainless, \$40,000.00.

And here's one we gave to a Liberal candidate, Gaber's Farm Equipment in Roblin for a grinder, \$19,200.00. So, Mr. Acting Speaker, we look after everybody.

Also, a communique from Public Works Canada, now this one I'm very proud of. It's going to the construction of research station Agriculture Canada, \$12,050,000 in the town of Morden.

Harbour Development Fisheries and Oceans, Norco Industries, and this, in the constituency of the Member for Gimli, who last Thursday stood up and condemned the feds, and yet they have just finished spending \$362,041.00.

Another one in the same constituency, Float Wharf Construction, Fisheries and Oceans, Cheyenne Construction, Arborg, \$87,095.00.

Mr. Acting Speaker, my constituents and I find one policy of the government which was not indicated in the Throne Speech per se, but was announced recently by the Minister of Health to be repugnant and unacceptable and that is a question of abortion. Mr. Acting Speaker, it is my position and that of a considerable number of my constituents who do not support abortion on demand, and I, for one, feel that the government is in no position to finance abortion on demand in the Province of Manitoba. I would seriously ask the Minister of Health to review his decision.

I feel that the position taken by Saskatchewan and British Columbia and others in which they will only fund abortion when it endangers the life of a mother is in my opinion a correct and responsible response to this question.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I'd like to draw your attention to an article done by one Louise Shanahan in Our Family. I'd like to quote, Mr. Acting Speaker:

"There is, first of all, profound disillusion with political leaders who've set themselves up as gods and give lip service to Christian morality, but who, in an effort to capture votes and enjoy continuing political power, do nothing to prevent the violent spread of government sponsored via tax dollars, abortion on demand, homosexual rights, etc."

In lieu of that article, Mr. Acting Speaker, how can the Minister of Agriculture, the Member for Swan River; the Minister of Government Services, the Member for The Pas; and the Minister of the Environment, the Member for Radisson, sit there and do exactly as Ms. Shanahan indicates is being done by some politicians, namely, expounding a Christian belief, yet at the same time sit and do nothing to stop these devastating murders from taking place?

M. le Député, serait cela une des principales raisons qui ont forcé l'ancien Ministre de la Santé à résigner son poste? M. le Député, nous connaissons tous très bien, M. Desjardins. J'aimerais ajouter que c'est peut-être le seul Ministre qui jouissait du support de la confiance et du respect de tout les membres des deux bords de la Chambre.

Peut on être véritablement surpris qu'il se soit incapable de continuer à oeuvrer au sein d'un parti qui affiche un manque sérieux de compétence et d'honnêteté?

Non, M. le Député, il ne pourrait se le permettre et je le respect d'avoir pris cette décision.

Votre parti, M. le Premier Ministre, ne peut guère se permettre de ne pas remplacer M. Desjardins, car vous avez grandement besoin de quelqu'un dans votre parti qui possèdera comme M. Desjardins de bon gros bon sens et un sens d'honnêteté et de franchise. Faites vite, M. le Premier Ministre, car votre pauvre parti fléchi de plus en plus et tel le vieux guerrier, il se voit maintenant dépasser par cette lutte qui devra entonner.

Vous avez un sérieux problème d'un manque de confiance dans votre parti. Saisissez donc cet occasion pour démontrer aux Manitobains que vous êtes sincère en déclarant une élection à St. Boniface dès maintenant.

(English translation will appear in a subsequent issue.)

Mr. Acting Speaker, the remarks from the Member for Kildonan, the click click clickety click of his jackboots from the Brooklyn Dodger or, namely, the Member for Kildonan, his remarks to the effect that if they had a majority of 10 or more seats he would have kicked the Member for St. Vital 10 times around this building for giving constructive criticism. Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, I'm also giving constructive criticism. And am I to expect the same treatment from the Member for Kildonan, who it seems is pretty brave when talking about a smaller person? Is this how this government would treat Manitobans if they had a 10-seat majority?

Mr. Acting Speaker, I'm here representing my constituents, and if the Member for Kildonan figures that he can use his strong-arm tactics on any one of my constituents, God help him, for I am slightly bigger than the Member for St. Vital.

Mr. Acting Speaker, you know when you've lost the confidence of the people when people start laughing at you. Take this for example. We all watch the odd movie now and again, but this one's called the Manitoba NDP, Hollywood North. Hollywood film producers have much in common with the NDP; they both peddle dreams. Reality is definitely not a consideration. However, the things that appear on the silver screen seldom wash in reality. The NDP never wants to be concerned with reality, continue to forge ahead.

I'd like to give you a little sample of some of their more recent productions. Mr. Acting Speaker, I'm sure you've seen the movie "Exodus": producer, the former Minister of Labour, the Member for St. James. You got to picture this, Mr. Acting Speaker. You got a giant supermarket chain, Westfair Foods of Winnipeg, and it is seriously considering moving its corporate head office to a less hostile environment, Calgary, Alberta. The move would cost the Manitoba economy 400 jobs. The question of moving arose about a year ago during a strike with the Manitoba Food and Commercial Workers last summer. The company believes the NDP Government introduced legislation during the strike providing for final offer selection, solely for the union president, Bernie Christophe.

Mr. Acting Speaker, under the terms of final offer selection, a union can demand that an arbitrator pick the last offer of either management or labour before a strike began. Management can only make the same demand with the union's approval. Add to this the payroll taxes and the hassle of dealing with an anti-free enterprise government, and it's no wonder Westfair is considering a move to Tory Alberta.

Mr. Acting Speaker, here's another one, "A Man Called Intrepid": producer, our First Minister; co-producer, the former Attorney-General, the Member for Fort Rouge. Way back in 1983, then Attorney-General first circulated a draft Freedom of Information Act. Remember all that?

The act was passed more than two-and-a-half years ago, which means it now only needs an official proclamation to make it law. The NDP Government has consistently promised to proclaim the act at several stages since it was passed. While the Provincial Government is hesitant to pass its own act, the First Minister freely uses information acquired through the federal Access to Information Act whenever it suits his purpose. Ask this government what it's doing with its act, and you get the runaround.

Mr. Acting Speaker, here's another one: Chitty-Chitty Bang-Bang, producer-the NDP Manitoba government. The NDP first came in power in 1969 after promising a government takeover of auto insurance. This much-ballyhooed initiative has finally come back to haunt the NDP Government. Right Harry? Just last month, the Manitoba Government announced an average increase of 24 percent in auto insurance rates. While provincial officials argue that Autopac rates are among the lowest in the country, other surveys suggest that the premiums for a Winnipeg driver are higher than those paid by motorists in Calgary and Ottawa. Clearly, in this government, what goes down must come up.

Un autre en français, M. le Député. C'est le NPD, le Pont d'Or du Premier Ministre. Le NPD ne s'en est jamais caché. Il croit que les dépenses

gouvernementaux très élevées sont essentielles à la mise en oeuvre d'un programme socialiste. D'effet, le gouvernement du Manitoba vient de donner une démonstration éclatante à ce principe.

À Selkirk, ville natale du Premier Ministre Pawley, le gouvernement a déterminé qu'il était nécessaire de construire un deuxième pont traversant la Rivière Rouge.

Le meilleur emplacement sur les plans de la circulation et de la construction se trouve près du pont Lockport actuel au sud de la ville.

Au lieu de cela des facteurs politiques ont entraînés le choix d'un emplacement trois milles plus au nord.

Le nouveau pont abouti au beau milieu d'un district agricole, bien loin des gens qu'il est sensé de servir et bien loin des routes d'accès.

Actuellement la seule route allant de Selkirk à ce pont au long la rivière, elle ne comporte pas des glissières de sécurités. Il faudra également construire des routes d'accès convenable. En fait on prévoit une route à quatre voies de servir ce pont à deux voies.

L'emplacement de ce pont soulève d'autres questions intéressantes. Comme il est situé au nord d'un quai établi, il faudra le construire à 70 pieds dans les airs. L'emplacement original n'avait pas ce problème.

Le pont aura 3,000 pieds de longueur, deux fois plus que si que serait nécessaire à l'emplacement original.

Le gouvernement justifie la construction de ce pont par la nécessité d'accueillir la croissante de Selkirk. Croissance pour temps, à peine mesurable.

Finalement, pour ajouter à cette collection des gaffes socialiste, le gouvernement du Manitoba vient d'annoncer qu'un nouveau pont serait construit à Lockport.

