

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, May 26, 1989.

The House met at 10 a.m.

### PRAYERS

#### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Gerrie Hammond (Minister of Labour):** I would like to table the Annual 1987-88 Report of the Manitoba Labour Board.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### BILL NO. 13—THE MANITOBA INTERCULTURAL COUNCIL AMENDMENT ACT

**Mrs. Gwen Charles (Selkirk)** introduced, by leave, Bill No. 13, The Manitoba Intercultural Council Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Conseil interculturel du Manitoba.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to oral questions, may I direct Honourable Members' attention to the gallery where we have, from the McGregor Collegiate, thirty Grade 10, 11 and 12 students under the direction of Mr. Sylvain Beaudoin and Mrs. Ellie Chambers. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson).

On behalf of all Honourable Members, we welcome you here this morning.

#### ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

#### Repap Manitoba Inc. Environmental Impact Hearings

**Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert):** Mr. Speaker, my questions strike at the centre of incompetence. They highlight the management ability or lack of same, the lack of foresight and the total lack of respect that this Government has for the people of Manitoba and their environment.

Mr. Speaker, it is bad enough this Government gave away most of northern Manitoba without first investigating the potential. In fact, they have made major changes to convert it into a bleaching plant from an unbleached operation.

The Government has continually suggested there will be ample opportunity for public input. There was a tiny ad run the first week in May suggesting that those people who wanted to participate had to write back and say they were interested by the 29th of May. A project description was filed and then there was an impact evaluation study filed. The impact study was

only filed yesterday morning and the date for closing of written submissions is the 29th.

\* (1005)

Mr. Speaker, my question is, what kind of an open and honest Government is it that fast tracks a development application for their big business brothers without even a reasonable opportunity for the public to review the application?

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment):** Mr. Speaker, I assume the Member is referring to the process from the application to change the bleach kraft by Repap.

**An Honourable Member:** He never mentioned it.

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** It was not in your question.

**Mr. Angus:** Is this a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, or a clarification?

**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus) with a supplementary question.

**Mr. Angus:** All right. My supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to this Minister is, how are the interested citizens who are going to be affected by the Repap application on Manfor supposed to make any participation in the public process when the information on the impact evaluation comes in two days after the closing of their public representation?

**An Honourable Member:** Good question.

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Speaker, if that is the case, it will be corrected.

**Mr. Angus:** All right, Mr. Speaker, we are finally getting someplace. We may find a sensitive Government. I have a document here that I am prepared to table. In part of it, it suggests that the second and final supplementary report will be submitted by the end of May. Its contents will include such things as an assessment of chlorine impact on the vegetation, risk evaluation of direct human contact with process effluent. It has not been filed yet. My question is, will the Minister run an effective ad that puts the date for the receipt of written submissions back a minimum of two weeks?

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Speaker, in terms of the process, perhaps we need to make it clear for the public and the Member opposite the process upon which we are embarked. Certainly, the information is brought forward requesting the changes to be made to the plant, and review is triggered when a proponent files a proposal for development with the Department of Environment. Only one proposal was received and that was to change the bleach kraft process, as the Member referred to.

Once the proposal is received, it is reviewed by the department and then a response is issued to the corporation to bring forward changes that the department has identified. In response to those guidelines, the corporation then brings forward its initial environmental impact assessment. This was recently received by the department and was placed on the public registry and is available for anyone who chooses to obtain that information. The next step will be hearings with the Clean Environment Commission. There will be hearings but we have not yet called for them and we have not yet made the decision if the information is sufficient to call for hearings.

**An Honourable Member:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus) with a new question.

**Mr. Angus:** Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that we are paying lip-service to a very realistic problem of cheap rhetoric and individual talk about sustainable development and environmental protection, without—

**Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member (Mr. Angus) is on his fourth question. His first question was extremely lengthy and had very little in the way of a question in it. I think it is time that Honourable Members in the Liberal Party returned to the decorum they used to talk about and placed their questions in a proper manner.

\* (1010)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The Honourable Government House Leader does not have a point of order. I have recognized the Honourable Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus) on a new question.

### **Environmental Impact Hearings Advertising**

**Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert):** I suspect that it is time that the Tory Government recognized that business and the environment must learn to cooperate, live and grow together. They do not do it by hiding information and by preventing information from coming forward.

The letter that I have tabled indicates very clearly that there is going to be an impact assessment on the Swan River Chipping Plant. There was no advertisement in the Swan River paper. The people in Swan River do not know anything about it. Will this Minister consider advertising to all of the affected people, the impact, the information that is going to be available that has yet to come in to tell them what the impact is? Will you advertise and let them know what is going on?

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment):** Mr. Speaker, this is an application to change the process at the plant. That does not change the cutting area and there is not an application to change the cutting area.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable Member for St. Norbert, with a supplementary question.

**Mr. Angus:** I appreciate the guidance of my business friends and their inability to manage the whole system because the ad clearly says there are cutting areas that are going to be affected.

My supplementary question is the ad clearly says that there are cutting areas to be affected, and my question is how on earth do fishermen and trappers know how their livelihood is going to be affected when they do not even know what area is going to be affected or how the cutting area is going to be affected when the public information is not available?

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Speaker, there will be literally months of time elapsed before a hearing will be held on the cutting areas. We are talking about a change to the plant, and I do not understand where the Member is getting his information.

### **Process Review**

**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable Member for St. Norbert, with a final supplementary question.

**Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert):** Mr. Speaker, will this Minister review the whole process of the public information, advising back to at least this side of the House and the general public what steps he is going to take to inform the general public as to the potential impact of the total project? This piecemeal approach to protecting the environment is not satisfactory.

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment):** Mr. Speaker, this environmental process, because of the importance and the magnitude of this project, will be done absolutely by the book. There will be no end runs done. We will make absolutely sure that Repap lives by every environmental law in this province. They have committed themselves to do that and we are committing ourselves as a Government to make sure that happens.

### **Repap Manitoba Inc. Cutting Areas**

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition):** The answers from the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) clearly indicate that he was not directly involved in environmental issues in the document that was tabled in this Chamber last week and signed by the Government because, Mr. Speaker, in that document, there are cutting areas that are given away to the company without any environmental impact studies, without any required environmental impact studies. The cutting areas in the Swan River area, the whole radical change in the cut area from one side of the province to the southern side has been given away in the agreement.

Would the Minister now, consistent with his discussion about a full study, stop the signing of that agreement and have a full environmental impact study of the massive change in the cutting area into the Swan River Parklands area?

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment):** Mr. Speaker, the changes in cutting area will be subject

to hearings. The question that we are dealing with this morning is the question of changing the process in the plant and that is all.

**Mr. Doer:** The agreement says that Manfor hereby grants the licence from the share purchase agreement and it gives the cutting areas to the year 2009, including areas in the provincial parks. How does the Minister say that the public is going to have input into the massive changes in the forest cutting areas, changes that we said last summer should not take place, this Government said last summer would not take place, and yet they gave it away in the middle of the night somewhere in Montreal? Where are we going to get our rights in terms of environmental assessment of that massive change—

\* (1015)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Doer:** —in the cutting area for the people of Manitoba?

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Speaker, every change in the cutting rights and every change that is indicated in the agreement is subject to environmental studies.

### **Manfor Divestiture Environmental Impact Study**

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition):** My question to the Minister is, why did the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) not say to the Minister responsible for the divestiture, you cannot sign that document until we have a major environmental impact study? Why did you sign the document before the study?

**Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance):** It is very obvious to me that Members of the NDP and the Liberals are against this deal. They do not support it.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) on a point of order.

**Mr. Doer:** The Minister is misleading the House. We were always in favour of divestiture of Manfor, not the massive giveaway of our forest resources that the Minister has tabled in this Chamber.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. A dispute over the facts is not a point of order.

**Mr. Manness:** Mr. Speaker, is there a point of order?

**Mr. Speaker:** I said there was no point of order.

**Mr. Manness:** There is no point of order. It is obvious to me that Members opposite are against this deal because as we pointed out over and over and over again that through the negotiation process the Department of Environment was very active. They laid before us the processes. They were built into the agreement.

Repap today has said on the public record they will not do anything with respect to redevelopment, with respect to cutting the forest, with respect to any portion until the environmental impact has been done and licences are granted.

I do not know what political position the Member is trying to put forward. I do not know what currency he is trying to build with whatever vested interest group in this province, but from my point of view it appears to me the Leader of the NDP (Mr. Doer) is totally against—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please; order, please.

**Mr. Manness:** —the divestiture of Manfor.

**Mr. Speaker:** May I remind the Honourable Minister that answers to questions should be as brief as possible and should not provoke debate?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, we put on the record last August we would not change the cutting area and this Minister said he was using the same criteria. I suggest to you that is not true with the document he has signed in this House.

My question to the Minister is, why did we not have an environmental impact study with public participation on the public's forest that we own before he changed radically the cutting area in our province into the Parklands Region? We will have environmental impact studies on the way in which the wood is cut, but we will not have an environmental impact study under the document he has signed in terms of the massive change in the cutting area. Why did we not get that?

**Mr. Manness:** Mr. Speaker, the Member is wrong in a number of his points in his preamble. First of all, the size of the cutting area has changed insignificantly. Manfor was given 105,000 square kilometres and the Repap agreement is 108,000, so the change that the Member talks about is insignificant.

Let me also say—it seems like the Member has got a penchant for Michael Wilson—that throughout all the negotiations the southern wood agreement never came into being, never was discussed in any consideration until around Christmas 1988. So when the Member talks about the southern cutting wood area, he is wrong. It was not on the table for the first five months of negotiation with this Government either. I do not know what it is that the political scavenger sitting across from me who is attempting to make an issue with this in the Swan River area.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please; order, please.

**Mr. Doer:** On a point of order, the Minister has just—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Doer:** —now admitted that he changed his position from what he gave in the House months after. The only

scavenger is the fact that this Government has given away our forest resources—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

\* (1020)

**Mr. Doer:** —and he is trying to say it is the same amount of area.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. A dispute over the facts is not a point of order.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please; order, please. Order, please.

### Grain Silo Project Cancellation

**Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, this Government's federal cousins have done it again. We learned last evening that a federal contract to build grain silos in Egypt was cancelled by the federal Government as a result of Mr. Wilson's Budget.

Nine workers from Egypt who were in Winnipeg to train for the project returned to Egypt last night upon learning of the decision to cancel this project. Not only will this decision affect a Winnipeg-based engineering firm, which had been retained to do consulting work on the project, it very much means that a number of lost opportunities for Manitoba subcontractors and suppliers will be adversely affected.

My question to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon), can the Minister tell the House today what this decision will mean to Manitoba and what he intends to do about it?

**Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism):** I have had discussions with UMA Engineering with regard to CIDA's cutback in this particular project. They are having ongoing discussions with CIDA over a number of projects in which they are involved. It is unfortunate that cost-cutting measures in this particular case have caused some reduction in that area, but further discussions are ongoing between CIDA and UMA. UMA is confident that, from my discussions with senior officials from that office, they will be able to replace the projects as far as job creation and other economic activity for Manitoba is concerned. We are very pleased that we have an engineering consulting community in this city and in this province that carries on work worldwide, has a worldwide reputation, and will continue to carry on projects outside of the province.

### Budget—Federal Manitoba Impact

**Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition):** We cannot accept the fact that it is an unfortunate occurrence. Can the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) tell us

what explanations he has received from the Prime Minister of this country, for once again Manitoba is to be dealt shoddy treatment?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) —(Interjection)— Mr. Speaker, if the Liberals want to answer their own questions, I will sit down and allow them to.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** We probably could answer them better than he could.

My final question to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon), when is this First Minister going to go to Ottawa and speak with the First Minister of this country to demand explanations for why over and over and over again, since the announcement of the Budget on the 26th of April, Manitoba has been dealt with more harshly than any other province in this country?

**Mr. Filmon:** Mr. Speaker, we know what the priorities and concerns of the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) are. She has said them very clearly on the record. Just 10 days ago, she said, everybody knows that Sharon Carstairs does what Sharon Carstairs thinks is best for Sharon Carstairs. That is her bottom line. So when she wants to talk about our concern for the people of Manitoba, we know what her concerns are. The people of Manitoba come last, after Sharon Carstairs and all of her own self-interests, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. We refer to all Honourable Members—

**Mr. Filmon:** Mr. Speaker, I am just quoting what she said on the record, in the newspaper and on television and radio. If she is not proud of it, then she can retract it at some point.

\* (1025)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I am bringing to the attention of the Honourable First Minister the fact that we refer to all Honourable Members in the Chamber, as the Honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

**Mr. Filmon:** Absolutely, but when it comes to quoting people's direct words, Mr. Speaker, I am doing that.

The Leader of the Opposition knows full well that her hero, her idol, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, drove this country into a debt situation that is unconscionable—unconscionable, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is that whoever was in Government federally today would have to be looking at cost-cutting measures. We are not happy that Manitobans have to bear a share of the cuts that take place.

I have put on the record that we took 38 percent of the cuts in DND spending, far disproportionate to our share of DND or any other expenditures in this country. We were not happy about that. The fact of the matter is that every other department, whether it be the Department of Energy, whether it be the CIDA, or whether it be any other Government department, cuts have taken place. I am not happy that, for instance, an engineering firm, such as, the UMA Group—

**An Honourable Member:** That is why Manitobans are happy.

**Mr. Filmon:** Mr. Speaker, I am not happy that an engineering firm such as the UMA Group, my former employers, are affected by a decision such as this. I know that the engineering firms in this province of ours, and there are some very, very good ones, they have expertise, they have technical ability that they can export throughout the world and, under those circumstances, I know that they are strong enough to compete, to get new work in the United States under the Free Trade Agreement and many other things.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please; order, please.

**Mr. Filmon:** The Opposition Members are not in touch because they should know that these firms, Mr. Speaker, are actively pursuing that work and those jobs for the benefit of the people of Manitoba.

**Mr. Speaker:** May I remind the Honourable Minister one more time that answers to questions should be as brief as possible?

### **Educational Facilities Inadequate Space**

**Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek):** I believe there is a crisis in education in north Winnipeg, perhaps not your usual crisis, Mr. Speaker. This time the crisis is in space caused to a great part by inappropriate planning, plus the abject failure of the Public Schools Finance Board to meet the changing needs of the city. Yesterday the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) released the figures for funding available but failed to stipulate the names for buildings and renovations. Margaret Scott, Stanley Knowles, Tyndall Park and Sisler High School all have something in common, inadequate space. Why is the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) unwilling to release the names of the projects, when he is prepared to give the figures?

**Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education):** For the information of the Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo), the planning for school construction in this province is not done specifically by the Department of Education. That has to be done through the local school divisions, and they have to assess their needs and propose their plans to the Public Schools Finance Board. Now, that is done on a rational basis over a three-year or a five-year period of time. Therefore, school divisions have the responsibility of projecting their needs, whether it is in the North End of the city or whether it is in any other part of the province.

Yesterday, we tabled the Public Schools Capital Projects for the year, which was certainly a fairly generous kind of program, \$27.6 million, \$2.4 million will go to the construction of backlog in industrial arts and vocational facilities. The projects that have been submitted to the Public Schools Finance Board were submitted to us to approve. We approved those in accordance with Treasury Board and the details of that announcement can be obtained from the Public Schools

Finance Board, who will be communicating directly with school divisions to let school divisions know first whether their projects have been approved or not.

\* (1030)

### **Capital Projects**

**Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek):** Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the Public Schools Finance Board, which comes directly under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach), has a prioritized list of capital projects. Will the Minister table this list in the House?

**Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education):** Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to table that list within the House, but I think it would be inappropriate for me to table the individual lists before school divisions themselves have the information. The global figure was given yesterday. Contact is being made with those school divisions by the Public Schools Finance Board, which rightfully should be done, and as soon as the school boards know whether their projects are approved and which ones are approved, then I will be happy to table that information for the Members in the House.

### **Ladco Land Development Deal Educational Facilities**

**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo), with a final supplementary question.

**Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek):** Yesterday, the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) announced a major project. Has money from this project been dedicated to an appropriate school for this area, and will the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) guarantee the schools in his Government's new subdivision will not be built until the present needs are met by the Public Schools Finance Board?

**Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education):** Mr. Speaker, the need for schools in any part of the city are assessed not my myself individually, but are assessed by school divisions in conjunction with the Public Schools Finance Board. There is consultation that takes place. Nobody in this House is going to deny that if a school is required we simply are going to sit on our laurels and not provide the building. We have to rationalize as well to make sure that school space that is available is filled adequately. If a school is required in any area of the city, in any other part of the province where there is a lack of space, where we cannot accommodate students, this department and the Public Schools Finance Board, together with school divisions, will address those needs accordingly.

**An Honourable Member:** Hear, hear!

### **St. Vladimir Cathedral Handicap Access**

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask about another issue pertaining to

North End neglect by this Government. My question is for the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson). Manitobans everywhere but particularly those in the North End of Winnipeg are feeling the impact of a very hurtful decision by this Government to disentitle places of worship, churches, synagogues, temples from access to funds under the Manitoba Community Places Program. In fact, recently the Minister herself turned down an application from the Cathedral of St. Vladimir and Olga in the North End of Winnipeg for funds to put in access for the disabled.

Given that churches in the North End particularly, but also everywhere, are central to the quality of life, central to the ethnocultural fabric of our city, how does the Minister justify a decision to give on the one hand large sums of money to elitist organizations like the Tuxedo Tennis Club and the Charleswood Curling Club, and on the other hand to deny funds for disabled access to St. Vlad's in the North End?

**Some Honourable Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation):** Mr. Speaker, I have indicated quite openly and quite publicly in the criteria that was in the guidelines for the Community Places Program, church worship area is an area that does not look after meeting the needs of the whole community. There is one specific area or interest related.

Church areas that do provide access to the whole general public, if it was a church hall that was going to allow access for day care, for seniors programs, for programs that benefited the whole community, those programs are eligible under the Community Places Program. But, Mr. Speaker, church worship area that allows just for funding for specific groups within a community are not eligible and they will not receive funding.

### **Community Places Program Worship Centre Exclusion**

**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), with a supplementary question.

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns):** Given the fact that for churches, at least in the North End, for the Minister's information they are gathering places for community groups, for ethnocultural communities, for a meeting place for all kinds of organizations in the area. Given the fact, I would like to ask the Premier that since he is from the North End and has roots in the North End and understands the issues, will he agree to overrule his Minister today and to at least agree churches that are trying to improve their churches from the point of view of access to the disabled and the elderly, to make them eligible, to allow them to be eligible for funds under the Manitoba Community Places Program?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I am very disappointed at the hypocrisy of this Member of the Legislature because under her jurisdiction when she was in Government, and probably even the Minister

responsible for Lotteries, they set the rules that determined that churches were ineligible under the Community Places grant, and they decided against churches and in favour of giving money to the Rossmere Golf and Country Club for its work. Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe the hypocrisy of this Member of the Legislature.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable Member for St. Johns on a point of order.

**Ms. Wasylycia-Leis:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely clear that the previous Government, the NDP Government, did not exclude churches from the criteria of the program and in fact encouraged the access—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please; order, please. A dispute over the facts is not a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), with a supplementary question.

**Ms. Wasylycia-Leis:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the Minister of Finance just yelled from his seat to someone on this side of the House. It may have been me, it may have been one of my colleagues, that we do not believe in church. I would ask him to stand up in this House, to not reflect on the spirituality of Members on this side of the House and to withdraw those outrageous remarks and to apologize to whoever he directed that remark.

**Mr. Manness:** Mr. Speaker, I will reflect on nobody's spirituality.

**Ms. Wasylycia-Leis:** Mr. Speaker, I will continue, although in no circumstances could that be interpreted to be a withdrawal of a remark that commented on another Member's beliefs and attitudes.

However, Mr. Speaker, I would like to get back to this important issue. It is important for the North End and I would like to ask the Premier, if he will not agree to make this change on the basis of what is important to the North End, would he at least agree to make this change on the basis of what is important to the disabled and ensuring that the disabled of our community are able to have benefit from spiritual activities in any community?

Will he agree to reverse the decision made by this Government, not this Party when we were in Government, Mr. Speaker, but by his Government, to exclude places of worship from the criteria? Will he agree to reverse that decision here and now and make it possible for churches who are trying to ensure handicap access to their places of worship are eligible for funds under the Manitoba Community Places Program.

**Mr. Filmon:** Mr. Speaker, one thing I will assure this Member and all Members of this Legislature and indeed all people of Manitoba, our guidelines will be consistent for all people in all areas, whether they live in Charleswood, whether they live in Concordia, whether they live in north Winnipeg, whether they live on Redwood Avenue where I used to live, whether they

live on College Avenue where I used to live—regardless. The guidelines, the eligibility, the criteria will be consistent right across the board in all areas of this province.

### Ladco Land Development Deal Proposals

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** I have a question for the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) in reference to the agreement between MHRC and Ladco which will see a new subdivision developed in St. Vital. The joint venture agreement entered into by this Government was in fact not tendered, but rather we heard three proposals. The proposal that was accepted was from Ladco whose president, Mr. Borger and the Borger family, who donated \$14,000 to the PC Party in 1985. My question to the Minister is, who else submitted the proposals and will he table those proposals today in the Legislature?

\* (1040)

**Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Riel):** First of all, to clarify for the Member across the way, the project is in south St. Boniface not St. Vital. So there is the first problem with his question.

The other one is during the—first of all, in this particular proposal, we circulated through the House Builder's Association a letter. They circulated it amongst their membership. Proposals were submitted to our Government and the proposal that we accepted, regardless of who donated to any particular Party, because I would suggest to the Members that the proposal that was accepted was for the benefit of the taxpayers of Manitoba, \$5 million more than any other proposal.

### Mixed Housing Program

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, on a supplementary, I would like to know who the other proposals are. This agreement has no real commitment to any potential provincial housing assistance programs in that area. I quote Clause 23 which states, "The provision of the building lots suitable for any specific housing assistance program that may"—and I emphasize may—"be made available to purchasers by the Province of Manitoba is given full consideration." Where is the commitment to mixed housing programs in this area?

**Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Housing):** First of all, when the proposals were looked at and all the proposals were looked at, we considered that we would use the funding and the profits from this particular proposal to subsidize all housing throughout Manitoba. We have not cut back on any of our housing. In other words, we will probably increase our housing with the monies that are subsidized through this particular housing development.