L'emplacement où le pont de M. le Premier Ministre aurait dû être construit dès le départ. Le pont de M. Pawley est à l'image de son gouvernement. Il coûte trop chère, il n'est pas à sa place, et il n'est nulle part.

(English translation will appear in a subsequent issue.)

Mr. Acting Speaker, this government doesn't deserve our support. It is tired, void of ideas, and lacks the confidence of the people of Manitoba. That is why, Mr. Acting Speaker, I supported the non-confidence motion put forward by my leader.

MR. ACTING SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Government Services.

HON. H. HARAPIAK: Mr. Acting Speaker, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to stand and support the Speech from the Throne. I am pleased to once again be in the Legislature representing the constituency of The Pas. In the constituency of The Pas, Mr. Acting Speaker, there are a lot of economic opportunities taking place at this time. Ecolaire is a manufacturing firm that has been set up in The Pas to deal with the construction or manufacturing of the spillway gate for limestone. There have been 50 new jobs created because of the new corporation that was started up in the constituency of The Pas.

Manfor also is operating on a profit basis at this time. We have heard a lot of talk from the members of the Opposition that Manfor should be sold because it was

a drain on the taxpayers of the province. I want to assure you, Mr. Acting Speaker, that through the cooperation of all who are involved with Manfor, and that's including the unions, management, the board of directors and the government; they have turned that place around and now we are operating on a profit basis.

We know that there is a need for more capital infusion to continue with the viability of Manfor because there is a need to utilize the hard woods that are available in the surrounding area. There are serious buyers that are looking at Manfor. We are not afraid to look at people who are willing to come into the province and make an investment, and ensure the viability of the corporation and the viability of the jobs that are going to be continued. We are not afraid of looking at joint ventures either, so whatever way we can go to improve the situation at Manfor, then we certainly will be looking at that.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to just touch for a few moments on the Olympics that are going on in Calgary. I was extremely proud to be a member of the community when the torchbearers came to the Legislature and came here carrying the flame with the theme of "Share the Flame." I was extremely proud to be a Canadian when the opening ceremonies of the Olympics were taking place. It certainly was heartwarming for us as Canadians to be hosting the Olympics. I have a special interest in the Olympics at this time because there is a young man from The Pas, who is a member of the Olympic hockey team, Vaughn Karpan, has been a member of the Olympic hockey team for the last two Olympic series. I know he has been quite a contribution to the Olympic hockey team, and we are quite proud of him as resident of The Pas and as a Manitoban.

A MEMBER: That's right, what about that bobsledder from Emerson there? He doesn't even talk about him.

HON. H. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, I would like to talk for a few minutes on an issue that has been very much in the minds of many Manitobans and, because of that, it has also been in the minds of many Canadians and that's the whole area of auto insurance.

There are many of my constituents who have raised concerns about increase in the rates that took place recently. It is good to have an opportunity to discuss them, to give the people an opportunity to make a comparison of what is going on in the private insurance industry in other provinces, and some of the coverages that are available to Manitobans, in comparison to what is available to citizens of other provinces through the private insurance sector. I know there have been many articles in the papers recently.

The Member for Dauphin pointed out last night some of the horror stories that have been shared through the media. As he mentioned, the media was before this time giving it a one-sided approach to the whole discussion and they were really condemning the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for increasing the rates. But after you go out and bring out the information and share with people what is going on in the whole insurance industry right across Manitoba and the whole world, they'll see that there is no basis for

the complaints that have been carried on throughout the discussions.

I would like also to touch briefly on the mining industry which is really showing a remarkable recovery after a few years that they weren't doing very well. The Minister of Energy and Mines made an announcement yesterday about the healthy position the industry was viewed in at this time.

Madam Speaker, I want to get back to the Speech from the Throne. The Speech from the Throne again expresses our government's continuing commitment to creative job training, improved human services and meeting the challenges facing the health care system in this province. The health care system has been meeting the needs of Manitobans, but we recognize there is a need for reform. We know that the Minister we have at this time, the Minister of Health, will be working in a cooperative method with all sectors of the health industry to try and bring around the changes that are necessary, because we cannot continue to have the health industry increase in cost the way it has over the last 10 years.

As well, Mr. Acting Speaker, I'd like to applaud the government's effort in preserving the rural lifestyle, which is attempting to assist the farming community at a time when the agricultural industry is in a crisis.

I know there are many speeches made during this Speech from the Throne which addressed another area that is of concern to Manitobans, and that is the whole area of free trade. Mr. Acting Speaker, we are not opposed to the concept of free trade. As a matter of fact, our Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology, the Minister of Energy and Mines, and the Premier have been travelling across many parts of the world, trying to increase freer trade. But what we are opposed to is the Reagan-Mulroney trade deal that was negotiated at the end of this past year.

I don't want to go into details on my personal objections to the free trade. However, I will state simply that I am in favour of reduced tariffs and reducing trade barriers between Canada and other countries, but not at the risk of losing our identity as a country or as Canadians, and also in affecting our ability to control our natural resources, our waters, our energy supplies in a way that we, as Canadians, can control and shape our own future.

I would like to, particularly at this time, make a few comments about the Workers Compensation system. Mr. Acting Speaker, looking back historically at the roots of the Workers Compensation in our province as well as in the rest of Canada, two of the five cornerstones of the system were based on the concept of compromise, with labour giving up the right to sue and industry giving up the right to plead no-fault as a defence. These were indeed commendable compromises. They provided the injured worker with a system where they could ensure continued income during the time of a disability while, at the same time, they were protecting the employer from a costly law suit which potentially could break the financial backs of many small businesses.

As the system was based on an injury system rather than an adversarial system, the expenditures were directly distributed to the participants, avoiding the spin-off costs of legal and medical advocacy groups. Also, it eliminated lengthy court processes. The founding

concepts of Workers Compensation were both humane and cost-effective.

During the evolution of compensation in our province, the various boards of the day have tried to structure a reasonable balance between both the concerns of industry and the concerns of the working men and women in this province.

Reflecting on the development during the first few decades of Workers Compensation, it is apparent in retrospect that the balance of the scales were quite often balanced in favour of industry, but over time as labour became more organized and the advocacy of labour representation has come down to a fair representation, there's more equal balance to the Workers Compensation system now than there was in early times.

During the time of the Conservative regime, there was a lot of controversy surrounding the Workers Compensation system and in the midst of the controversy, Mr. Acting Speaker, industry raised the concerns that some compensation awards, such as heart attacks and lung diseases, were caused by a lifestyle of people, rather than dealing with smoke habits and eating habits as the cause of those injuries.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair.)

But labour was also raising an equally valid concern about industrial diseases, particularly cancer, which was caused in the workplace and that was not being recognized as a compensative part of the compensation system. It appears that over time we have made a lot of changes in Workers Compensation. I believe that the changes were brought about during the last year to deal with the Legislative Review Committee's Report.

The changes that were brought about in the board were done through consultation with both labour's representative or labour groups in the province and also industry. We brought them in and consulted with them as to who should be their representatives. I believe that the system will become much fairer because of the strong representation that is in place now from both industry's group and labour representatives. We also have a chairperson who has had a lot of experience, and I feel that he has made Saskatchewan's system a very effective Workers Compensation system. I am sure that over the next little while that members will recognize the choice that was made was the right choice to bring about the changes that are necessary.

Madam Speaker, rather than dwelling on matters which are labour, I know there are a lot of areas where there is confrontation between labour and industry. But rather than dwelling on the past and the confrontational attitude that was there, I would prefer to look forward to the future, where I believe that the cooperation will be coming forth from all members because we feel that this is extremely important to the injured workers in the province.

We are committed to providing a system that is fair to the injured workers. We want to make sure that there is a system in place that is going to be providing fair coverage to both the injured workers. Also, we want to make sure the industry is handled in a way that is not affected in any way, because we certainly don't want to be scaring away the people from the province.

We are therefore looking forward to dealing with the 174 recommendations that were unanimous when they

came forward. We know that it will be a more effective system.

At this time, Madam Speaker, I would like to urge the members to consider closely some of the programs we are delivering, to take off their blinkers and look at what's happening, what is being delivered by this program and support it when it does come to a vote.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for La Verendrye.

MR. H. PANKRATZ: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I consider it a privilege and an honour, on behalf of the people of La Verendrye, to once again be able to respond to the Throne Speech. Madam Speaker, I intend, with members in the House, to draw to the attention some of the concerns that have been drawn to my attention during the past year.