It is a good proposal. It is the best one we had received on the table. It is far superior to the proposal

by the previous Government that they had looked at under the previous Government, far superior by \$5 million.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), with a final supplementary question.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, still who were the other two bidders?

### Infill Housing Program Statistics

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** What is the Minister doing for the Inner City? In the '88-89 Housing Estimates, he made a commitment originally of 20 infill houses. I then brought to his attention that in the supplementary information it says 50. He then said that it was a misprint, that in fact he would like—and maybe I should quote. The Minister said—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please; order, please. Would the Honourable Member kindly put his question now?

**Mr. Lamoureux:** The Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) committed himself to 38 infill housing. Not one infill house was built in the '88-89 fiscal year. Has this Minister or has this Government abandoned the infill housing program?

**Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Housing):** First of all, the answer is no and if the Honourable Member across the way will look at the press release of February 16 showing that this year we will probably be building in subsidized housing—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The Honourable Minister of Housing.

**Mr. Ducharme:** We will be representing some 1,225 units targeting to low- and moderate-income Manitobans at a cost of \$73 million. This is concurrent with any other year that any of the MHRC has been involved. I must repeat, instead of selling the land for \$3.5 million, we decided that we would decide to make a profit of \$10 million and put it back into the housing of all Manitobans.

### Trapping Industry Forest Fire Compensation

**Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupert's Island):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board. Yesterday, the Minister announced plans to compensate victims of the recent forest fires that swept through a number of central Manitoba farm communities.

During the last Session, I stood in this House and asked the Minister of Natural Resources to consider compensation for Natives who lost their trap lines, camps, and equipment under similar circumstances. Is

the Minister now prepared to retroactively reopen the issue of compensation for Manitoba's northern Natives?

**Some Honourable Members:** Hear, Hear!

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Government Services):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I was very pleased to make the announcement yesterday that there will be assistance available for municipalities and local Government districts, which is the provision under the Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board. There are guidelines that are set out federally, provincially, and together with the municipalities that outline exactly what disasters qualify and in what conditions under which they will be compensated. I have outlined that.

When we talk of, Mr. Speaker, I would like to actually have participation federally for provincial firefighting, but that does not qualify, and that is why in unorganized areas where we have Crown lands that is a provincial responsibility and does not qualify under the Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board guidelines.

**Mr. Harper:** Mr. Speaker, the issue here is one of fairness. There should not be a double standard applied, one law for the South and one law for the North.

Last year, in rejecting my request, the damage done to the area was referred to as an Act of God, such as hail damage to uninsured crops, uninsured farmers. Will the Minister consider the claims of Manitobans in this case?

**Mr. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I take exception to the reference that we have a law for the South and a law for the North. This Government has been very determined in terms of treating people in Manitoba fairly all the way across the line.

What I will do though, I will check to see whether within the guidelines federally, provincially, whether there is provision that they can address that. I know that there are areas that are dealt with through the Department of Indian Affairs. The federal Government has a responsibility there. I want to make sure that there is not going to be overlapping, and we will treat Manitobans all fairly.

**Some Honourable Member:** Hear, Hear!

### **Discrimination Complaint Polo Park Shopping Mall**

**Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupertsland):** Mr. Speaker, my final question is for the Minister of Northern Affairs, also responsible for Natives Affairs (Mr. Downey). As the Minister is aware of yesterday, a number of students from Thompson were detained by the security at Polo Park, and there was no reason for detainment, other than the fact that they were Native.

Will the Minister of Native Affairs directly intervene in this disturbing issue by asking the Manitoba Human Rights Commission to investigate this matter?

**Some Honourable Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern and Native Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I take very seriously the kinds of events that take place such as are being reported today in the press dealing with our Native community, a community which I feel has every opportunity to be the same and be treated equally as everyone else in this province. I will stick by that principle and I will do whatever I can to make sure that those kinds of incidents do not take place and give them the assurances that they have every right to be in any part of this province, in any business or wherever, and no discrimination at all.

**Mr. Speaker:** The time for oral questions has expired.

### **ORDERS OF THE DAY THRONE SPEECH DEBATE**

**Mr. Speaker:** On the adjourned debate of the address of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, and the proposed motion of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs), her amendment thereto, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch) who has five minutes remaining.

**Mr. Gilles Roch (Springfield):** Mr. Speaker—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for Springfield.

**Mr. Roch:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to continue my address on this debate on the amendment of the—it is unfortunate that there is only five minutes left because I was barely a third of the way through my contribution to this Throne Speech Debate. Therefore, given the fact that I only have five minutes left, I have been forced to prioritize some of the many comments I wanted to bring out again, but there will be other opportunities within the next few days, maybe longer if the alliance holds up, to get my comments on this Government's lack of action in all areas, but specifically rural Manitoba.

One item which is on everybody's mind, a concern of everyone, is health care. What about desperately needed health care measures to alleviate an increasingly chronic shortage of health care professionals in rural Manitoba? There was absolutely no mention of that in the Throne Speech. Ambulance services in rural Manitoba are suffering. The need for doctors, medical doctors, in rural communities is overwhelming. There is an insufficient amount.

\* (1050)

In the area of psychiatry, there are only six psychiatrists to serve all of rural Manitoba. Half of Manitoba's population, which is spread out over thousands of square miles, has only six psychiatrists to serve it and what is this Government doing about it? I am sorry to say, Mr. Speaker, nothing, nothing at all. Yet in the last election campaign in a document entitled "Campaign '88 for the PC Manitoba," one of

the items was "non-monetary incentives for doctors, a proposed program to investigate the feasibility of offering office space, training, etc., as a complement to salaries."

We have yet to hear about this campaign promise. It was a good one, but it needs to be carried out. That is the difference between rhetoric and action. It has to be carried out.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker, William Chornopyski, in the Chair.)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, recently the Honourable Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema), the Health Critic for the Liberal Party, offered the Government and indeed the Province of Manitoba a proposal, an initiative that could be undertaken. The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) agreed that this initiative was a good one, that he would consider it and that he would have his departmental officials look into it. Since then, we have not heard anything from it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Liberal proposal has been well received. Again, as in all matters which are to do with rural Manitoba, the urban media neglected to report it extensively, but the fact is that the rural newspapers, the rural media, have picked up on it and look forward to it. I know my friends opposite, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so I will be brief and I will just quote a headline from one of the rural newspapers which says, "Hospital officials like Liberal critic's intern proposal."

Essentially, to sum up in a nutshell, I am quoting here so therefore I will use the name, "Dr. Gulzar Cheema said the province should offer a paid one-year internship in return for five years of service in rural hospitals." Now, it is a much more extensive proposal than that, but because of limited time I have had to put it in a nutshell. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I certainly hope that in this area of health care, as in all the other areas which I outlined yesterday, that the Government will make a sincere commitment in living up to the spirit and intent of rural Manitoba, of keeping the people there.

Given the fact that my time is up, despite the fact there are many other areas I would like to get into and there were some comments I wanted to make in French and I have been unable to—it is amazing how fast 40 minutes can go—I would like to thank you for your attention and I look forward to voting in favour of this amendment.

**Mr. Harold Gillehammer (Minnedosa):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to begin by commending you on your new position, a very difficult one and I am sure one that you will fill with great distinction. I would also like to congratulate two of my colleagues who have been appointed to the Executive Council, the Member for Kirkfield Park (Mrs. Hammond) and the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns). I am sure, with their distinguished careers in the public service of Manitoba and their experience, that they will make a valuable contribution to the Government of Manitoba.

I am pleased at this time to add my voice of support to the Throne Speech and have this opportunity to talk

about some of the highlights in the Throne Speech and of course the record of this Government.

At the beginning of the last Session, the first for this Government, I stressed the importance of having a plan, having a clear sense of direction and having a clear sense of goals. This, of course, we did and we articulated this plan for a competitive, diversified economy to provide increased job opportunities for our citizens and to pay for the quality health care, education and social services.

During this past year, we have made significant progress towards our goal, and we will continue our path to building a stronger, more prosperous province. The first challenge we tackled was Government spending which, of course, had spiralled out of control. For too many years, we had been living beyond our means to a point where we were spending over \$1.5 million per day just to pay the interest on our debt.

At the beginning of the last Session, I compared our problem with a family who, overburdened with personal debt, could not afford the very basics. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the past year we have brought spending under control. We have reduced the deficit to its lowest level since 1981. As a result, we will free up some of those dollars going towards servicing the debt so that those tax dollars can be spent on basic needs such as health care and education.

I think that in the speech that the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) gave the other day, she concentrated on how we were able to bring this about. I think there was a compliment in there that certainly we had addressed this debt reduction. The Opposition Leader (Mrs. Carstairs) said we have not been doing enough to reduce the deficit, but given the obvious constraints of minority Government, we have taken great strides in reducing this deficit.

Certainly, the Opposition Leader has not shown any fiscal leadership. She has not acknowledged that a decision to spend is a decision to tax. In the first Session alone, the Liberals advocated that over \$700 million be added to our deficit by way of increased expenditures.

Again, any decision to spend is a decision to tax. Our Government recognizes that. We also know we must continue to improve our fiscal position so that we can direct tax dollars back to Manitobans in the form of tangible, real and useful services.

We are laying the financial foundations to meet the challenges in providing for quality health care, education and social services for Manitobans for the 1990s. We have been finding and are continuing to find ways to manage better, to get more value and better services for every dollar spent. We have changed our accounting policies to more accurately reflect our financial position. We have been reviewing our management practices and there is an ongoing review of Government spending. We are spending more wisely the dollars collected from Manitoba taxpayers, and we are also returning accountability and responsibility to Government.

Through our reform of Crown corporations, we are making our own institutions more accountable. During

the last Session, we passed legislation which ensures that our Crown corporations are managed according to sound business practices and not the politics of the day.

Rate increases requested by Manitoba Hydro, Manitoba Telephones and MPIC will be publicly reviewed ensuring that those rates are based on the true business needs of the corporations, not on the political agenda of any Government.

I think that our experience from the past has shown that is a very important step forward. We have divested ourselves of ManOil and Manfor, Government-owned operations which over the years have cost Manitoba taxpayers millions of dollars. Manitobans are clearly in favour of these divestitures, recognizing that these two corporations can be better run by the private sector.

I am not sure, given questions today and in previous days, how the Official Opposition really feels about these divestitures. I question whether they have a stand on this issue. I do know that there is no question that the sale of Manfor to Repap is a good deal for The Pas, it is a good deal for Swan River and a good deal for Manitoba as a whole.

**Some Honourable Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Certainly in today's newspaper, the announcement of \$1 million for retraining of northern Natives is a very welcome thing and it has been welcomed by the people of the North. I think we have to focus on these very positive things that are happening. Certainly some of the issues raised by the Opposition are ones that are currently being looked at by this Government.

\* (1100)

We have returned sound management to Government. At the same time, we are encouraging the economic growth necessary to create wealth and jobs. Half of Manitoba's employers have been removed from the way of the payroll tax, a tax on jobs and a tax on opportunities. We have recognized the great potential of small businesses for job creation and as such are offering a tax holiday to new small businesses. We recognize that taxes have been an ever increasing burden on individual Manitobans and as such are committed to no increase in personal income tax during the first term of our Government.

We are working with Manitobans in creating opportunity in this province, we are supporting our business community. Tourism, trade and investment opportunities are being promoted. In return, the business community is showing a new confidence in Manitoba. According to a study released last week by the Investment Dealers' Association of Canada, private business investment in Manitoba will increase by 12.5 percent in the coming year -(Interjection)- Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased that your predecessor has more avenues to be heard these days and no longer is encumbered by the position that you now hold.

Businesspeople are encouraged by the progress we have made with deficit reduction and making taxes

here more competitive with other provinces. Our Government recognizes the interdependence of our economic, environmental and social well-being and as such has adopted sustainable development as our approach to economic growth. We are ensuring that development today does not jeopardize the use and enjoyment of our resources by future generations.

Our Government is also tackling the challenges facing rural Manitoba. We are committed to agriculture, the backbone of our rural economy. Farm communities in my riding are like communities throughout rural Manitoba. Our farmers have faced severe drought, low commodity prices and rising interest rates. Their declining incomes mean they have less to spend on goods and services in their local communities. Business suffers, the tax base declines and the community infrastructure deteriorates.

In response, our Government has offered immediate and long-term support to producers and to these rural communities. We are easing the tax burden on farmers. Last year we began the process, reducing education taxes on farm land by some 25 percent. This spring, we announced a further 10 percent reduction. Our Government has also taken steps to stabilize farm incomes by joining the national tripartite plans for red meat, bean and honey producers. These agreements will provide a more level playing field and help Manitoba farmers more fairly compete with producers in other provinces.

Our Government also provided \$18.3 million in immediate drought relief, including programs to help livestock producers maintain their basic breeding herds. Our Government is not only reacting but it is also undertaking plans to reduce the effects of future drought and flooding. We are developing a long-term land and water strategy which includes soil conservation, wildlife protection and a 10-year drought-proofing plan. In agriculture, as with other development, our Government is committed to protecting and enhancing our resources for future generations.

Our commitment to rural Manitoba includes working with communities to diversify our agricultural base. We are working with communities to develop new business and expand existing ones. That is why I was so disappointed when I heard the Opposition Leader's (Mrs. Carstairs) criticism of recent Government support for redeveloping Brandon's Keystone Centre. Unlike the Opposition Leader, our Government recognizes the role that the Keystone Centre plays in generating income and jobs in Brandon, and in serving the people of western Manitoba. According to a 1987 Westarc study, the agricultural recreation complex, the Keystone complex, generates more than \$50 million annually in economic activity in western Manitoba. Our Government recognizes the need to work with communities in encouraging development in rural Manitoba.

One of the greatest challenges we face are the pressures that continued out-migration places on the social services and infrastructures in rural Manitoba. We are taking steps to strengthen rural communities, including a Government-wide effort to decentralize the delivery of Government services. We have already relocated seven full-time positions to Boissevain,

sending a clear signal that local services no longer have to be provided out of Winnipeg. The continuing exodus of young people from the rural to urban centres is also causing an imbalance in rural-urban representation in our Legislature. The Opposition Members have given lip-service to these concerns but it is imperative that we act on this issue in the near future.

Our Government has more than paid lip-service to the concerns of rural Manitoba. We recognize that our road system is the life line of our rural communities, and last year we increased spending on highways to \$95 million. During the Throne Speech last week we restated our commitment to expanding and improving our road system.

We know the importance of delivering Government services to our communities. Last year in my community of Minnedosa we spent \$200,000 to renovate the Minnedosa courthouse, maintaining a service in that community, maintaining jobs in that community.

Our Government has also demonstrated its commitment to providing people in rural Manitoba with the best health care possible. Presently in the community of Erickson, for example, a \$3.8 million hospital personal care home is scheduled to open this fall. These facilities are part of our overall strategy to ensure that Manitobans living in and near rural communities have access to quality medical care.

Again, I repeat that we are very pleased about the support for the Keystone Centre in Brandon. We think that Brandon is a regional centre that we must continue to develop. I am rather dismayed the Opposition would have such negative feelings about support for that Keystone Centre. However, it is consistent with comments made last year during the election where the Opposition Leader (Mrs. Carstairs) was ready to sell McKenzie Seeds. I think that a city like Brandon needs the Keystone Centre, a city like Brandon needs McKenzie Seeds and we are fully supportive of that.

Health care is a priority for all Manitobans and our Government recognizes its responsibility in ensuring that health services are maintained and enhanced throughout the entire province. I consistently hear in here concerns about money being spent only in the City of Winnipeg for health care. It is important that we have a balance and that money for health care is also spent in rural Manitoba.

In our last Budget, we increased funding for health care by 9 percent, providing more dollars for services such as home care, health promotion, personal care homes and incentives for doctors to set up practices in rural Manitoba.

As well, we have recognized for many years the needs of ambulance services in this province have been neglected. I believe the previous speaker made some reference to this, and obviously is not aware of the initiatives that have been taken in the last few months. Last year Manitoba ranked the lowest in Canada in per capita funding for ambulance services. We have a commitment to correct this deplorable state and bring Manitoba's subsidy to slightly above the national

average. We are providing more funds to make more training available to ambulance personnel, and more important, there are funds now to reduce the cost to the patient of the long distance ambulance trip, whether it is from Minnedosa or Swan River, or where have you.

Our Government has also made a commitment to another long-standing area of neglect, mental health care. We have developed a plan to work with our community and our professionals in focusing on what services are required, and ensuring that those who suffer mental distress receive the support they need to continue their lives as independently as possible.

While addressing today's needs, we are also planning for the challenges facing us tomorrow. Last fall our Government established the Health Advisory Network. We have brought together health care professionals and laypeople to help develop a health care action plan to take Manitoba into the 1990s.

Our Government also recognizes the important role education plays in building a better Manitoba. Education is a lifelong process, preparing us as individuals to meet the challenges facing our province. Our Government recognizes that all Manitobans, whether they be teachers, parents, students, businessmen, labourers or community and industry leaders, have a stake in quality education. As a Government we have been consulting these groups to ensure that our education policy, from literacy programs to retraining to AIDS awareness, prepare us for the future.

\* (1110)

We have been examining ways to ensure that all Manitobans, whether they live in Winnipeg or Minnedosa or Leaf Rapids, have equal access to quality education. We are exploring opportunities to expand education and training programs through the latest distance education technologies.

I am very proud of the small community of Wawanesa which has taken such a leading role in distance education to help provide specialized courses for rural schools and some here for the City of Winnipeg, as well as our northern schools.

Our Government is reviewing our funding system and making it more sensitive to the great variations in need, demographic realities and local economic capacity across Manitoba. Education is perhaps the most important tool in developing the best resource we have here in Manitoba. Our greatest opportunities in developing our province lie with our people.

I am pleased that the Minister of Education has announced the global figure for funding. I would hope that Opposition Members learn what the role of local school boards are in setting priorities in terms of local building projects, and that those school boards can work with the Public Schools Finance Board in helping to make those concerns a reality.

Perhaps what has bothered me most was when the Opposition Leader (Mrs. Carstairs) referred to Manitoba as a have-not province. My Government colleagues and I disagree. We have a great deal of pride in Manitoba, and we know Manitobans share our pride and our vision of a stronger, more prosperous province.

Manitobans have demonstrated that pride. Manitobans do not feel like they are a have-not province. We have only to look at the success of the Hydro savings bonds which went on sale last week. Manitobans are responding not only to this made-in-Manitoba blue chip investment opportunity, but they are also responding to the chance to contribute to developing one of the greatest natural resources we have in Manitoba. Manitobans are proud of their province. Manitobans do not feel that this is a have-not province.

I think it is important that we talk about our vision of Manitoba and how Manitobans envision this Government as responsible and competent, one which works with the people of this province to secure and enhance a prosperous future for all Manitobans.

We recognize that we cannot do it alone. As I said earlier, a minority Government has its own constraints. But a minority Government also carries with it the responsibility for all of us to respect the voters' choice and make this Government work. Certainly we have at times demonstrated we can work together.

I think we can all be proud of the level of cooperation exhibited during the Meech Lake hearings. Certainly I, personally, enjoyed the number of days on the Meech Lake hearings with my colleagues from all Parties. I think we showed a level of cooperation there that Manitobans appreciated. That cooperation was also shown in the joint fight to save the Canadian Forces Base at Portage. Again, I think, the people of Portage, the people of Manitoba, appreciated the fact that we can work together on certain issues.

I was disappointed to listen to the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) on Tuesday respond to the Speech from the Throne in such a negative way. I recognize the role of the Opposition is to monitor and to constructively criticize Government action. I stress the phrase "constructive criticism," because I believe the out and out negativism demonstrated by the Leader of the Opposition erodes both the constructiveness of her criticism and the spirit of cooperation we have been working towards.

Certainly, that means putting the people of Manitoba first. I question the Opposition Leader's commitment to the voters. Earlier this month she was quoted as saying that she does what she thinks is best for her and that hopefully also is what is best for her Party. It is time, Members of this Legislature, for the Leader of the Opposition to ask, what is good for Manitoba? Maybe it is time for the Leader of the Opposition to put the concerns of Manitoba above her personal, political ambitions.

I contrast that with the remarks made Wednesday by the Leader of the Second Opposition (Mr. Doer). While certainly he and his colleagues have fundamental disagreements with the Government over policy and process, and he vigorously states them, he also recognized common goals and values that we all share and certainly put forward by his demonstrated ability some cooperation that is sadly lacking in Opposition benches.

All of us sitting in the Legislature are challenged to put our electorate first, to work together in the best

interest of the people of Manitoba. My perception is that the people of Manitoba believe this minority Government is serving them well. I believe they are not yet ready to pass to judgment on the Government or Members of the two Opposition Parties.-(Interjection)-It seems I hit a nerve over there. If that response is typical of the Opposition Party, that they do not want to cooperate, do not want to work jointly on issues such as the ones I cited, I think the people of Manitoba will judge them on that.

I believe the people of Manitoba are not yet ready to pass judgment on the Government or Members of the two Opposition Parties. I hope in that recognition we can all proceed to work together in offering to Manitobans the best Government we possibly can.

I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for this opportunity to put my thoughts on the record. I look forward to working with all Members of the Government and all Members of the Opposition for a better Manitoba. Thank you.

**Some Honourable Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation):** You sort of caught me by surprise. I had not intended to speak until actually next week sometime.

**Mrs. Gwen Charles (Selkirk):** There is a point of order.

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** I rely on the Deputy Speaker. When he says there is a point of order, then I will rely on that.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (William Chornopyski):** Order, please.

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I concur to you, the Opposition is not running this House you are and if you recognize me, then I want to speak.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (William Chornopyski):** The Honourable Minister for Highways and Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger) has the floor.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (William Chornopyski):** What is your point of order?

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Just to clarify the record, it is not the Liberal mismanagement but rather possibly the NDP that are supposed to be standing up next. I just wanted to make sure the record was straight.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh!

\* (1120)

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (William Chornopyski):** Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Minister for

Highways and Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger) has the floor.

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I really appreciate the unexpected opportunity to speak, and the fact that none of the Opposition Parties were ready to speak. You know, we have sort of a normal course of action that takes place. It shows why we are Government and they are in Opposition. I think that illustrates it real well.