We all know that governments have a responsibility to stimulate the economy at certain times, but it is unfortunate to see this government and the way they are going about it. Their stimulation is detrimental to industry and business as a whole in the Province of Manitoba. Madam Speaker, any comments that I will be making in referring to any members as such, I hope they will not take that as a personal attack, but as the management ability, its policies, and its lack of ability to govern this Province of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, let me start off with the Community Places Program. It's a \$10 million fund and 76 percent of it has been allocated last year to NDP ridings. This is just not acceptable in a province like this. Here we have the Falcon Ski Club which has been applying for it, raised \$30,000 of its own money to get a T-bar lift in place, and here we see where the Province of Manitoba, the Department of Culture and Heritage, allocates these monies only to NDP ridings. They have re-applied, and hopefully they will be successful in their re-application. This is one of the only areas in the Province of Manitoba that had an increase in tourism, and here this province is using this funding for ridings, basically for their political advantage.

I just have to mention that last year there were some meetings at Falcon Lake - and the Minister of Natural Resources was out there at the time - in regard to increasing the costs of cottage lot owners. He was making the remark that users should pay. Madam Speaker, if users should pay their fair cost, are they paying their fair cost at Hecla? I'd like that question answered sometime during this Session. Are they paying their fair costs? I think this is a fair and legitimate question that should be answered by the Minister of Natural Resources during Estimates, and I'll pursue that as well.

Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate the Steinbach Credit Union; I want to make that public and put on record here today. We have a Steinbach Credit Union Board that needs to be given — (Interjection) — That's right, second-to-none like the member indicates. First of all, we were talking of the debentures before - somebody was mentioning debentures - that Autopac, which is broke, was giving to different communities.

Let me tell you, we have a credit union that increased its assets by over \$30 million last year. In total, it has

over \$300 million in assets right today. It paid into the stabilization fund this last year, over \$1 million. Madam Speaker, in response to some of these comments that they are making - it would be better if MPIC had no debentures out in the communities, because credit unions like this can lend the monies to these facilities for less money than MPIC is providing the money. As a matter of fact, we did have a lot of our debentures purchased by the Steinbach Credit Union. So what I'm trying to indicate to you, Madam Speaker, is that when the province is broke the way it is today, it shouldn't look at refinancing organizations, which it has basically just done with borrowed money in the first place.

The other thing that I'd like to draw to your attention at this point is that 25 percent of its loans are in agriculture - 25 percent. That's something that we in our community can be proud of, Madam Speaker.

The Premier is talking of caring and sharing, Madam Speaker, caring and sharing. My constituency does most of its caring and sharing through Lions Clubs, Legions, Kinsmens, churches and the donations from businesses. These people need the credit, not this government that is just grabbing whatever they can.

I want to give credit to these organizations in my constituency because what has this government done in my constituency in the last year? They haven't built one mile of road; they haven't asphalted one mile of road. They were going to asphalt seven miles of road. They were going to asphalt where the base has been in place for seven years and, actually, during their cuts, Mr. Premier, that was cut.

So, Madam Speaker, there was nothing in my constituency, no miles of roads constructed in the past year, but at least - and I'm trying to draw to your attention the revenues that you're gaining from a constituency like this, the revenues that you are gaining.

The Premier talks of a dream and a vision, but most people don't share that dream and that vision that he has, Madam Speaker, because it's like Peter Warren stated on his program: "This province is broke." And then, how do you get to a Premier, Madam Speaker?

I think with a little less government interference, some of these dreams could become a reality, and I would address that straight to the Premier. We all received from Inco. Ltd. a brief for the Government of Manitoba. I think we all received this brief. Inco is employing 180,800 people, Madam Speaker. What do they write in this report? What do they write? I want to quote from this report:

... and in this context of controlling costs, the trend of increases in a number of government-mandated costs are of considerable concern to the mining industry. For example, in the Manitoba Division the cost per employee for Workers Compensation has risen by 180 percent since 1980. Unemployment increased by 216 percent, and CPP costs by 97 percent. These increases occurred in a period when the Consumer Price Index rose by 49 percent."

The company's ability to maintain its competitive position as a low-cost producer is jeopardized by these inflationary increases, Madam Speaker. Inco exports the majority of its products. In the case of nickel, Canada accounts for only 2 percent of the world's nickel consumption, Inco sells about 90 percent of its nickel in foreign markets. And here, the Premier has meetings across this province against free trade - 90 percent of it, Madam Speaker.

Although Inco is the largest producer of nickel in a non-communist world - I should say Inco is in the communist world - it cannot control the prices it receives for its products and it cannot pass on cost increases to its consumers. Price levels are determined in the world market.

MR. H. PANKRATZ: Well, Madam Speaker, I know time won't permit me to go through what I would like to put on record in my speech, but in regard to Workers Compensation, Inco indicated since 1980, a 180 percent increase . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

The Honourable Member for La Verendrye has the floor. Other members who are participating in the debate have already had their turn.

The Honourable Member for La Verendrye — (Interjection) — Order please. Would the Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek please come to order, and the Honourable Attorney-General.

Now the Honourable Member for La Verendrye has the floor.

MR. H. PANKRATZ: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate your getting control of the Chamber because some of the members opposite, they are actually - well, okay, no comment.

Madam Speaker, since 1980, Workers Compensation for Inco, a 180 percent increase. Madam Speaker, why is the Cormack Report not made public? Why is it not made public? Well, maybe the Premier is going to speak after me and possibly he will refer to that. Madam Speaker, they have no authority to be in a deficit position; their mandate doesn't allow them to do that.

Madam Speaker, now I want to go back to a window manufacturing firm in the Town of Steinbach. It employs over 600 people of which most of them are in Manitoba. Madam Speaker, the last year they paid \$194,000 into Workers Compensation into claims. In the past six years, and there's been quite a growth in this industry, they paid \$617,000 into claims, Madam Speaker. I think we can again see how this is a mismanaged operation, this Workers Compensation. Madam Speaker, in spite of these kinds of increases, it still has almost a \$200 million deficit.

Madam Speaker, I want to touch on agriculture. Manitoba farmers are suffering a 4 percent drop in their net income in 1987 compared to an increase of 16 percent nationwide. Saskatchewan and Alberta had 36 percent and 15 percent increase respectfully in 1987, Madam Speaker. For Manitoba, in 1988, the outlook is even more grim with a predicted decline of 19 percent.

Manitoba had the highest level of farm bankruptcies. Madam Speaker, this government should work together with the Federal Government to try to introduce tripartite stabilization for the beef, for the honey, for the beans, and maybe even sheep, whatever they can. They should be negotiating and trying, in whatever ways possible, to reduce the costs of grain production in the Province of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, I know because I'm short of time, I won't go into it, but this land transfer notice that we received, transfer of leased Crown lands, is also a disaster. Madam Speaker, then we have Autopac, and

just Sunday, now again, what does the Free Press state? - "Autopac expected with large increases again for the next two years," Madam Speaker. I'd like the Minister in charge to tell us how many trucking firms are moving out of the Province of Manitoba, are moving their head offices to Alberta. Madam Speaker, I think in Autopac, we've just seen the tip of the iceberg.

Madam Speaker, because I have a shortage of time, I would like to indicate in regard to tourism, business and industry, let us provide a policy and a climate with an entrepreneurial spirit which will make sure that the province will benefit. We have the entrepreneur spirit but we need the support from the Province of Manitoba, Madam Speaker.

Then, Madam Speaker, we have the disaster of what's going on at the present time in regard to doctors. So the Minister says that if the doctors don't like it, they can move to other provinces. What an attitude to take from the Minister in charge of our professional people, Madam Speaker. Then we have the Minister of Health indicating, in regard to Pharamacare, that they should just go and shop around and see where they can get the best deal. Madam Speaker, this is not tolerated by the people of the province.

Madam Speaker, in regard to Telephone, yes, we do need private lines in rural areas. By all means, we need a better telephone system in the rural areas - by all means. But Madam Speaker, MTX, how many lines could that have introduced into the Province of Manitoba? How many lines could that have constructed, Madam Speaker? The losses of MTX are \$27 million just to get out of it. Those aren't the losses you had the four years prior and you didn't have a judicial enquiry. Why not? Because it would reveal that possibly you lost a hundred million dollars in MTX. That's right, another time where you are misleading the public.