I want to indicate that each time after each Session, changes take place in the House. I want to congratulate you, as well as others, who have taken different responsibilities, and it happens every year. It is always exciting. The one thing in the almost 12 years that I have had the occasion to be in this House, is that each Session is different. Each Session is different and changes take place. It is always a learning experience and certainly for myself, after all this time, this last year has probably been one of the most learning experiences I have gone through, having had the privilege to serve as a Minister for the Province of Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am going through a very extensive learning process right now. It is exciting and I enjoy the challenges that are there. From time to time, a person sometimes maybe makes errors, has occasions where you would like to retract some of the things you have said, but that is part of the process here. In fact, I think one of the things that is a known fact here is Hansard prints everything you say and after almost 12 years you have a lot on the record. Sometimes you look back at the things you have said and you have had to change your position. I have had to do that on occasion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think there is nothing wrong with changing a position. I think that circumstances change, which make provision for a person to change his position from time to time. I want to give you an example from the time when I first was elected in '77. I was pushing for a brushing program in southeast Manitoba and we had a program at that time where we gave people interest-free money for two years to break land and make it arable. That program was well accepted, it was good.

In retrospect, when we look at what has happened, just one year of drought that we experienced last year, I have changed my position on that. I think that we have to start developing—and it is being done by this Government—a land and water strategy where we do not take all this land and make it arable because a lot of it is very marginal soil. I think the impact of water shortages is something that everybody is very conscious of, certainly in my area.

When you look at the southeast area, we have a lot of swamps, big general swamps, the Sundown Swamp, Caliento Swamp. These were watersheds, basically, that were holding water back and it made everything work well. These swamps are virtually dry right now and what we have done, we have concentrated on drainages, we have moved the water down as fast as we can. Last year was the best lesson I think anybody could have

ever learned in terms of the drought situation. I think we have all learned from that and I think there has to be a feeling of support from all Members in the House to develop new strategy in these areas.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is not actually what I wanted to start off, but I am getting there. I want to talk a little bit about rural representation and what is happening in the rural community versus the city. We have a unique situation in Manitoba where we have one major city. I think this is the only province where we have that kind of a situation, where over half our population lives in one city. The impact of that, what is happening is that it is escalating. More and more people are coming to the city all the time, especially our young people. Why? Job opportunities. It only makes sense.

That is part of our strategy when we talk about decentralization. I think it is a very important part in terms of keeping some of our people out in the rural area. I mean, the agricultural community will function because our farmers are very efficient farmers. They have the equipment, they will produce the food, but the small communities, the service centres that are there, are gradually being depleted.

We have a number of growth centres and they are not that hard to establish, but I will tell you something. In my constituency, for example, where I have 33 small hamlets and communities—and the biggest one is Niverville with a population of 1,500 and there are only a few of them that are actually growing. Some are maintaining themselves but the majority are gradually dying down. Each year our older people are either moving to homes, young people move out to get jobs and, as a result, gradually our communities are dying.

To me, it is a sad thing. I am a rural individual, I love the rural living, I love my rural community—I live in the community of Grunthal. I think it is a nice lifestyle that I feel comfortable with, but we see this deteriorating. I think that is why the position that this Government is taking in terms of decentralization, you try and keep that lifestyle in our rural areas, I think, is a very important thing.

While we are talking about rural communities and the impact of what is happening in the rural areas, I want to talk just briefly about the aspects of the electoral changes taking place because I have been here now almost 12 years, and what has happened, this is the second electoral change that has taken place. In the first case, there was an expansion in my constituency. But in this last change, and I wish that I could change it, but the system is such that it cannot be changed if I could. They virtually annihilated my whole riding, what I have built on for years—the community contacts, the people who feel comfortable with myself being their representative.

If anybody cares to have a look at what has happened to my riding which starts right now at the Floodway and goes all the way down to Middlebro and Warroad corner, they have chopped it all to pieces. There are four different ridings now and I basically lose the base of support that I have had. That is part of politics. I have to accept it, but I do not like it. The general picture that I would like to address, and I think some efforts

were made to try and change that, I think we should have somebody on the commission who would have an understanding of the rural areas to some degree instead of just going strictly numbers game.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will be looking hopefully for some change in that regard as to how this will be done in the future. But to re-emphasize my concern about what is happening to the rural area, after this next redistribution of boundaries, we will have 31 seats in Winnipeg and 26 seats in the rest of Manitoba. I do not think that is a healthy situation.

I would ask Members that when for the future we are going to be looking for changes that they would support that because I am sure that the city representatives do not necessarily feel comfortable having that lopsided a situation develop, because I can recall when I got elected that the rural area had more seats than the city and after this change the city will have five more seats than all the rest of Manitoba put together.

I just wanted to raise that concern because there is concern in the rural community about the shift that is taking place. That is why, together with my colleagues, my Government is looking at seeing whether we can gradually change that shift so that we can take and have people feel comfortable living in the rural area. Not everything should come to Winnipeg.

I believe that many of the industries that are establishing, we can provide the same kind of infrastructure and services in the rural areas that the city is. We can provide a better way of life in the rural area and hopefully we can take and concentrate and make provisions so that the industries that want to establish, that they come out and give the jobs to our young people in the rural areas.

I have been working, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a project in the southeast area, including the La Verendrye area, for example, I think produces almost 50 percent of the hogs in Manitoba. I have been promoting the idea and working towards that aspect of it. Why should we not have some processing industry that is related to the product that we raise out there? To me that makes common sense. It makes common sense to everybody. We are not asking to have cars manufactured in my constituency, but we want to have industry that is related to the product that we raise out there.

It is this kind of concept that we have to develop. It is not going to happen overnight. What has happened with the depopulation of the rural area has not happened overnight. It has been a trend for a long time. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can assure you that I am with a Government that has vision, that is prepared to move in that direction on a long-term basis to start developing that.

In the one year that we have been Government, I feel proud of the accomplishments that have happened on this side. I served for six-and-a-half years in the Opposition when the NDP were Government. As we are paying the price for what happened with the federal Government under the Liberal years, that is how we in Manitoba are paying the price of what happened

under six-and-a-half years of mismanagement under the NDP.

So when some of the Members say that there is a marriage between the NDP and the Conservatives, not so. But I will tell you something, I would think that the NDP have a little bit more vision than the Liberals have in terms of what is good for this province, in keeping the Conservative Government in power at this time, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Keeping the Conservative Government in power at this time is the most positive thing that can happen to Manitobans right now, and the NDP realize that.

\* (1130)

I found this with interest when I listened to some of the speeches of the Liberals and they are saying—the Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles) was speaking yesterday and said, when will you give the Manitobans a chance to make that choice? They had a choice in '86, and they had a choice just a little over a year ago. People made their choice. The Official Opposition feels that there is a possibility that they could gain somewhere along the line. They want to have another election. This Government has been moving forward on their policies, just the same way as if we had a 10-seat majority here, and we will continue to that. Certainly from my departments—Highways and Transportation, Government Services—we have been working in that direction.

I want to take this opportunity to bring forward some of the concerns that are happening in the transportation industry, and I think this affects everybody. Right now we are going through the throes of deregulation, the trucking deregulation. That has been a process that was started prior to my coming into office, and we are continuing that process. At that time provisions were made and Manitoba fought hard for this, and I will give the reason for that right away—that we do it on a gradual basis. There is provision to deregulate until January 1, 1993. I want to use as much time as possible.

In spite of the criticism from other provinces that we should hasten the deregulation, some of the provinces like Alberta are totally deregulated right now. Why are we using a slower approach? Because transportation, the trucking industry, is very vital to Manitoba. It is as vital to us in Manitoba as maybe oil is to Alberta, potash to Saskatchewan. Because we have nine of the 14 national carriers located here, the economic impact is dramatic on our province and I think that by hastening deregulation—

Who are the applicants? Right now we have, I think, about 150 applicants before the Motor Transport Board that want to have the rights to operate in Manitoba. They are unhappy because it takes a long time. Who are the applicants? They are all from out of province. If we allowed this to happen, overnight we would destroy the industry. It is of major concern. So I feel comfortable that the approach we are taking on a gradual basis, in spite of the criticism we are getting from other provinces, that we are on the right track to try and help sustain the transportation industry which is very important.

We have learned in the deregulation aspect of it because our counterparts to the south in the States deregulated some time ago. As a result of that, what happened, everybody who could get a truck going was on the roads. We learned a lesson from that. We said, in conjunction with deregulation we are going to apply the National Safety Code at the same time, so there are proper inspections, that our vehicles are not going to deteriorate for safety reasons.

In conjunction with that, we are trying to develop a highway program with the federal Government under RTAC. Incidentally, the chairman of RTAC who is doing the studies, bringing it forward—and I want to go into that in a little bit more detail later on—is working as the chairman of this group who is gathering this information where ultimately we can develop a program that we can present to the federal Minister to accept some responsibility from that end of it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about Churchill. For me that is possibly the most difficult thing that I am facing in my department. Last year the excuse was used that because of the drought situation there would be very little grain going through the Port of Churchill. At the late stage in the game, we started actively working in this House trying to promote the idea. I want to say at the outset that my department has no decision-making role to play in Churchill. It is a federal responsibility. My role, and this Legislature's role basically, is involved with lobbying and trying to influence decisions that are going to be beneficial for the Port of Churchill.

The problems of Churchill stem from not in the last year or the last two years, they have been there for a long time. There has always been that hope. I had occasion, just a day ago, to discuss with interested parties about it, and we reflected back to the time when there was almost 7,000 people living in Churchill. We are down to approximately 700 at the present time. Gradually all services that basically created Churchill have gradually been withdrawn. I am talking of things like the American Air Force in there, the Canadian Air Force was in there. There was much activity going on at one time. Gradually everything has been pulled back.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in my view, we face the most crucial, crucial period for the Port of Churchill right now. Everything seems to be caving in and I feel the load pretty heavy on my shoulders in spite of the fact that I do not have a decision-making role to play in this thing. I will do everything possible to influence the responsible organizations, whether it is CN, whether it is the Wheat Board, whether it is the federal Minister, to try and see whether we can get some consideration.

I facetiously have made the remark that if Churchill was located in Quebec, it would be a booming metropolis. I say, facetiously I made that remark. That is maybe not quite fair, but one thinks that way because seemingly all the players in the game seem to be negative towards the development of Churchill. I do not know how many Members have been in Churchill from this Legislature. I would encourage everybody to get down there. It is very unique and I think it is a very positive thing out there. In the middle of a country like Canada to have an ocean port, I think should be all

kinds of reasons, in spite of the fact that our shipping season is short, but that could be extended.

There are so many problems heaped on at Churchill. I know that there is a delegation that is being planned by the NDP in terms of going to see the Ministers. I want to give you a little bit of scenario and I have mentioned that in some of my remarks in answer to a question in the House. I have met with all the players involved at this stage of the game, first time around, some second. I can assure you I will meet with all the players again in the hope that maybe some movement could go through the Port of Churchill this year.

It does not look positive. When you consider that last year we exported 31 million tonnes of grain, that the projection for this year is something like 11 million, maybe a little more, that our stocks, that our reserves are the lowest that they have been since 1954, we are looking at a very stacked deck for us to get any movement of grain through the Port of Churchill. I just want to indicate I support those who want to lobby for it because I certainly am as well.

I do not know what we can do to impress on the necessary players that they should take the limited grain that is going to be exported, to move that through the Port of Churchill. The Wheat Board has a responsibility to move the grain for the farmers at the cheapest costs, and they will not be politically influenced by any decisions. They are an independent body; they have done a good job. I think they are the most respected organization in terms of selling grain that has ever been established. That feeling is very strong with the farm community.

We have had discussions with the Wheat Board. They have indicated chances are very, very slim. Even if there is a good crop year, most of the grain that is being exported right now has to meet the already committed exports that are taking place. But the shift that is taking place, we in Manitoba are concerned about Churchill.

I know that the seaway people are very concerned because the majority of the grain is moving west right now. When you consider the capital investment in this seaway itself, or the capital investment that has been made in Churchill over the years, millions and millions of dollars have been put in there. What we are going to do, I am not sure. I do not know what can be done. I certainly am open to suggestions of any kind and encourage every -(Interjection)- I cannot quite understand what the gentleman is saying there, but one thing, in my meeting with the federal Minister of Transportation the other day—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. A point of order.

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** I am not sure whether the Member standing is—

**Mr. Ed Mandrake (Assiniboia):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, would the Minister entertain questions after his speech?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The Member does not have a point of order.

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have no difficulty with entertaining questions at any time, during

the Question Period, or even after my remarks, and especially I assume because I am talking about the Port of Churchill. The question would be related to that and I certainly would entertain any question along those lines.

\* (1140)

I just want to indicate that on my trip to meet with the federal Minister of Transportation I accepted the fact, not accepted the fact but realized the difficulties we would have in moving grain through the Port of Churchill this year. What I wanted from the federal Minister was an assurance about the future of Churchill. Is there a future for the Port of Churchill? That is the question I asked the federal Minister. Can you give me assurance that even after a year like this year, if no grain moves through, that next year we are on track and that there is a future for the Port of Churchill? I have to indicate to you I did not get that assurance. I think I mentioned that in this House. I could not get the assurance.

What I did get out of the federal Minister of Transportation, he indicated he is prepared to have his staff and my staff work jointly in terms of looking at all the options that are there for Churchill. We have also requested it be removed as a grain-dependent line. Our rationale for that is that it changed it from the pockets of the farmers into a different pocket in terms of the subsidy on it. I think that would also make division because CN has basically been very concerned about keeping it a grain-dependent line so it is subsidized out of the grain industry.

As a result—this is my supposition and I am trying to establish some figures—I think the rates they have offered for other commodities moving through there have not been competitive. When you consider years back cars were being shipped, there were all kinds of commodities coming through there, it has virtually dried up. So we thought by having it removed as a grain-dependent line that possibly if we worked jointly with the federal Government, other departments here, we could probably get other commodities moving along that line, because once that line is shut down it is a fait accompli as far as the port is concerned. That is my feeling. That is why I am very concerned we have to get some commitments now so that the Port of Churchill is going to be, maybe not viable, but I think it is part of Canada. It is part of Manitoba and we have to keep it going.

In my visit with CN, they indicated it would take approximately \$300 million to bring this line up to snuff, \$300 million. I have said from time to time CN probably—and I should be careful so I do not sound too callous on this—but CN would not mind if one of their trains went through a trestle, providing nobody got hurt. It would give them the excuse not to use that line anymore. That is my gut feeling because they would give us Churchill for \$1; they would give us that whole line for \$1.00. They would probably pay us to take their line over but I think that, like anything else, once it is a federal responsibility they have to make that commitment there, and I think we all have to work together to see that we keep the Port of Churchill alive.

Other problems that are facing Churchill right now—I will tell you that the LGD of Churchill, I think, is in the glue to the point of \$1.5 million. This is what the LGD is in trouble for. The reason for that is the federal Government feels the grant in lieu of taxes they pay, the assessment, has been too high so they are withholding some of this money. I raised this with the federal Minister and he has indicated to me to send all the documentation and he is going to look at it. If nothing is being addressed from the federal Government, the province has to pick up that portion somewhere along the line. For example, everybody knows that a municipality or a local Government district cannot run into a deficit, and they are running in a deep deficit right now. It is a major concern for us. That is just another problem we are facing in Churchill.

On top of that, when you consider the province is paying close to a million dollars a year for the maintenance of the complex we have there—that is, every year—the feds pulled a pretty smart deal. They initially, when this deal was cut, made the capital investment and said you operate it from now on in this province. I do not think it was a good deal.

**An Honourable Member:** Slickered Eddie.

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** Yes, because now we will be paying forever to run that complex.

While my colleague, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) is sitting here, another issue that is looming on the horizon is the fact that some of our health services could be cut down in that area. I want to encourage—in fact, I have not even talked to him but I will now—that we possibly go and visit with the Northwest Territories to see whether they can keep providing this service.

**Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health):** I have already done it.

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** You have already done it? It looks positive?

**Mr. Orchard:** I am ahead of you by six months.

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** Thank you, I appreciate that.

I had the occasion to meet with people from Northern Transport the other day who do a lot of shipping through there to the various Arctic points. What they are looking for is a sustained operation, not an escalated operation. If we are going to keep that thing going, some of these things have to escalate. The shipment, the activity in the North, is continuing but what is happening is that the shipping comes out of Montreal and out of Edmonton and we are sort of staying stable on the shipping end of it.

I have just briefly touched on, and I could probably talk at great length just on Churchill itself, but that is just some of the problems that we are facing. I can assure this House and the Members here that anything that can be done—I will most certainly take and do everything I can to keep the Port of Churchill going. I like the community, I like to go up there.

**Mr. Orchard:** Right, it is a great community.

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** Does the Member have a question?

**Mr. Orchard:** You are up there more often than the MLA is, Albert.

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** I believe I will continue.

**Mr. Orchard:** Yes, continue.

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** The other area of concern that I have in the transportation aspect of it are things that have been announced, Via Rail cuts, the layoffs for CN, and they impact on this province. I know that we play a certain amount of politics with it but when we consider the impact that it has on Manitoba, rural Manitoba—I should not differentiate because a job loss is a job loss to Manitoba no matter where it is, but in the city there is provision for people to be able to pick up some of this. You know, you can get a different job. In some of the places, like a community at Woodridge, you do not pick up another job, you have to almost uproot your family and move, try and get retrained so that you can get employment. These things are very dramatic.

I will not speak in defence of CN. Their rationale when I talked with them was they have to be competitive, they have to start being competitive in the transportation industry, otherwise they lose more, and more jobs will get lost, so there is a rationalization to it.

My concern is the people who are affected by loss of jobs, that we can somehow make provision to make sure they have employment. I think there is nothing more tragic in this world than somebody who wants to work and cannot get a job. We have some people who do not want jobs maybe, but when a person is capable and he wants a job and cannot get a job—and I have seen this so much in the rural areas—it is a tragic experience, people who are married, have family, the impact it has. I think it is a humbling and embarrassing experience because those people who are fortunate enough to have jobs look down at these people, not down their nose but sort of with pity. Nobody wants pity. Everybody wants to be a producer, and that is the emotional aspect that goes through that.

I can talk from experience because I have four children of my own and three of them are married. I have seen the impact of unemployment in some of these cases, especially when you have a family. A single person, like the only son I have, he trots off to B.C. and plants trees out in B.C. I do not have that much empathy for something like that because you are more flexible, but somebody that has a house, family and kids, it is very, very difficult when you do not. So these impacts of cutbacks in VIA Rail and CN, to me, they are emotional things, in spite of the rationalization for it.

Hopefully, we can encourage some kind of participation. I have some information from CN that indicates—maybe I should put that into the record while

I am here. They indicated to me when I raised the aspect of employment with them, approximately 60 percent of the employees affected are protected from such changes by employment security provisions in their collective agreement. These employees are entitled to full salary and benefits when they are not working, as long as they are willing to take work or training for work available to them in their region. Others will be absorbed into positions that will become vacant through early retirement incentives, and others will be able to work in seasonal positions that will be established and positions created in supervisory ranks. Remaining employees affected who do not have employment security because of lack of service will be laid off. They will, however, be eligible for other benefits such as supplemental unemployment insurance payments, retraining and relocation and will be eligible for recall for seasonal employment. That is the best that we have right now from CN.

\* (1150)

There is an effort on behalf of CN to try and ease it to some degree, but still it is a cutback. Again, we have to weigh the pros and cons of this. Should we tell them do not do it? If they did not do it and then they become more inefficient and more uncompetitive and lose more lines, ultimately laying off more people, it is one of the things that we have to face. So that is why I say my concern is for the employment aspect of it, that there would be some kind of provision made for the people who are affected.

Positive things I have had the experience to be involved in to some degree in the last year in Highways is establishing uniform speed limits across the province and PTHs. It is not a big thing, but it is something.

The other program of which I am very proud of is Access to Communities, where we allow PTH loading on PRs to communities with 50 population or more and with eight kilometres of a PTH. That affects about 145 communities. We are even looking at doing this for some other communities that are a little past that point providing there is justification. What has happened—and the rationale for that if I could maybe spend a second on that, is that when you have trucking outfits coming from Alberta, B. C., wherever the case may be, loading on—you know full PTH loading—they come within 8 kilometres of a community where they are delivering and they are stopped. They have to reload. So we thought this was a very positive aspect of it.

I could get into parallel parking but—and maybe I will. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will. It has been raised, and I have had many discussions about that. The one thing that bothered me is it has been policy for many years that when we redo streets in communities that we encourage them to go to parallel parking. The rationale for that, by and large—and when I started in at this thing because I support the concept of it, I sort of went to some of these organizations, or met with some communities, and ill prepared, I might say, in some cases. But because I thought it was a positive thing, that I could convince them that they should go with it.

Well, we had the Gladstone incident, and a few others. I do not necessarily want to get into the Gladstone

issue itself necessarily, but what I did after that case, I came back to staff and said, well, now you convince me why we should impose something on communities when they do not want it. I mean, if we do something, I would like to have it be a happy arrangement. Government is going to spend money in a community, the community should be happy, the people of Manitoba should be happy. Why does it have to be a fight?

You better give me reasons as to why we should do this, and I have all the background information as to the additional costs in terms of going with angled parking versus parallel parking, plus the safety aspect of it, where the accidents are three to one virtually in terms of angled parking versus parallel parking, plus the general—you drive into a town where there is parallel parking, it looks neat. They have done their beautification in the communities; it looks smart. You take some of the communities—and I do not necessarily want to pick out names—but you drive into a community where there is angled parking all over the place, it is a mess. I do not feel comfortable with it. If some of you who drive in communities where there is angled parking, you will know what I am talking about.

So I have to indicate that I do not like to be a tyrant that is going to impose some of these things on communities necessarily but, I do not think it is a—well, you know what happens, I have had cases where we did a check on one community and we found out that a third of the parking spaces that were being used were being used by employees—a third of them that park there all day long.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair.)

Well, I feel it is not the responsibility of the Highways Department to take and provide parking for the people, for the businesses. I mean, that responsibility we do not—the City does not accept that. The City does not supply parking for the businesses. I do not think that the Highways Department should necessarily supply that kind of parking to the rural areas.