Madam Speaker, I want to talk now about abortion, the one concern I would like to make on behalf of the citizens of my riding. We do not believe in denying rights to women but we do believe in protecting the rights of the unborn. Madam Speaker, I agree that therapeutic abortion must be available. There are a number of circumstances in which they are justified. I believe that Medicare should pay for those, but I do not believe that we should have an open-door policy for abortion on demand - absolutely not, Madam Speaker.

Like the Member for Virden stated, we have a number of people who want to adopt children. Those options are open, but I don't think that abortion should be another method of birth control and definitely not paid by the public, Madam Speaker.

I do believe life starts at conception. I believe this is a moral issue, Madam Speaker, so I don't believe it should be exercised as an open-door policy. Lorna Dueck, February 19, wrote a letter to the Free Press, and it states, "Thanks for life." It was in the Carillon News, pardon me, it was not in the Free Press. I wish anybody who has that paper would read it and it's a real good letter. She is a victim of one of them, Madam Speaker, and it would make it very clear to everybody.

Madam Speaker, the former Attorney-General, the Education Minister now, during his speech on Friday, February 19, how proud he was of what they had accomplished for humanity. Madam Speaker, I challenge this Minister of Education in respect to his

accomplishments. I strongly believe he must also take some responsibility for the moral decay in this Province of Manitoba, Madam Speaker.

Why have we got in the City of Winnipeg and the Province of Manitoba the highest crime rates in all of Canada - 30 murders last year - over thirty murders - the highest ratio in the province? If you are elected, Madam Speaker, you must also take some responsibility.

Madam Speaker, now we have Bill 47 last year in our Session. Also, Madam Speaker, to some degree they understated the facts in Aids, and now naturally it's the abortion issue where this government again is trying to hide itself.

Madam Speaker, on free trade, because of my time constraints I will not speak on free trade at this time, but I will take my opportunity at a later date. But, Madam Speaker, I will want to make one mention in regard to free trade and that is the Premier came all over the province - oh, I appreciate he came to Ste. Anne. I appreciate that you did; that you came to my riding; that it was one of your six pit stops. But, Madam Speaker, were there any hearings on MTX? Did you have any hearings on MTX? Did you have any hearings before the Inter-City Gas, before you were going to take over the Inter-City Gas? You sold Flyer. Did you have hearings before you sold Flyer, that money loser which is now making money? Did you have hearings?

Madam Speaker, another question to the Premier. We sold these buildings and set up a private corporation. Were there hearings before you sold those buildings, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker, 90 countries will be holding a meeting in respect basically to global free trade come the fall of 1988. These 90 countries basically that participate are all members of the GATT agreement, Madam Speaker. They are all longing for an agreement that we are now making with the United States, Madam Speaker.

The Minister of Agriculture, just before me when he was speaking, he indicated about the broiler boards and so forth, different boards. Well, Madam Speaker, I'll put on record that the chairman of the broiler board is in favour of free trade. Madam Speaker, I'll put that on record. But I don't accept when the Minister will just constantly state, what if, what if, what if. I would like him to answer what if we don't have free trade, where will we go? Where will we sell the pork? I wish that he would answer me. Where will seven out of ten hogs go to? — (Interjection) — But what will keep the United States from putting on countervailing duties? — (Interjection) — Okay, but what'll keep them from raising it? Okay, well I'm looking forward to having all these questions answered, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, industry and technology, Madam Speaker, last year, there was the opening of Versatile. You know, there wasn't one member from this government at the opening of Versatile and they're employing hundreds of people. The Premier wasn't there, he didn't have time. Obviously, he must have been busy, he must have been scheduled that day. But, Madam Speaker, this Versatile is the one that is shipping most of its products to the United States. — (Interjection) — That's right. So, Madam Speaker, I find it interesting.

Then we have the next one where the Federal Government gave a grant to build this Fripp of Fripp

Fibre Forms, Brian Fripp of Fripp Fibre Forms. So the Federal Government gave a \$656,000 grant. The Province of Manitoba borrows money to them, just borrows them the money. Okay, that's fine, but you know what the man indicated in his report? That he was looking forward to the Free Trade Agreement because it would open up the market to the United States. Madam Speaker, I think that the Province of Manitoba from now on should not give one grant to any industry that's going to ship anything across the line.

Madam Speaker, Mr. Fraser - and I want to put on the record from Western Report, December 7, Madam Speaker, where Mr. Jack Fraser, president of Federal Industries, and when he states, and I quote: "Mr. Fraser says businesses, including federal industries, are reluctant to invest in Manitoba because of the tax climate. 'What really distresses me is that I'm a strong booster of Manitoba and I've tried to stimulate the business community here,' says Mr. Fraser. 'We don't have too many large corporations, and to pass legislation and Budgets that penalize the business community, the payroll tax, the corporate tax, those are major negatives. Then on top of the taxes comes Mr. Pawley's anti-free trade message.' Mr. Fraser accuses the Premier of reversing his position from a 1985 statement that cautiously endorsed the free trade."

Madam Speaker, this Premier cautiously endorsed the free trade in '85. He came out in favour of the North American common market with other first Ministers, and now he's opposed. For a province that is almost betting its entire future on the exports of electricity to the U.S., to come out against free trade is beyond comprehension.

Yes, Madam Speaker. One more comment, then I'll - how's that? Madam Speaker, I got to put on record my local member of parliament. "The NDP Government of Howard Pawley's Manitoba is opposed the free trade deal, but the federal Tories have launched a counterattack." The Honourable Health Minister, Jake Epp, charges the Premier in this article - and I won't read it - but he charges him that he agreed to what was taking place and now he's making a reverse.

I realize that my time is cut short on me so, Madam Speaker, in closing, it is unfortunate that the members who were once most critical over the present Member for St. Vital, that he didn't see fit to vote with us yesterday. Fortunately, Madam Speaker, he will have another opportunity when this government will bring down its Budget, so hopefully he will see fit to do it at that time and have the courage. Hopefully, in the near future, we can defeat this government and we can bring a little bit more sanity back to the Province of Manitoba.

Thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Before I commence my address, I would like to thank His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor for doing an excellent job in the presentation of the Speech from the Throne, for the excellent job that he is performing as Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Manitoba.

Let me also, Madam Speaker, thank you for the superb job that you are doing as Speaker of this Legislature. Let me assure you, on behalf of all my colleagues, that we will provide to you all the support and assistance we can to ensure that you carry on in your role as Speaker of this Chamber in the most parliamentary way that can be anticipated.

I would also like to take this opportunity, Madam Speaker, to wish the Honourable Member for Charleswood a speedy recovery. We were pleased to see him join us for a few moments last night and we all, I'm sure, in this Chamber wish to extend an early return, a healthy return to the Honourable Member for Charleswood.

I want to also state at this point that I'm sure that all members in this Chamber regret that the Honourable Member for St. Boniface no longer sits in this Chamber, a member who served his province, served this Legislature, for some 30 years, served the Province of Manitoba in an outstanding manner, Madam Speaker, and I believe one that Manitobans as a whole recognize and owe a debt of gratitude towards for his service over the years.

Madam Speaker, I as well at this opportunity would like to thank the Mover and the Seconder for the presentations they made in the customary manner in opening the debate on this important Speech from the Throne.

Madam Speaker, I want to discuss with honourable members today choices, directions, commitments and actions, and I want to spend a few moments just outlining to honourable members what the priorities are, as outlined in the Throne Speech that was read to this Chamber by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, a Throne Speech that I believe, without any hesitation, represents the major areas of concern of Manitobans: health care, the issue of jobs, social services and the maintenance of social services, greater consumer protection for ordinary Manitobans, rural Manitoba and the problems confronted by rural Manitoba within the global and national scene at the present time, and, of course, the issue of trade, the issue that the Honourable Member for La Verendrye just spoke about for a few moments this afternoon - and I commend him for his thoughts - the comprehensive trade deal espoused by the Mulroney Government in Ottawa.

Madam Speaker, what is important about these priorities that we outlined in the Throne Speech is that these priorities are not simply the priorities of this government. They are, Madam Speaker, the priorities of Manitobans. As Premier of the Province of Manitoba, Madam Speaker, I have had the opportunity to travel the length and breadth of this province over the last number of months. I've had the opportunity to hear from Manitobans and to speak to Manitobans directly about their particular concerns, about their priorities, about what they would like to see by way of options and directions insofar as the Government of the Province of Manitoba.

I can tell you, Manitobans are proud of their accomplishments. They are proud of our accomplishments. They are committed to the future of the Province of Manitoba. Manitobans are proud of the fact, Madam Speaker, that, as a province, we have an economic strategy that's been well-thought-out - not an ad hoc strategy as takes place in Conservative

and quasi-Conservative governments elsewhere in this country. But it's been an economic strategy and an economic tradition that has resulted in our having one of the lowest unemployment rates in Canada over the past six years. Madam Speaker, contrary to what honourable members across the way suggest, I believe Manitobans are proud of that tradition and they want to ensure that tradition is maintained in Manitoba.

Manitobans I talked to, Madam Speaker, are proud of the tradition and the commitment to families, to children, and to seniors. They are proud of our real efforts in this province to bring about greater equity amongst Manitobans. Greater participation and greater sharing has been important insofar as the improvement of the quality of life of Manitobans, and groups and communities within this province. Manitobans that I meet are proud that they have amongst the best health care systems to be found anywhere in the world.

But, Madam Speaker, what is most encouraging is that Manitobans everywhere share my government's commitment to not rest content, not to simply retain the status quo, not indeed to share no vision, but to build upon these important things that have created this a better province for all to reside in, to make our provincial community better, to continue to strive to realize the goals that are shared by the vast majority of Manitobans.

I realize that these are not the only priorities that are being articulated in Manitoba today. I realize there are many other agendas that are being presented and being articulated for the future of the Province of Manitoba. These agendas are being presented today, Madam Speaker, and I want to talk a little about those agendas today.

I want to talk about the Conservative-Liberal agenda for this province, about this finally officially-made alliance between the Liberal and Conservative Parties in the Province of Manitoba of Progressive Conservatives and Conservative Liberals, what they are proposing for the future of the Province of Manitoba. Manitobans have known for years what the Conservative Party stands for. They know only too well what the Conservatives stand for in the Province of Manitoba. They know who the Conservative Party in the Province of Manitoba represents. It wasn't too long ago, Madam Speaker, I believe you can recall, other members of this Chamber can recall, when Manitobans received a very brief but a very painful reminder of what the Conservative Party of Manitoba stands for in the Province of Manitoba.

Now, Madam Speaker, as for the Liberals, it has always been more difficult, hasn't it, to find out where the Liberal Party stands in an any given issue. Let me tell you, Madam Speaker, that this new coalition of the Conservatives and Liberals across the way makes it much easier for us to know where the Liberals stand in the Province of Manitoba. It is once more becoming obvious that the Liberals and Conservatives, my colleague just mentioned to me, are but like peas in a pod, with the only difference being the speed which they move to force their agenda in the priorities of what they represent upon the people of this province. Let me look at the issues and let me first begin with the issue of jobs.

No government in Canada, since 1981, has done more to create jobs in this province than this New

Democratic Party Government of Manitoba. I believe that no people anywhere in Canada can be more proud of what they have done in order to ensure jobs for working men and women than the people of the Province of Manitoba. The success is well documented in Federal unemployment statistics, in reports by banks and financial institutions. Economic forecast after economic forecast give this province one of the highest rates, Madam Speaker - and let me point this out to the honourable members of the Conservative, as well as the Liberal coalition - one of the highest rates of private investment in Canada; one of the highest rates of growth in Canada; one of the highest rates of job creation to be discovered anywhere in Canada; and, Madam Speaker, one of the lowest unemployment rates to be discovered anywhere in Canada.

Madam Speaker, I don't expect for a moment the honourable members, whether they be Conservative or the Liberal member across the way, to accept my word for this, but maybe they will believe the economic and financial institutions in this country that have spoken about this subject. The Conference Board, October 1987, Madam Speaker, estimated real growth in Manitoba at 2.2 percent to have been the strongest amongst the prairie provinces. In addition, they estimate the unemployment rate to be the third lowest amongst provinces. In 1988, the board anticipates a slightly stronger real growth at 2.5 and a further decline in the unemployment rate.

Now, Madam Speaker, sometimes I am uneasy, I must acknowledge, reading bank statements and financial forecasts to honourable members, but I know that the banks and the financial institutions have a great deal of influence amongst members across the way and probably if I can read to them the financial indication from the banks and the financial institutions to the Honourable Member for River Heights and the honourable members of the Conservative Opposition, maybe they would indeed be persuaded.

The Bank of Commerce, October 1987: Manitoba still has the best growth record in Western Canada. Stronger employment growth in 1988 than in 1987 is expected to result in a larger reduction in the unemployment rate as well as a stronger growth in personal disposable income and retail sales, the Bank of Commerce.

The Royal Bank, December 1987: Real gross domestic product growth in 1987 is estimated to have been above the other prairie provinces at 2.8 percent. In 1988, real gross domestic product growth in Manitoba and Quebec at 3 percent is expected to surpass the national average and be the strongest among provinces.

Royal Bank, fall of 1987: Quebec and Manitoba will be the growth leader, says the Royal Bank, benefitting from a strong performance in their manufacturing utilities and construction sectors.

The honourable member suggests that the banks are involved in selectivity. Now we find the banks suddenly on trial on the part of the honourable members across the way.

The Royal Bank, March of 1987 long-term forecast: We continue to rank Manitoba with Ontario and Quebec as a growth leader in the decade to 1995, the Royal Bank perceives, reflecting the overall health of its economy, Manitoba's also expected to outperform the rest of the country in terms of disposable income growth and consumer spending.

Then we have the Bank of Nova Scotia: As in 1986 and 1987, real gross domestic product growth in Manitoba is expected to be strongest amongst prairie provinces in 1988. The bank also expects the unemployment rate to remain third lowest among provinces.

Investment Dealers Association, May 1987: Real economic growth in 1987 is projected at 3 percent and will exceed the national average by a wide margin. The declining trend in the unemployment rate in the past three years will continue in 1987 as the rate falls to 7.3 percent from 7.7 percent. The Manitoba economy unemployment rate is forecast to be 2.4 percentage points below the corresponding rate for Canada as a whole.

In case honourable members weren't impressed by the statements of the Royal Bank and the Bank of Commerce and other institutions, I would like to read from the Dominion Securities, January 15, 1988:

Manitoba enters its sixth year of economic expansion backed by solid economic fundamentals. The consumer sector will benefit from lower interest rates through much of 1988 and a further decline in the unemployment rate. The volume of personal disposable income is projected to rise 3.4 percent in 1988, more than triple the average for the prior two years. Then it proceeds. We don't hear anything about barren wasteland that we heard from the Honourable Leader of the Opposition in his speech. He talked about Manitoba being a barren wasteland, an economic wasteland.

Madam Speaker, I guess he was reflecting back to the years when he sat on this side of the Chamber and when young men and women were leaving this province because there weren't any job opportunities. I guess he was reflecting back to those years, Madam Speaker. I admit, they must have been painful memories for the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Manitoba workers also, states Dominion Securities, to stay ahead of inflation for the past four years with real average annual wage gains of about 0.8 percent. In contrast, the rest of Canadian workers have seen a consistent erosion of real wages in recent years - not Ed Broadbent speaking, not Roy Romanow of Saskatchewan speaking, but Dominion Securities.

For 1988, we expect average nominal wage gains of about 5.5 percent per worker. Manitoba's on track for a vigorous housing construction environment throughout the early 1990's. During the 1980's, to date, Manitoba's annual real gross domestic product rise has averaged about 3.3 percent while Canada has averaged 3 percentage points growth.

Madam Speaker, I would like to also, just for a moment, mention that it's not just the banks I referred to - Dominion Securities - but there's a recognition even in other lands of the good place that Manitoba is to invest and to grow in. Mitsubishi Bank, the trade and investment department of that bank, the largest banks in the world community today, Madam Speaker, I met with them in November. I was pleased to find that they had, in fact, circulated a brochure to their investors, along with other banks in Japan. Apparently it's not the regular form to distribute brochures to their customers about individual provinces in Canada, but they were doing it insofar as the Province of Manitoba.

What do they say in their brochure? They indicate in their brochure - they highlight work loss. I say this

to the member that is the Labour critic, who always has made a big scene about our labour laws in this province, well, the Japanese point out that work loss and strikes and labour disputes is the lowest in Canada in the Province of Manitoba. They listed province-by-province and they tell the Japanese investors, "Invest in Manitoba because its work stoppage record is the best in Canada."

They point out as well, Madam Speaker, that the basic structures of utilities and private companies handling natural gas, hydro, water, and transportation are well established, and especially energy sources like hydro and water, abundant and of low cost. Hydro - this is the Mitsubishi Bank in Japan - its cost, referring to Manitoba Hydro, is almost 30 percent lower than other provinces. Madam Speaker, the price of land in Manitoba is lower than other Canadian cities - government supports initiatives.