Mr. Speaker, I enjoy the portfolio that I have in terms of Highways and Transportation, and Government Services as well. It is a very challenging one because what happened over the years—and I think I put this on the record before but I will again—that 1982, which was a carry-over Budget of the Sterling Lyon administration that got defeated in the fall of '81—the carry-over Budget was \$100 million for capital programs. From '82, it kept dropping every year because the previous administration did not prioritize highways. The previous Minister of Highways is the one that should be embarrassed because he lost his—

**An Honourable Member:** \$40 million in a bridge to nowhere in Selkirk from John boy!

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** From \$100 million in the capital program in 1982, we were down to \$83 million in 1987, and the challenge for myself has been to try and bring that back up because we believe that the highway infrastructure is an important part of rural Manitoba in terms of movement of goods. It is also a very important part in terms of the transportation industry

in Manitoba. I want to indicate to you that 77 percent of all traffic travels on the PTH system, 23 percent travels on the PR system, the provincial road system.

From the time that the Government took over the PTH-PR system, we still have over 4,000 miles of roads that have not been touched once. They have not been touched once.

Mr. Speaker, I notice the little sign that you gave me. We are hoping to improve them all over the place, including your constituency, but that has been one of the challenges. I wrote every Member of the Legislature, asked for roads that they considered a priority, and I have received responses. I have been trying to address them within the budget that I have—and I cannot make any comments on how much money I have until Budget day comes—but we are trying to address most of the concerns that have been brought forward.

I want to explain a little bit, for the benefit of those people who do not know how this system works. In order to get a road done, the first step has to be to prioritize it, do a survey and design. If we are going to rebuild a road, we have to have a proper design of it. We have to know how much property we need. That usually is Year 1. Year 2 is the acquisition of the right-of-way, to buy the additional property, because you are buying it off people. Not everybody is going to be receptive to it. In some cases, we have to go to expropriation, grudgingly, but that has to happen in order to keep the project going. The third stage or third year is the actual construction and grading of it. Then usually, you allow a year for settlement and ultimately you put either base and AST or pavement, or whatever the case may be on there. That is sort of the normal process that we go through in terms of highway construction.

\* (1200)

Then I want to spend a little bit of time having explained that, what has happened on Highway 75. We have indicated—and my Premier (Mr. Filmon) has indicated—that Highway 75 was a priority highway. I think it is justified to be a priority highway based on traffic counts. The kind of traffic we have, I want to indicate to you, that the Port of Entry at Emerson is the fourth highest truck point of entry in Canada. We are just getting into free trade so I would expect that would escalate even more. We certainly are projecting that there is going to be a bigger escalation. What has happened, when I took office as Minister of Highways and Transportation, there was a grading job that was imminent, which was let and took place last year. Past that grading job, there was no survey designed. There was no future plan in terms of continuation of the twinning of Highway 75.

What we have done since that time, we have hired consultants to work from both ends, from I-29 going north as well as from this point going south. We have a major, unique, problem in the Town of Morris. When you look at the location of Morris, which is right up against the river, you have three railway tracks that have to be crossed. If you go on the west side, you have the river on the east side and, if you go through

the Town of Morris, it is against the normal principles of having a free-flow highway type of thing, so consultants are working on these things.

I want to correct the Member for Assiniboia, (Mr. Mandrake), who made some statements to the *Scratching River Post* saying, first of all—and I do this with all fairness—indicating that a decision had been made. The decision has not been made to this date yet, I want to say to the Member. I was going to take some offence initially, but I have a good relationship with my critic over there. I just want to tell him that when he says that my office is not accessible, then I take exception. My office is accessible. After I read the comments in the *Scratching River Post*, I went back and I said to staff, has Ed Mandrake, has the Member for Assiniboia been here asking to see me and, if he has, why was I not notified?

I feel comfortable by their statements that maybe there has been a misunderstanding. Certainly, I always have my door open to any Member, if at all possible. You know where I learned this from? I want to tell you, you learn from other people in this building. The previous Minister of Finance, Mr. Kostyra, when he was in the House here, I was a Member of the Opposition. I could pick up that phone and talk to him anytime. Invariably he answered, he would be on the phone talking to me. I thought that was such a positive thing. I mean, as a critic in the Opposition, to be able to phone the Minister and, invariably, you get through to him. I have always felt that was a very positive thing. Why I am saying that is—and I have tried to do the same thing—that if Members of the Legislature want to get in touch with me, I get very concerned if you do not get through.

**An Honourable Member:** I am listening, Albert.

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** Okay, I have not given up yet.

Other areas I have concerns about in highways and transportation is our general infrastructure. We are falling behind when we consider that our weights and dimensions are up to some degree under the national basis. We have concerns under the national basis in terms of the hours of service. These are things we are working with, the other things—our infrastructure, the bridges and the cloverleaves. As we have escalated weights coming on and dimensions, our structures are not built for those kinds of things. In fact, many of our highways are not necessarily built for the weights and dimensions we have right now.

So it is always a catchup game. The same thing applies with municipalities. The federal Government is gradually pushing things into the province and the province, to some degree, does almost the same thing. Here are the municipalities that have a major problem and probably my colleague responsible for Rural Development (Mr. Penner) is going to be addressing it as well, but we have bridges where you have rivers flowing, bridges that are the responsibility of the municipalities. They cannot afford to build the kinds of bridges we need for the kind of traffic we have nowadays.

Just look at the kind of vehicle traffic we used to have, the weights we used to have in our trucks. A

three-tonne truck was a big truck, then it went up, five tonne ultimately. Look at the units we are hauling now. As I indicate, our roads and our bridges—we have to really prioritize highways to be able to even hold our own at this stage of the game, and the previous administration did not do that.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** I am just warmed up now.

A final comment—I could go on with this forever. If Members opposite have concerns, I want to say my door is open.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Ed Mandrake (Assiniboia):** Mr. Speaker, I have asked permission to ask the Minister some questions after he is finished.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The Honourable Minister's time has expired. Is there leave? (Agreed)

The Honourable Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Mandrake), if the Minister is willing.

**Mr. Mandrake:** There is the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) chirping again.

Just one question, several questions on the topic of highways, we have two agreements which expired in March of '89 in regard to the Port of Churchill—two agreements. Has this Minister even started renegotiating the agreements with his twin brothers in Ottawa?

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. I think the Member should be made aware of the fact there are no renegotiated ERDA agreements at all. However, on the two agreements that have expired, we have a year's continuance of those two agreements.

I have the commitment from the federal Minister that the dustproofing is going to continue, which was part of the ERDA agreement, as well as the air terminal in the Port of Churchill. He has indicated that in spite of the fact the agreements will terminate, they have a commitment to fulfill their portion of it. Certainly from our portion of it from Manitoba, we have fulfilled that. I have the assurance that the federal Government will continue their commitment.

In terms of the general agreements, we are working at that on an ongoing basis. I think it was raised in the House already whether there are going to be any new ERDA agreements or whatever type of agreements. No provinces at this stage of the game have any agreements and Manitoba does not either. It is being worked on and, hopefully, there are going to be some positive things coming out of it.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the Honourable Member have leave to ask another question? The Honourable Member does not have leave.

The Honourable Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak) on a point of order.

**Mr. Richard Kozak (Transcona):** Mr. Speaker, may I have leave to ask the Minister one question?

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the Honourable Member for Transcona have leave to ask a question? No, the Honourable Member does not have leave.

The Honourable Member for Churchill.

**Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill):** I would like to begin, Mr. Speaker, by congratulating the new Ministers in the Government benches and wishing them well in their portfolios, although not too well. We do hope that they at least try to bring forward in their new responsibilities the needs of Manitobans whom they have been elected to represent and appointed to represent in their Cabinet.

I also want to congratulate the new critics in the House on their new responsibilities. A lot of different areas have been transferred over the past little while, and it will be interesting to see how different people perform in different critic responsibilities.

I want to extend special congratulations to my new House Leader, the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) who, I believe, will earn a reputation equivalent to that of Stanley Knowles in his many, many years of service in this Legislature. I think that he has the same sort of commitment to the Rules of the House, to the well-functioning of the House, to the expedient dispatch of business in this House, and the protection of individual Member's rights in this House that has so marked the career of Mr. Knowles. I know that he will spend at least as many years in this Legislature as did that gentleman. So I want to congratulate him on that new portfolio.

\* (1210)

I want to congratulate the new Deputy Speaker (Mr. Chornopyski). I am not certain why the previous Deputy Speaker (Mr. Minenko) felt it was necessary to resign, but we enjoyed working with him. I am certain that we will enjoy working with the new Deputy Speaker as well. Of course, Mr. Speaker, as is customary and with all sincerity, I want to congratulate you on your continued tenure and again, once more, offer you my cooperation with respect to following your advice and attempting to uphold the rules of this Legislature so it functions quite well.

Mr. Speaker, I have been in this Legislature a number of years now and I have probably sat through a dozen Throne Speeches. During that time, I have come to realize that there are most likely three criteria by which Throne Speeches are best judged. The first criterion is based on rhetoric or what the Throne Speech itself actually says. Does it enunciate a vision of a better future? Does it list specific initiatives to address current issues? Are those initiatives appropriate under the present circumstances? Does it give the public an idea of what the Government is and where it hopes to go over the course of the next year? That is the first criterion.

The second criterion by which Throne Speeches can best be judged is their relevance, or lack thereof. It is not a matter so much of what the Throne Speech says,

but rather what it fails to say. Does it ignore areas of public interest? Does it miss those important public issues that one should assume any Government would want to highlight in their Throne Speech because of the significance of those issues to the general public?

The final criterion is one of resonance. That criterion cannot be judged on the basis of the document alone but can only be considered by reviewing the Throne Speech in the context of overall Government actions over a period of time, both inside and outside this Chamber. Does the Throne Speech language resonate with what the Government is actually doing? Does it reflect and rebound back?

It is easy to write a Throne Speech and it is easy to articulate a framework for any given Session in this Legislature, but it is much harder to put those words to action and to put substantive action to that framework. Mr. Speaker, it saddens me to tell you but I believe that this Throne Speech fails on at least the first two of those criteria.

(The Acting Speaker, Mr. Mark Minenko, in the Chair.)

**Mr. Harold Taylor (Wolseley):** We can embrace your concerns, I am sure.

**Mr. Cowan:** Firstly, it does not—the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) said he can embrace my concerns, he is certain. That Party makes a practice of embracing anyone's concerns at any given time as long as they believe it leads them to power. I can tell him by embracing my concerns, that is not going to move them any closer to power, so he should save his efforts.

I believe this Throne Speech fails first, because it does not identify those initiatives and actions that effectively deal with the serious problems that confront Manitobans and their families. Like the Conservative Government wrote it, it is a weak and a timid document that is built more on a foundation of fear of defeat than a plan to meet with new challenges with determination and courage.

The Throne Speech mirrors, Mr. Speaker, or Deputy Speaker, or Acting Deputy Speaker, as the case may be, that overwhelming caution, that overwhelming indecisiveness and halting timidity that has so come to characterize a provincial Government, that must always stifle its innermost feelings by rejecting the right-wing agenda that it would dearly love to bring forward, rejecting the right-wing programs and policies that Conservatives spoke so endearing about while in Opposition and would so much like to impose when in Government.

So, on the first count, this Throne Speech falls short because it lacks definition and vision. A bit of a tepid brew of lacklustre excuses for opportunities that they have lost and actions they have deferred.

However, it is on the second criteria this Throne Speech fails most miserably. It speaks to almost every issue under the sun, but entirely misses some of the most important ones.

The Port of Churchill is right now facing the most crucial test in its entire history, and yet the Manitoba

Government made no mention at all of that crisis or how it would propose to respond to it in their Throne Speech of a week ago.

The Minister responsible for Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger) spoke in this House a few minutes ago and said that it is the worst problem that faces him in his Department. He said about all the things that he would like to do to resolve this problem, yet when it came time to give some indication to the people of the Province of Manitoba that this Government felt there was a problem, not only to the people of Manitoba, but to the federal Government, the Canadian Wheat Board, they failed to do that. They made no mention at all of how they would respond to that crisis in their Throne Speech.

They have turned their back on the Port of Churchill in its time of greatest need. What sort of message are they trying to send? There can only be in my mind three possible reasons why they failed to include the Port of Churchill in the Throne Speech: No. 1, they forgot about it; No. 2, they do not think it is a problem; No. 3, they know it is a problem, but they do not think it is worthy enough to mention. There cannot be any other reason for it not being a part of the Throne Speech.

No matter what the reason for their omission, the fact is, by its absence, the Manitoba Government has shown both incompetence and insensitivity. I will come back to the situation at the Port of Churchill later in my comments, but for the time being I want to identify a few other glaring omissions in the Throne Speech.

There is no mention of provincial support for the struggle of aboriginal people against Conservative Government cutbacks of aboriginal post-secondary educational programs at the federal level by their Ottawa cousins.

This Throne Speech ignores entirely the very basic fundamental fight by Indian people for their treaty rights for a better future for their children and their grandchildren.

Again, one has to ask the question, why did this Government condemn the Portage cutbacks in the Throne Speech but ignore the post-secondary education program cutbacks by the very same federal Government?

Why did this Government disregard the federal cutbacks in the Unemployment Insurance Program in this Throne Speech? UIC cutbacks would create severe economic hardship for thousands of Manitobans right across the province. The most suffering, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will be in those areas of high unemployment such as the North, and yet this Throne Speech fails to speak out at all against those cutbacks. It fails to speak out for working Manitobans and their families who will bear the brunt of those cutbacks.

Seniors fair no better under this Throne Speech. There is no mention in it of any intention by the Government to fight the blatant attack on universality by the Mulroney Government and its claw back of pensions of senior citizens. As a matter of fact, the Throne Speech gives short shrift to Manitoba senior citizens.

It promises seniors more of that which they received last year, and the fact is, they received nothing from this Government during the past year. It promises more of a seniors directorate and that would be a joke if it was not so tragic.

What does the Speech say exactly about this Government's vision for seniors? It says the Seniors Directorate established last year will continue to inform and consult the Manitoba seniors, communicating their needs and concerns to the providers of Government services and programs.

A paper on the issue of elder abuse initiated last fall will be released during 1989-1990. It will outline the scope of the problem and chart a path for future Government action. Well, let us look at what the Seniors Directorate did last year and how the Minister responsible for it communicated the concerns of seniors to Government departments and to other providers of services for seniors.

When the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) raised the Pharmacare deductibles for seniors in this province twice in less than one year and then locked in automatic increases year after year after year for seniors and other Manitobans, did the Minister responsible for Seniors (Mr. Downey) defend the interest of seniors? Did he speak out on their behalf? Did he take the case of those on fixed incomes to his Government when they were imposing that economic hardship on them? No. Instead he cast aside the protests of individual seniors and organizations representing them, and Members of the Opposition in this House, by suggesting that—and we all remember the quote—seniors did not want more handouts, as if Pharmacare was a gift rather than a right, and seniors who opposed increased deductibles were selfishly only looking for handouts for themselves. That is the type of attitude which that Minister carried throughout the past year. That is the type of attitude that so betrayed this Government's real lack of interest in the needs of seniors. That is what they are promising more of for the next year? If I was a senior, Mr. Speaker, in this province—and I will be some day—I would be very, very disappointed in what this Government has done for seniors.

\* (1220)

What did that same Minister do when, day after day after day in the Legislature, it was brought to his attention how his Government's cutbacks in the Home Care Program were causing unnecessary hardship and grief for seniors in the families? What did he do? First he denied that there were any cutbacks at all. Then he passed—did not answer the questions. When finally forced to answer the questions, all he did was parrot his friend, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). He was the strongest ally of the Minister of Health as they both attempted to hide the stark reality of Home Care cutbacks and the grief they were causing on individual Manitobans under a shield of denial and obfuscation.

What did the Minister do when he was forced to take sides between seniors and their court battle against the federal Drug Patent Act, and economic hardships from higher drug prices, and the multinational drug

companies who benefited most from those higher prices? What did he do? He sided with the drug companies, he defended their right to ever-escalating profits over the rights of Manitoba seniors to fair drug prices and a secure economic future. The Attorney General (Mr. McCrae) supported that as well.

It is no wonder that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) found it necessary to demote the previous Minister responsible for Seniors. Unfortunately that demotion and the change that has followed from it has obviously meant very little. When the new Minister responsible for Seniors had the opportunity to speak out against the Wilson Budget attack on universality, through its taxation and clawback of seniors' pensions, all we heard was silence from that side. Once again, the Government ignored the pleas of seniors for fairness and for respect.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair.)

That silence has spoken volumes. It spoke in volumes about how nothing has really changed with this new Minister in place because all the Minister does is reflect the Government as a whole. The fact that nothing has been changed was confirmed in his most recent Throne Speech.

In the debate on the Throne Speech, just the other day, when the new Minister responsible for Seniors was given the opportunity to answer a question on what one specific example of something the Seniors Directorate had done for seniors, all we heard from him was some rather transparent puffery, for which he is well-known, and a lot of bravado and bluffing, and even a bit of blustering.

The fact is that even with the new Minister nothing is happening with the directorate. As a matter of fact, it could be said the directorate is going backwards on this new Minister because that paper on elder abuse, which was promised for this year, has now been postponed for a year or maybe two more years under this new Minister. So seniors fare quite poorly under this Throne Speech and under this new Minister.

The Throne Speech also lacks any concise vision for health care for this province. It is becoming increasingly obvious that the Department of Health is in a state of suspended animation, as the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) stops everything at his desk before any decision is taken. That Minister's own paranoia, which is becoming obvious day after day, has brought the Department of Health to the brink of administrative chaos. We all pay for that by health care quality in this province that suffers.

He talks a lot about a partnership with health care providers in the general public but that partnership about which he speaks so often is frustrated by a dictatorial Minister who listens but does not understand, and who attempts to consult but does not cooperate on the basis of that consultation.

The Throne Speech also failed to identify how the Government intends to defend Medicare against its destruction by incrementalism as the federal Government continues to cut back on its share of health and education costs across the country. Those cutbacks at the federal level—and I direct this comment to the

Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) because he is the one who is going to have to deal with the problem eventually. Those cutbacks at the federal level will mean \$100 million less for health care needs for Manitobans over the course of the next five years. That is undoubtedly the greatest single threat that Medicare and the health care system has ever faced, and yet not one word in this Throne Speech about how this Government intends to protect our health care system in face of what is certain erosion and may well in fact be possible eradication of Medicare, so we believe that the Throne Speech fails in the second criterion.

That brings us to the third criterion, and that criterion can only be judged over a period of time. Unfortunately, we are going to have to wait to see if this Government can do a better job this year of fulfilling its Throne Speech commitments than it did with last year's commitments.

Mr. Speaker, with the exception of the last criterion, we find this Throne Speech lacking, and only time will tell as to how lacking it might be with regard to that last criterion of resonance or reflection.

**Mr. Taylor:** It is not lacking your support, though.

**Mr. Cowan:** The Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) steps into it again and suggests that it is not lacking our support. You know, Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot of posturing as of late from the Liberals as to how this Throne Speech should precipitate a general election across the province right now.

**An Honourable Member:** Hey, there is a good idea.

**Mr. Cowan:** We have just heard from the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) talking about principles. We have heard a lot of comments and their pretense of principles over the last little while, and they have to be put in context. It has to be reviewed side by side with their earlier comments on the same subject.

You know, it is just a few short months ago that the Liberal Leader (Mrs. Carstairs), the very same Liberal Leader who today is calling for an election, was saying that there should be no immediate election. Last July when there was another Throne Speech Debate, in this Chamber she said that voting against the Throne Speech would be like voting against your mother.—(Interjection)—

Yes, the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) betrays the Liberal philosophy when he says, "but that was last year." From day to day, from year to year, they change their philosophy depending on what they think is best for themselves, not what they think is best for the province, not what they think is best for the people, but what they think is best for themselves and their own personal interests.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Cowan:** I would ask the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) to listen to this because last year his Leader said that she found it very difficult to disagree with generalities in the Throne Speech, in any Throne

Speech, by introducing a non-confidence motion on that Speech which would cause an election. She admitted then that doing that—and these are her words—would be the worst opportunism of any kind. What did she say about a non-confidence motion last year? What did she say about voting against generalities last year? What did she say about voting against her mother last year? She said that would be opportunism of the worst kind and, if it was opportunism of the worst kind last year, it is opportunism of the worst kind this year.

**An Honourable Member:** On the part of the NDP, yes.

**Mr. Cowan:** A direct quote from the Liberal Leader at that time was, "we do not believe it is in the best interests of Manitobans at the present moment to go to the electorate." That is a very informative statement from her, and we would want to believe that her timing and her actions regarding a provincial election were based upon her perception of the best interests of Manitobans generally. One would think that from that quote, but that quote does not stand alone, Mr. Speaker. There is a much more telling statement of hers which she made much more recently, about the same time she was beginning to utter some public musings about a Liberal scheme to force an election now. What did the Liberal Leader say then? "I think," and this is the Liberal Leader quoted from a news conference she held. She said, "I think I have enough credibility within the Liberal Party of Manitoba that they know that Sharon Carstairs does what Sharon Carstairs thinks is best for Sharon Carstairs and hopefully that is also best for the Liberal Party."

Well, the Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak) applauds that statement. She has her caucus well trained, because when she makes such an obvious egotistical, arrogant statement, what do they do but applaud like trained seals, Mr. Speaker, and they want to govern? And they want to govern? And they want to govern, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, the quote is and I repeat it again, "Sharon Carstairs does what she thinks is best for Sharon Carstairs." That cannot be said enough around this province. From town to town, from city to city, from meeting to meeting, we will tell the people of this province what it is that motivates this bunch of Liberals when they go out and call for an election, now, now, now, now, now. It has nothing to do with the best interests of the public. It has nothing to do with the best interests of this province. It only has to do with what Sharon Carstairs thinks is best for Sharon Carstairs.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) tells me to stand up for what I believe in. Well I can tell you what I believe in is what I believe is best for the people of this province, and not what I believe is best for myself. That is a principle. Maybe they just do not understand what principles are and what principles mean and how principles should guide your actions, rather than be purely motivated by ego and arrogance, as is their Leader.

The Member for St. James is now suggesting that the Conservatives have abandoned seniors, and I believe that they have. I am really quite frightened as to what these people would do if they ever had the opportunity to unbridle the sheer ego of their Leader by putting her in the Premier's chair and letting her do what she thinks is best for her all the time, all the time, all the time.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please; order, please.

The hour being 12:30 p.m., I am interrupting the proceedings. When this matter is again before the House, the Honourable Member will have 17 minutes remaining. This House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m., Monday.