Although the Federal Government has a few systems to support, the Provincial Government carries out their own system; you can negotiate individually, providing a business consultant service was their first step, and other incentives are planning to support investors. They list a development agreement program, technology commercialization program, trade assistance program, debenture capital program, and consultant services. Madam Speaker, this is the Mitsubishi Bank in Japan.

I could go on, as I will be discussing later, about other initiatives on the part of other leading trading companies, other leading financial institutions and recognizing - contrary to what honourable members across the way have to say, and some of their allies elsewhere - that Manitoba is a good place to invest. Manitoba has a good job creation record and we support the Province of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, this is an economic success story. This government's economic record has been a major contributor to that success, Madam Speaker. Yet have you noticed that every major economic initiative on the part of this government has been met with Opposition criticism by honourable members across the floor? Their record during the past six years has been to condemn every economic initiative that has led to Manitoba having such a favourable economic performance record, province-by-province, across Canada.

Madam Speaker, let me read you a more objective analysis from the January issue of Saturday Night magazine: "Health, education, social services, grants to municipalities account for two-thirds of the province's \$4.2 billion Budget. Thanks to 14 years of NDP rule, Manitoba pays no Medicare premiums. They receive Pharmacare for prescription drug purchases for \$125 a year, \$75 for seniors, and rural school children get free dental care.

"The Provincial Government provides much of the funding for municipalities, universities, hospitals, non-profit day care centres. After the last Budget, the revenue sources include a wide array of inventive taxes, such as the new 2 percent levy on net income. To the extent that a Provincial Government can do so, within the federal tax collection system, the NDP has tried to ensure fairness because the government is paying directly for many services financed by municipal taxes and health care premiums in other provinces, the tax load on individuals is amongst the lowest in Canada.

"Ottawa," and I would ask the Honourable Member for Morris to listen to this comment, "Ottawa and six

provinces have all rung up higher per capita debt loads for their constituents, and last year the provincial unemployment rate was less than 8 percent. It's not a bad economic performance," states Saturday Night.

Madam Speaker, the Member for River Heights has said repeatedly, "Well I can support the government on social issues during the Session," but she said, "I'm going to vote for the Conservatives on economic issues."

Madam Speaker, I want to tell the Member for River Heights that there's no greater social issue of that in the Province of Manitoba but ensuring that the people of the Province of Manitoba are provided with jobs. I say to the Member for River Heights that the cornerstone of any responsible government and its social policy is you cannot have social justice without economic justice. Madam Speaker, what we now have arrived at is a crux of the difference between the New Democratic Party of the Province of Manitoba, the Liberals and the Conservatives in the Province of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, we have seen Liberal Party action. We have seen Conservative Party action in Ottawa. Madam Speaker, it was Liberal economic policy that evolved a national tax system where the wealthy and the powerful paid little or nothing towards taxation. It was a Liberal economic policy that took on the problem of deficits by cutting back in this country to health care and to education, to the young and to the sick in this province.

It is the Conservatives, Madam Speaker, however, that have continued that policy since 1984. The only difference, Madam Speaker, between the Liberals and the Conservatives is that when Conservatives put people out of work, they say that's business. When the Liberals do it, they feel compelled to hold a bake sale.

Madam Speaker, it's not surprising that members opposite have opposed this government's economic policy. It's not surprising that they are reluctant to praise Manitoba's economic accomplishments. But, Madam Speaker, members opposite should not tell Manitobans they support our social policies, as has the Honourable Member for River Heights, social policies, either they don't understand, don't believe in the fundamental connection that must exist between social and economic policies.

The story is familiar on health care. With what began in Saskatchewan under the leadership of the former Premier of that province, T. C. Douglas, and I would commend in fact to the Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek the autobiography of Tommy Douglas written by a former aide of his, a gentleman by the name of Wilson, I believe it is. It's an excellent book that details chapter-by-chapter the life of Tommy Douglas, and particularly a chapter dealing with his introducing Medicare to the Province of Saskatchewan.

But, Madam Speaker, I suggest the Member for Sturgeon Creek read the book, because that book documents so very well the opposition of the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party - but principally the Liberal Party - in opposing universal Medicare in the Province of Saskatchewan.

Well, the Liberals were quicker to realize that the concept of universal health care was popular with Canadians. — (Interjection) — I want to just tell the Member for River Heights, I can remember the former

Liberal Premier when he was Leader of the Opposition in the Province of Saskatchewan, kicking the door of the Chamber of the Saskatchewan Legislature in anger, in wrath because Tommy Douglas and Woodrow Lloyd were introducing full and comprehensive Medicare to the people of Saskatchewan.

The honourable member talks about social programs, Madam Speaker. The record of the Liberal Party is a sad one, not just in Saskatchewan but elsewhere when it comes to social programs.

Madam Speaker, the base of Medicare was established through the efforts of Tommy Douglas blazing the trail in the Province of Saskatchewan, followed by Woodrow Lloyd. And then later, reluctantly, Liberal and Conservative governments being dragged into supporting the Medicare system across this country, dragged into it only because they realized it was popular to do so.

Madam Speaker, we recognize in Manitoba that it is now time to ensure that the reform of the entire health care system as part of the social contract in this country, a contract that states that we are, as a nation, more than anything else entitled to ensure there's basic health care provided to all regions, points and areas in Manitoba.

The same comparable health care must be provided to all levels of Canadians at comparable levels of taxation so we can have the same fundamental program whether someone is living in the outports of the province of Newfoundland or in Sudbury, Victoria or Calgary. Madam Speaker, that has not been the direction. I mentioned the other day, the Minister of Health mentioned that since 1980, \$8.5 billion has in fact been deducted from the provision of health care and post-secondary education by Liberal and Conservative Governments across this country to make it more difficult for the smaller and poorer regions of this country to have the same decent standard of health care as is enjoyed in the larger and stronger and healthier centres of this country.

I was pleased, Madam Speaker, to be part of the last Premiers' Conference in New Brunswick, when a resolution was passed and forwarded on to the Prime Minister - we still don't have a response, but I trust it's coming shortly - demanding that section 38 of the Canada Act be strengthened, that section 38 of the Canada Act be given some teeth, beyond the nice phraseology that exists there now, to make it a legal requirement that Canadians, wherever they live in this vast land of ours, be able to enjoy comparable health and education and social services, regardless of the level of taxation, to have comparable tax levels from one end of this country to the other. Madam Speaker, that is what social democracy is about, not phraseology.

Madam Speaker, let me tell honourable members across the way and the Honourable Member for River Heights that I will spend 150 times more, 300 times more, fighting for that clause to be inserted in the Constitution, which would mean something, than to concern myself about the question of Senate reform or abolition, because it will affect people and the needs of people wherever they live and work and reside.

Madam Speaker, this contract, this commitment of providing comparable levels of health and social services has been broken as a result of the actions of Liberal Governments, followed through by Conservative

Governments. Quite simply, Madam Speaker, it's meant that Canadians in smaller centres and less wealthy provinces have had to live either with a decline in health care standards or an increase in provincial taxes or individual fees to maintain that system.

Madam Speaker, the decline in Federal Government support in this province alone amounts to the total funding to hospitals and personal care homes in the Province of Manitoba. I said this the other day. I think there was some protest that wasn't true. Madam Speaker, we'll be delighted to discuss those calculations with honourable members across the way. The total that has been removed from the Province of Manitoba by Liberal and Conservative Governments since 1980 represents the total health care funding to every hospital and personal care home in rural Manitoba or, to put it another way, half the medical fees paid to the medical profession in the Province of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, I raise this in order to focus on the most challenging issue that is facing us, and that is to maintain and sustain our health care system and work towards the reform of that health care system in view of the changing circumstances. Reforming that system will be an expensive one and, if the burden of that expense is to continue to shift onto individual provinces, then the disparities and services in this country of ours will continue to widen until our national health care system remains in place only. Strengthening our provincial health care system is going to be a long and a difficult process. It's going to mean change, and some of that change is already under way. Some are going to oppose the changes and resist the changes through fear. I understand that. Some will oppose the changes because they've never supported the notion of a universal, accessible health care system. Still others will oppose the change for a short-term political benefit. They will exploit fear, they will exploit concern. They will disguise themselves to be the defenders of the system, while attacking from within.

Madam Speaker, health reform is under way across this country, but Provincial Governments are taking different approaches. Conservative Governments, like those in Saskatchewan and Alberta, are approaching this issue as a budgetary process, slashing budgets, laying off health care workers, fighting with the nurses. The Manitoba approach is different. That is not to say that we don't have budgetary concerns, we do. They are difficult budgetary concerns that we are faced with. But I want to assure this House and you, Madam Speaker, that health care reform in Manitoba means the building of a better system, not a worse system. It means more compassionate care. It means more efficient delivery. Let there be no mistake.

We are committed to maintaining and to improving those things in our current system that are so vital to the health care and the well-being of Manitobans. But at the same time, let us make it clear that we are on the road to a better system, a system that will place a greater emphasis on prevention, a system that would be made more humane by providing people requiring care the opportunity to get that care in their own homes, in their own communities. No one likes to spend any more time in hospitals than they absolutely have to. That's why we are gradually moving, wherever possible, from the institutional care to home and community care.

We are not doing this in an arbitrary fashion. We are doing this by working with all Manitobans, in

consultation with Manitobans, cooperation, participation, but action. I believe it's an honest approach, an approach that must involve all parts of the Province of Manitoba and all providers of health care in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, I want to turn now to an issue that has captured a lot of attention in the last while. That, of course, is the issue of Autopac and the issue of the public insurance system. Madam Speaker, there has been a great deal of concern and outrage that's been expressed, not just by Manitobans but Manitobans included, but people right across North America in regard to the increasing cost of insurance. That concern and that rage is shared on this side of the Legislature as well. I share the concern expressed by Manitobans because, Madam Speaker, I recall, as the Minister who introduced the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation in 1971, when we established Autopac, it wasn't easy.

I remember the demonstrations out front of the Legislature. I remember the Opposition of the Conservatives and the Liberals. The Liberals and the Conservatives in this Chamber fought it to the very last moment and used every tactic, every rule that they could possibly obtain and then tried to invent some rules to defeat the introduction of public automobile insurance in the Manitoba Legislature. I'm sure that some of the honourable members across the way in 1971 were part of that massive demonstration outside this Legislature.

I remember, Madam Speaker, the lawyers from the Insurance Bureau of Canada sitting right up in the Speaker's gallery, day after day after day, watching every move in this Chamber, providing advice to the Opposition of the Day, meeting with the Opposition of the Day, in an effort to defeat the introduction of public automobile insurance. I remember meeting a Mr. Piper, representing the Insurance Bureau of Canada, who in the corridor was very frank and candid with me, that he was down here for one reason only, and he said it very bluntly and that is to get your job, the Insurance Bureau of Canada and their legal counsel from Toronto, from down east. So I remember that very well, Madam Speaker.

I remember the battle that went on to establish the best insurance system - and that has been demonstrated for the last 17 years in the Province of Manitoba - that can be found anywhere.

Madam Speaker, the rates in the Province of Manitoba remain among the lowest anywhere on the continent, but more important the benefits are second to none and I want to remind you of some of those benefits. Autopac's program of no-fault benefit is, Madam Speaker, matched nowhere else.

Medicare expense benefits: Manitoba up to \$100,000; Ontario up to \$25,000; Alberta, \$5,000.00. We've seen these comparisons to the Province of Alberta in the paper. I wonder why the Winnipeg Free Press doesn't compare the benefits when they want to run comparison of selected rates. Why don't they compare the benefits, the no-fault benefits in the Province of Manitoba as opposed to the Province of Alberta? Why don't we get the full story?

Total disability benefits: The Province of Manitoba, \$300 a week; Ontario, \$140 a week; Alberta, \$150 a week. Partial disability benefits: Manitoba, \$60 a week; Ontario, none; Alberta, none. Permanent employment

benefits: Manitoba, up to \$20,000; Liberal Ontario, none; Conservative Alberta, none. Funeral expenses: Manitoba, up to \$2,500; Ontario, up to \$1,000; Alberta, up to \$1,000.00. Death benefits: Manitoba, \$2,000 to unlimited; Ontario, \$1,000; Alberta, \$1,000.00.

Madam Speaker, Manitobans asked for change, I want to just mention to honourable members, in the third week in January, I toured rural Manitoba and discovered that there were concerns about the insurance system. When I came back, the Minister responsible for the Public Insurance Corporation and I discussed this long before the Honourable Member for Ste. Rose was involved with this demonstration out in front of the Legislature. The Minister responsible for automobile insurance and I agreed that there should be some changes at that time to the insurance premium system in the Province of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, Manitobans asked for changes because they believe in the system. They said good drivers should get a break and we introduced those changes and will be making greater improvements. Manitobans said that these spiralling costs cannot go on and we agreed. We set up the Kopstein Commission to look at ways to control those costs to make Autopac even more efficient. We are working with Manitobans to find a Manitoba solution to what is a very serious North American problem insofar as insurance.

Madam Speaker, I don't know whether honourable members have read the terms of commission of the Kopstein Commission, but if honourable members have done that they will see that the Kopstein Commission has been given large leeway to look at ways and means of ensuring that there be economies and maximization of benefit to the people of the Province of Manitoba.

We're doing this, Madam Speaker, because, like most Manitobans, we believe that the Province of Manitoba is perhaps the best system in this continent. We're going to make that system better, Madam Speaker. We're going to bring in changes, Madam Speaker, to strengthen that system. That's our agenda, Madam Speaker; that's our commitment to Manitobans.

What do we hear from members across the way? What is their commitment? What is their agenda to the people of the Province of Manitoba?

Well, Madam Speaker, from the Liberals we hear very little, don't we? We hear nothing when Manitoba consumers are being ripped off by the natural gas prices, until, of course, the interests of Inter-City Gas are at stake and the producers were threatened.

We hear no support for the public insurance system from the Honourable Member for River Heights. We hear no support, Madam Speaker, for the long-term interest of the motorists of the Province of Manitoba.

We hear in this Session from the Honourable Member for River Heights that seniors really aren't interested in this issue. The Honourable Minister responsible for the Insurance Corporation was condemned by the Member for River Heights for communicating with seniors in the Province of Manitoba about this issue which is of tremendous importance to the people of the Province of Manitoba.

Last Session, we heard questions not on keeping costs down for Manitoba drivers but we heard praise from the Honourable Member for River Heights about raising payments to body shops and big repair companies. That's the request we heard from the Honourable Member for River Heights last Session.

We know where the Liberals stand on public insurance, not because the Liberals here are willing to state their position publicly, but because Liberals east of the Province of Manitoba fought an election to ensure that they maintained the private automobile insurance system in the Province of Ontario.

Madam Speaker, the Liberals in Manitoba may not as usual be making their position clear but there can be no mistake about the Conservative position, and I give the Conservatives credit for this. We always know where the Conservatives stand. Unlike the Liberals, we always know where the Conservatives stand - privatize, privatize, privatize - the battle cry of Conservatives from one coast of this country to the next.

In 1971, they, the Conservatives, stood shoulder to shoulder with the insurance industry on the grounds on this Legislature in an effort to keep public insurance out of the Province of Manitoba. In 1977, one of the first things they did when they came to power was to create the Burns Commission to provide the excuse for getting rid of public automobile insurance.

Madam Speaker, that failed, and there are many theories as to why that particular effort failed on the part of the Conservatives in 1977. Sterling Lyon said, well, it's failed because Autopac was like a socialist omelet that couldn't be unscrambled. I say it didn't happen because the people of the Province of Manitoba wouldn't permit it to happen, just as they won't permit it to happen today in the Province of Manitoba. I want to warn Manitobans that they, the Conservatives, have not given up trying and they will continue to try to dismantle the public automobile insurance system in the Province of Manitoba.

The Honourable Member for Ste. Rose said on TV, in response to a question that was asked of the Member for Ste. Rose, would the Conservatives sell Autopac? The Honourable Member for Ste. Rose responded, if Autopac is not saveable, that's the only alternative. We have to get real profit orientated or, if you will, low cost because of competition back into the insurance industry in Manitoba, said the Member for Ste. Rose. The Leader of the Opposition himself says the Conservatives would introduce more private sector competition.

Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition either was not very smart when he made that comment or on the contrary was very, very smart when he made that comment. If he is being honest with Manitobans and truly believes that competition would lead to better insurance and better rates, then he clearly doesn't understand how the insurance system in Manitoba works. If he is being less than honest and remains committed to the Tory beliefs of yesterday, that Autopac should be replaced by the good old days of private insurance in Manitoba, then he's being very smart in the way that he proposes it. Let's not forget the old days.

Frances Russell, in an article in the Free Press, February 20, writes an excellent column. I'm going to read it to honourable members.

Last fall, a former Manitoban, now resident in Toronto, backed her car into another and did \$250 damage. Although she had been accident free through a 20-year driving career, her insurance company informed her that if she made a claim she would be charged an extra \$100 a year for each of the next six years. It also warned that her premium would double on top of that

if she made another claim during that time. She decided to repair the vehicle out of her own pocket.

An 18-year-old male driver from Kenora who had one accident last year is paying \$5,295 for his car insurance, driving a 1987 Ford with \$1 million public liability and \$100 deductible.

Last April, the Hamilton Spectator devoted a full page to the horror stories of private car insurance in Ontario. Here are just some of the instances.

A 27-year-old Lyndon Ontario woman, lent her 1987 car to her boyfriend. She had an accident. The car was pronounced a \$10,000 write-off. Her insurance company later cancelled her coverage because she supposedly still owed \$1.00. It was willing to renew at a new rate of \$2,300 a year.

There is no question, Madam Speaker, that Conservatives in this Legislature and elsewhere in Canada are committed to privatization, all costs.

The Fraser Institute held a conference on privatization, attended by more members of the Saskatchewan Government, by the way, as far as the information, than any other government in Canada. I want to read to this Chamber what was said pursuant to the Saskatchewan Government insurance. Speaking at the Privatization Conference was Michael Burns, the same Michael Burns that I made reference to a few moments ago, of the famed Burns Commission, the principal of the Centennial Group. He also was the author of Report for the Lyon Government in Manitoba on how to dismantle public insurance in that province. This is a Fraser Institute document. This plan was not implemented, it states, because of the defeat of the Lyon Government. Very revealing, isn't it? It didn't go ahead because of the defeat of the Lyon Government.

According to Burns: The most desirable method of privatizing a public insurance corporation is to transform it into a mutual insurance corporation. With this the policy owners become the owners. Privatization in this manner becomes difficult to attack politically because the old owners, as taxpayers, remain as new owners, as policy holders. However, the new corporation is now free from political interference and government red tape. At the same time as the Public Insurance Corporation is being transformed into a mutual insurance company, the marketplace is also open to competition. The legislative monopoly in automobile insurance is removed and any legislative advantages that the public corporation has in general insurance are removed. Cross-subsidization between different divisions of the corporation also are eliminated.

Madam Speaker, that is the hidden agenda of Conservatives in Canada; it is the hidden agenda of Conservatives in the Province of Manitoba. Madam Speaker, competition has become like a buzzword for honourable members. Who can argue with competition? We on this side of the House certainly believe in competition. We have supported competition throughout. But we also know when honourable members use that word it's a dim disguise for their own ideological fervor, to privatize for the few at all cost to the public at large.

Madam Speaker, members opposite have gone to great lengths during the past number of months to convince Manitobans that what is happening in the insurance industry is unique to the Province of Manitoba, that it is the result of some failure on the

part of this New Democratic Party Government, that it is a failure of the Public Insurance Corporation.

Madam Speaker, I want to repeat something that was said earlier in this House, and I quote: "The auto insurance industry has not been profitable in the last several years mainly because the cost of settling claims has risen faster than the premium income. Between 1982 and 1986 total premiums earned increased by more than 55 percent, while losses and loss adjustment expenses increased by about 68 percent.

For the bodily injury side of the business, under third party liability coverage, premiums increased roughly 63 percent while losses increased by almost 84 percent.

Madam Speaker, that's the answer to the mystery of losses but those aren't my words. They aren't the words of the Minister responsible for the Public Insurance Corporation in the Province of Manitoba. Those are the words, Madam Speaker, of John L. Linden, President of the Insurance Bureau of Canada and he was talking about Ontario. He was talking about the Province of Ontario, where he estimates the automobile insurance industry lost some \$330 million last year. — (Interjection) — That's right, in Ontario, where companies are asking right now in the Province of Ontario, 25, 30, 40 percent increases, carrying on, Madam Speaker, on top of 20 percent increases in each of the last two years.

Are John Lyndon and the rest of the insurance industry in Canada incompetent managers? Are they incompetent, Madam Speaker? Did they politically manipulate world rates, Madam Speaker? The Leader of the Opposition knows the answers to those questions. The Member for Ste. Rose knows the answers to those questions, if he was prepared to acknowledge what he fully knows about this issue.

Madam Speaker, what we have is a North American problem, and let the Honourable Member for Ste. Rose be honest with Manitobans that it is a North American problem. Madam Speaker, what of the Conservatives in the Province of Saskatchewan and the quasi-Conservatives in the Province of British Columbia with their massive losses and their major increases in automobile insurance premiums. In California, Madam Speaker, the projected 40 percent increase has resulted in citizens organizing the State of California against the insurance system and the factors relating to those costs.

But Madam Speaker, what of the Leader of the Opposition himself who, after consulting with his friends in the insurance industry, bragged about that consultation - and I am talking about 1986. Just before the election in 1986, the Leader of the Opposition consulted with the insurance industry. He bragged about the consultation with the insurance industry, and then he came forward with a suggestion that the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation had too large a reserve. Remember that? We had too large a reserve, and the Leader of the Opposition suggested that we should not have such a large reserve and said, I'm going to give away millions of dollars to Manitobans because we don't really need those funds and those reserves in the Public Insurance Corporation. It was give-away Gary in 1986.

Madam Speaker, does he say that today? No, he says we should have increased the rates in 1986, forgetting conveniently what he said in 1986, two months before the election in 1986. Give away millions

to Manitobans in 1986, forget the reserves. The reserves are too fat, too big. We don't need all those reserves. But today, he says we should have increased the rates. Madam Speaker, you just can't have it both ways. The Leader of the Opposition can't have it both ways, and Manitobans won't permit him to have it both ways.

Madam Speaker, where do we go from here with the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation? This is a corporation that has served Manitobans well for 17 years. It is a corporation that I believe is integral to the future interests of Manitoba. Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation has .25 billion invested in Manitoba, and much of that money is invested in municipalities and hospitals located in constituencies of honourable members across the way. — (Interjection) — Yes, rather than as they would have had that money being extracted from the Province of Manitoba and being invested in shopping markets down in Toronto and Montreal and other places where the insurance industry might wish to invest their money at a higher rate of return.

This government will do everything it can to strengthen the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, to ensure that Manitobans have the best coverage, to ensure that Manitobans are given the opportunity to determine the public insurance system they desire. This system, I am convinced, will be fought for and by Manitobans everywhere. We're going to fight for the consumers. We will succeed.

And, Madam Speaker, I wish I had more time but we'll have another opportunity, because I wanted to deal with the Inter-City Gas issue at some length. I probably will have a chance to deal with the Inter-City Gas issue, and where the Member for River Heights and the Conservatives stood on lower gas prices for the consumers of this province, and how they helped not one iota, in ensuring that the consumers of this province receive a \$38 million reduction in — (Interjection) — consumer costs.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

In accordance with our Rule 35(4), I'm interrupting debate to put the question, which is the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for St. Vital for an Address to His Honour, the Lieutenant-Governor, in answer to his Speech at the opening of the Session.

All those in favour, say Aye; all those opposed, say Nay. In my opinion, the Ayes have it.

The Honourable Opposition House Leader.

MR. G. MERCIER: Yeas and Nays, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Call in the members.

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

YEAS

Ashton, Baker, Bucklaschuk, Cowan, Doer, Dolin, Evans, Harapiak (Swan River), Harapiak (The Pas), Harper, Hemphill, Kostyra, Lecuyer, Mackling, Maloway, Parasiuk, Pawley, Penner, Plohman, Santos, Schroeder, Scott, Smith (Ellice), Smith (Osborne), Storie, Uruski, Walding, Wasylycia-Leis.

NAYS

Birt, Blake, Brown, Carstairs, Connery, Cummings, Derkach, Downey, Driedger, Ducharme, Enns, Ernst, Filmon, Findlay, Hammond, Johnston, Kovnats, Manness, McCrae, Mercier, Mitchelson, Nordman, Oleson, Orchard, Pankratz, Rocan, Roch.

MR. CLERK, W. Remnant: Yeas, 28; Nays, 27.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is accordingly carried.

The hour being 6:00 p.m., the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday)