



Second Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

40 Elizabeth II

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Denis C. Rocan
Speaker*



VOL. XL No. 7 - 10 a.m., FRIDAY, MARCH 15, 1991



MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	Liberal
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CARR, James	Crescentwood	Liberal
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
CHEEMA, Gulzar	The Maples	Liberal
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
CONNERY, Edward	Portage la Prairie	PC
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	Liberal
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	NDP
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	NDP
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Liberal
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
HARPER, Elijah	Rupertsland	NDP
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	NDP
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	NDP
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
NEUFELD, Harold, Hon.	Rossmere	PC
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	NDP
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	NDP
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary	Fort Garry	PC
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, March 15, 1991

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

Point of Order

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Yesterday, during a matter of privilege, I made some comments referencing the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) that I think were unclear.

I have had an opportunity to read the Hansard from yesterday and, in the early parts of my statements, I did make a statement that suggested that the Minister of Health was knowingly in possession of documents that may have been stolen. I wish to withdraw any allegation, any imputation of the reputation or the motives of the Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the honourable member for Osborne. His remarks make it quite clear and the Chair is satisfied.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege. A matter of privilege is the most important and most serious motion that can be raised by an honourable member in this House on matters of concern to that individual in a personal fashion. It is our only protection that we have where we believe that actions have been taken which impact upon our ability to carry out our mandate as elected MLAs.

We enjoy a number of freedoms and privileges in this Chamber which no other member of society enjoys—freedom from lawsuits if we make statements which, outside the Chamber, may well cause those named in the statements to seek legal recourse. We are protected in this Chamber to do that, and that is a tradition, Sir, that has grown up since the beginning of Parliament to assure that members have the opportunity to speak freely without the danger of forces outside and beyond this Chamber having the ability to quell freedom of speech in this House.

Mr. Speaker, when one raises a matter of privilege, it has to be taken very, very seriously by the member raising it and by this House, because it is the most serious motion raised, particularly as it was raised yesterday by the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) wherein he called for a motion of censure against a member of Treasury bench of cabinet of government. This matter of privilege and the motion of censure have to be considered very, very seriously.

Now, they must be, Sir, based on full and factual information. That is the first and foremost criteria of any member raising a matter of privilege. I submit to you, Sir, and I intend to make the case that in developing the matter of privilege yesterday the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) erred grievously in his statements and the accuracy of the same.

The member was cautioned by myself on a point of order when he raised the example used to justify his matter of privilege to the House. He continued to make the similar false presentation of information after being cautioned.

* (1005)

Mr. Speaker, the member for Osborne's case was predicated upon the fact that with an investigation by the police into his involvement with confidential tax documents that that police investigation was unprecedented by government to a member of the opposition and furthermore infringed upon his rights as a member of this Chamber. That is the whole premise for the motion of censure that my honourable friend brought forward yesterday against the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). That is not accurate.

I thank my honourable friend for his apology regarding his accusations which were not accurate about myself, and I thank him very much for that.

The basic premise that my honourable friend used in raising the matter of privilege was that his questioning by police had never been undertaken before. I will quote from Hansard of yesterday—unedited transcript—where the member says: "when he was in opposition, where he came into a possession of documents as a result of a break and enter"—which is falsehood No. 1, Mr. Speaker. The

member for Osborne further said: "and the police were not sent in to investigate in that case." Further on, he goes on to confirm—after being cautioned—"Despite that, no police investigation was undertaken. The police were not sent in to investigate the member who had possession of the report."

Mr. Speaker, that is the whole premise of my honourable friend's matter of privilege against the Treasury bench. It is not accurate, because there was a police investigation of the incident that he referenced in 1985, a full and complete investigation. The investigation did not surround the possession or the availability of confidential tax files but merely a research document in the ministry of health. Yet, a police investigation was called by government, was undertaken and the matter was laid to rest. All of the accusations made surrounding that issue were not substantiated and therefore were not raised in any other fashion and were concluded that there were no improper undertakings by anyone, Mr. Speaker.

My honourable friend's premise is that never before has an MLA of this House been investigated by government for possession of any documents. That is not accurate. I submit to you that my honourable friend, the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock), must withdraw his matter of privilege, because it is based on the false premise that he alone has been singled out for police investigation into the availability of confidential tax files. That is not an accurate presumption to found the most serious matter that a member can bring to the House, that being a matter of privilege.

I would move, seconded by the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Driedger), that the member for Osborne, in presenting his matter of privilege, March 14, 1991, provided inaccurate and misleading information to the House and that the member for Osborne should withdraw the inaccurate information and apologize to the House, Sir.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, we have a situation in this province right now where there are very serious concerns being raised on a regular basis about the actions of the Department of Finance, things that are being raised that suggest that tax law is not being applied equitably; that it is being applied one way to certain groups of people and other ways to other groups of people; suggestions that people have paid money in the belief they were legitimately paying taxes, that that

money has not gone to the government, that in fact it has gone into the pockets of the businesses collecting it.

* (1010)

The problem that the staff within the Department of Finance find themselves in - (interjection)- Mr. Speaker, this is relevant, and I will connect this up, believe me. I listened very carefully to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), and I would ask for the same consideration.

The problem that the staff within that department find themselves in—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Hon. Darren Praznik (Deputy House Leader): Mr. Speaker, the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) understands that this is a sensitive issue, but the member for Osborne should be speaking to the matter of privilege, not the issue of the feelings of public servants in the Department of Finance.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable deputy government House leader does not have a point of order. I believe the honourable member for Osborne is addressing his remarks to the motion as presented by the honourable Minister of Health.

* * *

Mr. Alcock: The problem that these staff find themselves in is that when they try to avail themselves of the normal means of communication within the department to get these wrongs addressed, they have been rebuffed, and they believe they do not have legitimate access to recourse to raise these very serious concerns, so they brought forward that information to myself.

Now, I read, or actually the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) read yesterday from Maingot's treatise on Privilege in Canada, a quote that I would like to read one more time:

"Since every member of the public has an interest in putting an end to abuses—in preventing a waste of public money—in opposing the creation of works in an inefficient manner—in checking improper expenditure, and may express his opinion on any question affecting the public health or convenience, communication on such subjects, made bona fide, and to a person having power to prevent or remedy the wrong, is privileged; that is, if it is made bona

vide, and for the purpose only of guarding against a public injury.”

The staff in that department are trying to bring forward a public inquiry. They are trying to make the case that I think has been proven now, that the government is inequitably applying tax law to trucking firms, that it is allowing certain corporations to split their payrolls in a way that allows them to avoid paying the payroll tax—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the honourable member for Osborne that the motion as presented by the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) clearly and specifically points out, “provided inaccurate and misleading information.” I would ask the honourable member for Osborne to keep his remarks relevant to said subject.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, I rose this morning in the House, I had as a source document a Hansard from Thursday, April 11, 1985. As you know, timeliness is of concern in raising a matter of privilege. I received the interview at eleven o'clock from the police. I was in the House at 1:30 raising the matter of privilege. One is afforded very little time to do the research necessary. I got this document. I read it. Mr. Speaker, it said in it, the former Minister of Health, the honourable Larry Desjardins says, I know that our place was broken in and that one report was taken out. He does not make a direct allegation that the Minister of Health took the report or participated in the break-in. He says he has no intention of making a big issue out of it.

I, in my remarks yesterday—and I have admitted this quite freely—made a suggestion that could be interpreted that the Minister of Health knowingly came into possession of documents as a result of a break and enter. I attempted, yesterday, to withdraw that remark. It was cut off by the interjection.

An Honourable Member: What about the police . . .

* (1015)

Mr. Alcock: The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) raises the question of a police investigation. I took the information from this Hansard that suggests the Minister of Health said I had no intention of making a big thing out of this. I made an assumption. I was wrong. I admit that error.

I do not wish to impugn the activities of the Minister of Health. I have said that before in this Chamber. I said it yesterday; I will say it again right

now, that I have no intention of disallowing the matter of privilege that I raised yesterday. I think the people of this province deserve some protection, and I still think it is time that this government took some action to see that the people get their tax money back, because they did not have to pay it.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of his comments, the Minister of Health said that a matter of privilege ought rarely be raised in the House. Given his own words, I am surprised that he is, indeed, raising this so-called matter of privilege today.

Matter of privilege is a very serious matter, Mr. Speaker, but it is not a dispute over facts. I believe the comments made by the Minister of Health and the comments made by the member for Osborne have indicated clearly what we have here is a dispute over the facts. In addition, what we have also had is an apology from the member for Osborne for any inaccuracies that he might have made yesterday in his statement in the House.

It is clear tradition in terms of matters of privilege. I just found one ruling from 1987, Speaker Phillips, in which a matter of privilege was resolved when an apology was made by the member involved and that settled the matter. So I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, there is no matter of privilege, because the member for Osborne has apologized and what we have now is a debate over a dispute over the facts.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the honourable opposition House leader. I will take this matter under advisement. I will give the government deputy House leader an opportunity to put his remarks on the record.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, I think one has to look very carefully when one is dealing with matters of privilege, to separate the important principles of the operation of this House from matters of operations of government. No one would dispute the concerns raised by the member for Osborne, but the issue before the Speaker and before this House at this time is one of principle on the operation of this House.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) raised a point of privilege with respect to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). He indicated to this House that the Minister of Finance reached his privileges as a member of this House by indicating that the minister had received a document from the member for Osborne. It had

been given to the member for Osborne in probate to the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, that was an issue—the motion of privilege—that was raised by the member for Osborne, that was based on the belief that never before had a minister of this House or a member of this House asked a police investigation in a similar matter. In bringing that case to the House, the member was obliged to be accurate in the information on which he based his case. Obviously, the member has admitted it now, that was inaccurate. Certainly one can appreciate, in the rush to prepare a case to come to this House that one does not have time to do all the research necessary.

The fact of the matter is, this is not a dispute over the facts, it is not a matter for which we normally take liberty in debating Hansard in information. Members have an obligation, we would submit, when bringing a motion of privilege to this House to be accurate in the information that is coming to the House. That is a higher duty than the normal privilege we take with information in the course of debate.

The issue is whether or not there has been a breach of the general privileges of this House in a member who, in bringing a motion of privilege, did not bring accurate facts to the attention of the House and the Speaker.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): As you pointed out, and it has been pointed already this morning, a matter of privilege is indeed a very serious thing. The matter of privilege that was brought up by the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) yesterday is not to be debated and to be rehashed by the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) in a matter of privilege today. That responsibility in determining whether or not it is a matter of privilege, Mr. Speaker, is yours.

The member for Osborne has addressed a portion of what the Minister of Health has done in stating his matter of privilege, and I would suggest that the matter of privilege raised by the Minister of Health has been taken care of. The responsibility for the matter of privilege raised yesterday by the member for Osborne is a responsibility of yours to decide, and I would trust that you will come up with the decision and that it should not be further debated.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank all honourable members for the information that has been brought forward, and as I have done in the past I will take this matter under advisement.

*(1020)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Government Services): Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the Annual Report 1989-90 Government Services.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 23—Manitoba Intercultural Council Amendment Act

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs), that Bill 23, The Manitoba Intercultural Council Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Conseil interculturel du Manitoba, be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lamoureux: Bill 23 allows MIC to elect a presiding officer and to hire its own executive director. This is something that we believe is very important to MIC, something that the New Democratic Party did not allow MIC to do, something in which the current Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Mitchelson) does support, so I would anticipate to see her support on this particular bill given that we have dropped the funding component—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, we are into a new session, and I assume there will be a number of bills brought forward by government and by private members. I understand the opportunity afforded honourable members is they are to give a very brief one-line explanation of what the bill is about, not to engage in debate and to seek support or make comments about the positions other parties have taken. It is really literally a 30-second-opportunity type of thing.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the honourable acting government House leader. On the same point of order, the opposition House leader.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, while I certainly feel that the Liberal

member may have editorialized somewhat in his comments, he does have the right to do so. There is no restriction in our rule which allows a brief comment of 30 seconds or so. I really think that the former government House leader, the Attorney General, is overreacting and I would not want his comments in any way, shape or form to restrict the right to freedom of speech of members of this Legislature being able to give a brief explanation of the bill as is allowed under our rules under first reading.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised, I would remind the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) that he is given the opportunity to make some remarks as to why this bill is being brought forward.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The question, therefore, before the House was first reading of Bill 23, agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 22—The Manitoba Energy Authority Repeal Act

Mr. James Carr (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs), that Bill 22, The Manitoba Energy Authority Repeal Act; Loi abrogeant la Loi sur la Régie de l'énergie du Manitoba, be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Carr: Mr. Speaker, at a time when all members of the House are looking at ways of streamlining and making government more efficient, the purpose and the intent of this act is to cut away a level of bureaucracy and decision making which is no longer required. The mandate of the Manitoba Energy Authority can just as well be supplied by Manitoba Hydro and the government of Manitoba.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery, where we have with us this morning 40 visitors from the Manitoba Association of School Trustees Partner's Program. They are under the direction of Mr. and Mrs. Zimmerman.

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

* (1025)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Health Care System Funding

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we have been raising questions all week on the effect of government funding policies on the education system of this province, on the social service system of this province and on the municipal sector in this province. It is appropriate today, in recognition of the question raised by our Health critic yesterday, in the funding policies of the government dealing with our health care system.

The present inflation rate in the city of Winnipeg is 6.8 percent. The government has identified health care is a so-called priority, and we found out with education that a so-called priority meant in essence a 5 percent reduction in the level of funding from the inflation rate to our schools across Manitoba.

My question to the Premier is: What will the funding levels be in terms of the health care system, and will they be at inflation at least so that the health care system of Manitoba can maintain the services to patients and people of Manitoba?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, while we have the school trustees in the gallery, which is of course the motivation for the member's questioning about the funding to health through education, let us remind the New Democratic Leader that in 1985 when their revenues were increasing at 6.7 percent, they gave a 2 percent increase to the public school system of this province. This year, when our revenues are increasing at zero percent, we still passed along 2 percent to the public school system, not enough, not as much as we would like to do, but under the circumstances, we are doing our best to cushion them against the difficulties that we have to face with zero percent increase in revenues.

With respect to health care, we have indicated that it is a top priority of ours. We have indicated that we are going to do everything possible, unlike the New Democrats who closed beds permanently, the only administration in the history of this province to close beds permanently, we are going to do our level best to maintain services in health care. That does

not mean that we can provide all of the funding increases that hospitals are looking for, but we are indeed going to try and cushion them against the difficult circumstances that we face with a zero percent increase in revenue.

All of that information about specific numbers will be available when the budget in Estimates is tabled in about a month in this Legislature.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, we will place our health care funding against the inflation rate any day of the week, and the Premier well knows, even in his first year in government, the health care funding was 8 percent for an inflation rate of 4.5, because we are dealing with an aging population, and we are dealing with patients who have increased costs with technology.

My question to the Premier is, we have funding decisions already in the hospitals well below inflation that are providing all kinds of proposed lists of services that are being reviewed in our health care system. The inflation rate in Winnipeg right now is 6.8 percent. The Premier had an opportunity in 1985 to fight for decent federal funding in health care. He had an opportunity in the 1989 First Minister's meeting when he applauded Brian Mulroney for cutting \$102 million on our health care budget. Will the health care funding be at least at 6.8 percent so we can maintain our health care services to the patients of Manitoba?

Mr. Filmon: What the Leader of the New Democratic Party fails to tell the public is that it was during the NDP administration in this province in the '80s -(interjection)- oh, they want to forget the past. They want to write off \$5 billion worth of debt that they added to this province during six years of government. They want to write off an increase from \$100 million a year of interest to \$600 million a year of interest all because of their spending decisions and mismanagement. They want to write all that off and forget the past.

I can understand why the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohm) wants to forget the past, because it is very embarrassing. It is very embarrassing. It shows what a disaster he and the NDP were in government.

* (1030)

We will not do that, Mr. Speaker. We will not drive up the debt in this province and provide a millstone around the necks of the future generations to pay for it. We will operate as much as we can within the

means that are available to this government, but there has never been in history the kind of circumstances that face a government with zero percent increase in revenues.

So we have to be very, very careful. We have to be very considerate in looking at every single expenditure of government. We may not be able to spend all of the money that we would like to, but our priorities are clear: health care, social services, education. We have to maintain those on behalf of the people of Manitoba, and that is what we are doing our level best to do.

Mr. Doer: The Premier is right. Never have we been in this situation before; never have we been predicted to be 10 out of 10 in Canada in terms of economic performance, which is driving down our revenues.

My question to the Premier is, given that his priority of education has meant a 2 percent funding, given that his priority of family services has meant a zero percent funding, given that the health care system is also a priority allegedly of this government, will he be using the Alberta formula that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) talked about and wrote about in January, that they would be taking away a patient's services based on other decisions of government—maybe cutting back on beds and other things in terms of government, without any other alternative service, like outpatients, as we had. What will be the effect on patients in terms of the funding policies of this Conservative government?

Mr. Filmon: The member for Concordia, the Leader of the Opposition, is wrong. Nobody has ever said that our funding increases to family services will be at zero percent. He is dead wrong in that, as he is in most things that he brings to this House.

The one thing that he fails to say is that there is only one administration in the history of this province that has permanently closed beds in hospitals in Manitoba and that is the NDP government, of which he was a part. That is the reality of how they gave priorities to health care. We would not give that kind of priority to health care; we would not give that kind of treatment to health care, because we do not believe in the NDP philosophy of cutting directly in the hospitals. That is the kind of thing that they did. -(interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Health Care System Funding

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Yesterday the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) tried to bluster and bamboozle his way out of a very serious health care issue. Today I hope he will stand in his place and admit that everything I said was true, as has been confirmed by hospital administrators in the city of Winnipeg.

We are very concerned about the situation because of existing stress on the system, waiting lists for surgery, inadequate resources for dialysis, and the list goes on and on.

We would like to know, from this Minister of Health, how this negative funding decision is going to deal with existing problems, what impact it will have on patient care in the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Every decision made by this government is an attempt to bring better quality, more effective patient care to the citizens of Manitoba. Now, Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend raised an issue yesterday. It is an issue that comes to government and to health care planners in the hospital system every single year, and I suspect you can go back 20 years and you will find that hospitals approach the Manitoba Health Services Commission and ask for an increase in funding.

It has never been, whether it has been Ed Schreyer's New Democratic Party government, whether it has been the Lyon Progressive Conservative government; the following Pawley, an NDP government, or this current government, that ever has government provided to the hospitals all that they have requested in terms of budgets. That has never been done. That is what the issue is today before the hospitals.

They have made a request for funding. We have indicated we will provide all of that but \$19 million, the same thing that has happened when my honourable friend sat in Treasury bench.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell my honourable friends, so they do not get their fearmongering running amuck, that there will be more money this year than last year to the hospitals of Manitoba. I will also tell my honourable friends, it will not be as much as they requested, which is the same it was for the last 20 years successively, independent of which party made the decisions.

Reforms

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, what we are hearing for the first time from this government is that there is going to be a cut in real terms, given inflation.

Mr. Speaker, how can this government arbitrarily hand down a decision to the hospitals in Winnipeg and Brandon to find programs to be cut to the tune of \$19 million? Would it not make a heck of a lot more sense to do it in the spirit of true health care reform, to have a dialogue with health care professionals everywhere and then to set the target based on the recommendations of professionals in the field?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I thank my honourable friend for the endorsement of the process that we are currently in, because that is exactly what we have been doing with the executive directors of hospitals in Manitoba, as represented through MHO, as represented by the CEOs of the Winnipeg hospitals, their board chairmen. We have met with the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the MMA, the executive of the Manitoba Nurses' Union, all of the stakeholders, including the taxpayer and the patient.

We are making those decisions in exactly the manner that my honourable friend submits. Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you, that contrasts dramatically with the 1987 decision by the then NDP government, where the Minister of Health hauled the CEOs of hospitals—six of them—into a press conference to announce a permanent closure of beds without consultation, without impact analysis on their programs, forcing budget constraints on those hospitals through mandated, dictated, imposed cutbacks by the then NDP government.

Nursing Profession Layoffs

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, I do not know how this minister can talk about a partnership with health care professionals, since one day this government agrees and settles with the nurses for a model to have nurse involvement in decision making, through nurse advisory committees, and then the next day not only hands down an arbitrary decision of \$19 million to be cut from hospitals but also decides to cut nursing

positions as they become available, as they become vacant.

I want to ask him: How is this top-down, cost-cutting exercise going to improve the health care system and build trust between this government and health care professionals?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I want to tell my honourable friend, I am very much interested in hearing her plans for the health care system as we approach Estimates.

I want to tell my honourable friend in case she has not understood, there has been a change in government and approach. We, government, the Minister of Health, myself, are not dictating that nurses be laid off as the previous government did when they said, you close beds. We do not do that. We have never asked an administrator at any hospital to lay off a nurse. The NDP did that in 1987.

Secondly, my honourable friend mentions a settlement to the Manitoba nurses of 14 percent over the next two years. Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you that contrasts very dramatically with the settlement that we inherited in government of a 3 percent increase, 3 percent increase in cost of living, and the settlement prior to that where nurses of Manitoba took a zero percent increase for three months of the contract and then a 2 percent increase for the next year. That was the generosity of the NDP, when revenues were growing at 16 percent and 18 percent, to the nurses of Manitoba.

Conflict-of-Interest Reporting Process

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, yesterday afternoon following Question Period and also following my raising of a matter of privilege in this House, I had an unsolicited visit from the Deputy Minister of Finance, Mr. Charles Curtis. Mr. Curtis informed me that I was in conflict of interest as a member of this Legislative Assembly because I teach a 30-hour course at Red River Community College. I immediately contacted my legal counsel who informed me that the allegation was specious.

However, Mr. Speaker, out of respect for this Assembly and to avoid even any appearance of conflict, I refrained from voting on the Liberal amendment yesterday afternoon, and last evening I informed Red River Community College I would accept no remuneration for the course taught, a

practice I have consistently followed since I was elected a member of this House.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Premier.

Did the Premier have any knowledge of the Deputy Minister of Finance's actions, and did he advise him to see me?

* (1040)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Absolutely not, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Alcock: My supplementary to the Premier: Is it the policy of this government that deputy ministers are to inform members of this Assembly about potential conflicts of interest or is it their policy to follow the law and report such potential conflicts to the Legislative Assembly Management Commission through the Clerk of this Chamber, as I have done?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, we believe that every piece of legislation that governs all of our actions ought to be abided by, and every piece of legislation has within it a process that must be followed by everyone, whether they be a member of the Legislature or any other citizen of this province. We will continue to follow that practice.

Members of Legislative Assembly Intimidation

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): I am pleased to hear that, Mr. Speaker, and in future will the Premier inform his ministers and all staff that intimidation of MLAs in whatever form is unacceptable to this government?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, that kind of allegation of intimidation by a deputy minister does not speak well of the member making the accusation. If the member making the accusation has some skeletons in the closet or has some reasons to be concerned, let him not blame it on a deputy minister for his own discomfort. That is a specious allegation and one that has no place in this Chamber.

Point of Order

Mr. Alcock: There are no skeletons in this closet, and I have written to the Clerk of this Assembly and informed him exactly of the—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member does not have a point of order—a dispute over the facts.

The honourable First Minister to finish his response.

* * *

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, if the member has a complaint let him make a charge, not come here and make an accusation under the protection of this Chamber that is afforded to him, an accusation against a 40-year civil servant who is respected not only in this province, but in every corner of this country and the world, not to make an allegation against a deputy minister who cannot defend himself in this Chamber.

Sustainable Development Conference Delegate Censorship

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the First Minister.

It is ironic today that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) should refer to the sanctity of freedom of speech today in the Chamber, and I would like to ask the minister about a dangerous pattern that might be developing in this province.

Does the First Minister condone the actions of the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) who recently censored invited guests at a community college conference recently held in Brandon?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, since I am not aware of the substance of the allegation being made by the member for Kildonan, I will take the matter as notice and look into it, if he can provide me with some information.

Mr. Chomlak: I thank the Premier for those comments, and I will provide him with that information.

By way of supplementary, I will also ask him as chairman of the round table if he will indicate to this House whether or not the pattern developed by the Minister of Education in the censoring of invited guests to a sustainable development conference will be duplicated by the round table?

Mr. Filmon: Firstly, Mr. Speaker, without any information, I have to assume the matter that he is raising is hypothetical or perhaps inaccurate. So I will say to him that I do not condone censorship and that this government is not, in any way, condoning of censorship. We have plenty of evidence to back the fact that we do not accept that form of dealing

as a government, and we will wait until we receive information from him and give him a full report.

Mr. Chomlak: I again thank the Premier, Mr. Speaker. I will try to ensure that he gets a transcript of the minister's spokesperson's comments in this regard.

My final supplementary to the First Minister is: Does he condone the Minister of Education, of all people, undertaking these types of activities given the portfolio assumed by that minister?

Mr. Filmon: I neither condone nor oppose a decision of which I am not aware, the information which he has not yet provided me, Mr. Speaker. So until I am able to investigate the matter and report back, I cannot make comment on it.

Inner-City Libraries Funding

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, last session I asked the Minister of Culture and Heritage if she would step in to save the three inner-city libraries that were in danger of closing. She refused to take any action, and gave what is becoming a standard response from this government, that this is an issue over which they have no control. Instead of taking positive steps to protect services to children, families and seniors in the inner cities who are the primary users of the libraries slated to close, this government has turned its back on these people and offloaded onto the City Council.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier tell this House why he wanted to be Premier of this province when, within a few weeks of assuming office, he began the consistent theme of this government that there is nothing we can do, there is nothing we are willing to try, and there is no one that we are willing to listen to on this and other issues?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, we have a New Democratic Party across the way that does not want to see any reduction in the size of City Council, but they want the provincial government to make decisions for City Council. Obviously, they feel there should be no City Council. They would like to run the City of Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, we traditionally, as did the New Democratic Party when they were in power, funded 11 percent of the City of Winnipeg's library budget. We have continued along in that process, and the City of Winnipeg, through City Council, has to

determine how to spend the dollars that they have in a manner that is going to serve the citizens of the city of Winnipeg. Those are their decisions, and I would ask them to make those decisions on behalf of the people in the city of Winnipeg.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister how this government can justify the more than \$300,000 spent on the literacy taskforce when the Minister of Culture and Heritage will not commit dedicated funding, as this government did, for the inner-city libraries who provide the essential literacy and education services?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, a building in itself does not provide more literate Manitobans. It is the education system, it is the way those buildings are used and the programming that is put in place that will determine and improve literacy in our province and in our city. The City of Winnipeg has to make decisions that are best going to benefit the taxpayers of the city of Winnipeg, and we are not going to accept responsibility for making those decisions for them.

Ms. Barrett: I think we have received the answers to our questions here on literacy versus services.

Inner-City Services Government Commitment

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

When will he and his government actually begin to live up to the commitments that they have made and start providing these vital services, start giving resources to the communities so that they can provide these vital services instead of penalizing the children, families and seniors of the inner cities who use these services?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I can appreciate that the member for Wellington has never been in government and never had to make priority choices, Mr. Speaker.

The fact of the matter is, the principle of representative government is that people are responsible for the decisions under their control. I can recall when I was on City Council some 14 years ago that the issue of the closure of the William Avenue library, for instance, was one of the difficult issues that was on the agenda of that particular budget exercise.

At that particular time, we were dealing with an NDP administration in this province, and we were dealing with funding levels that were provided for us at that particular time in the spring of 1977. We had to make a choice as to whether or not it was a priority for us, as City Council, to keep open the William Avenue library. The fact of the matter is, that she is well aware that decision was made in favour of keeping the library open at that time, despite the fact that we were left with difficult choices because of funding levels provided by an NDP government.

* (1050)

Today, the same situation prevails. That City Council has to make its priority choices, and if they choose to do more snow removal and cut libraries, that is their choice, Mr. Speaker. That is their priority. These are the ways in which choices are made, and if NDP administrations and NDP supporters at City Hall make that choice, I think that the member for Wellington ought to chastise them and ought to remind them of their responsibilities, because they were elected to make priority choices within their jurisdiction at City Hall.

Education System Funding

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): The Premier of this province talks about priority choices. He says, despite the fact that the government of the province of Manitoba is the principal funder of education, that school divisions have to set priorities—well, they have. They have cut in this city alone 250 jobs, including teachers and teacher aides. They have cut special needs programs. They have cut programs for gifted children. They have cut classes for English as a Second Language. They have cut French Immersion programs.

I want to know from the Premier of this province if he considers that will fulfill his mandate to provide quality education to the children of this province?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, if the member for River Heights, the Leader of the third party, would review the history of education funding in this province, she will find that education funding, over the past two decades, has continued to increase and increase at very substantial rates at the same time as over the same 20 years the school-age population has continued to decline in this province.

During that period of time various services have gone into the public school system provided at the cost of the taxpayer. During that period of time the pupil-teacher ratio has declined dramatically to the point that it is the lowest of any province in the country right now.

An Honourable Member: Because of special needs.

Mr. Filmon: Is the member suggesting that there are only special needs in Manitoba and no other province in this country? Is there no other province in this country that has special needs students? Is that what your argument is?

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, all of these matters—

An Honourable Member: He cannot answer the question.

Mr. Filmon: The member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) and the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) are doing a disservice to the member for River Heights by not allowing me to answer the question by interjecting all the time and trying to get into the debate.

They have plenty of time during the Throne Speech Debate to debate the priorities of this administration, the choices of this administration. If their words have fallen on deaf ears because nobody agrees with them, Mr. Speaker, they ought not to abuse Question Period—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, it is the Premier of this province who is providing a disservice to the children of this province and to the school divisions of this province by failing to set priorities in education and by failing to adequately fund.

Mr. Speaker, how does this Premier justify an overall increase to the property taxpayers in this city alone of 6.4 percent when his funding for operating costs to the school divisions was an average of 1 percent?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I can tell the member for River Heights that if she has been talking to young people throughout this province they are concerned about the debt load that is being left for them by previous administrations.

I had discussions with students in our public school system, with students in our universities and colleges who say to me: Premier, our concern is that

all of the services you are providing on an unfunded basis, today, are going to result in increased taxes, that our heritage, our future opportunity to grow and be successful will be severely damaged by the decisions being made today by people who keep saying spend the money, spend the money, run up the deficit and leave it to our next generation to pay for it, Mr. Speaker. They are concerned. That is what the NDP did throughout their term of office in the 1980s, and they do not want that practice continued by the actions of the Liberal Leader in this Legislature.

The fact of the matter is that not every school board is passing along increases. There is a summary in today's paper that shows some school boards have chosen to live within the means that are there and to keep the increases in property taxes down. Some school boards have chosen to try and recognize the reality that we are in today.

With the Province of Manitoba getting zero percent increase in revenues, we have passed along a 2 percent overall increase to the public school system, and we are asking the public school system to make decisions within their ability to govern to try and keep tax increases down, Mr. Speaker. We have not suggested that they just simply—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mrs. Carstairs: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, but the answer from the Premier only indicates that he does not understand the school finance formula anymore than the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach).

Mr. Speaker, the youngsters of this community and throughout this province are concerned that they will not have adequate training in order to be able to earn the incomes to help to pay off some of that debt load. By the kind of cuts that he is expecting in school divisions, he is affecting the quality of education to those young people.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is: How low a quality of education is he willing to see in this province in order for his deficit fixation to be met?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, all we hear is spend, spend, spend from the Liberal Leader. She wants to drive up taxes, and she wants to drive up the deficit in this province. -(interjection)- She has just hit the word that I believe is the key in this issue and that is prioritize.

Mr. Speaker, Wednesday morning, please, I would ask the—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

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

Mr. Filmon: I would ask the Liberal Leader to give me an opportunity to respond, instead of yelling all the time, Mr. Speaker.

Wednesday morning, I heard a teacher who identified herself as a 20-year school teacher in one of our large Winnipeg school divisions who said that the key in education is the interface between the professional teacher and the student, and that all of the resources that we have should be targeted to that interrelationship between the professionals in the classroom and the students.

She said that in that division, one of the ones that has passed along large increases in school property taxes—she listed off seven or eight different areas of administration, of overhead, of superintendents and of all of those areas that she considered to be nonessential to that relationship, that interrelationship between the pupil and the teacher in the classroom, that have resulted, in her judgment, in millions of dollars of extra fat being put into the system that were not addressed in this review.

*(1100)

She said, as I think many others have, that the priority choices are not the priority choices of the taxpayer in this province, and that the priority choices of these divisions are not necessarily in keeping with good administration and good priorities to achieve a better education for the students of this province. That is the view of a teacher. That is the view of a teacher who is in the system, Mr. Speaker, not somebody who for her own political purposes is trying to create some turmoil in this province. That is responsible decision making.

Assiniboine River Diversion

Mr. Edward Connery (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Natural Resources.

Mr. Speaker, everyone in this Legislature recognizes the need to supply adequate water to all of southern Manitoba. Exhaustive studies have been done on the need. There have been plans drawn up to have structures in place to withdraw

water from the Assiniboine River, but I am concerned that we do not divert water until there are other structures in place so that others do not go at risk.

Can the minister tell us if there are plans to withdraw water from the Assiniboine River for this project and when?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, the honourable member is correct. It was several months ago that I and several of my colleagues, notably the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and my colleague from Emerson, along with the federal minister, the Honourable Jake Epp, received a report that took some 12, 18 months in the making, that examined the various possibilities of providing water for that area in the southcentral part of the province known as the Pembina Triangle.

The report is just that, a report that we received. It calls on several measures that could be undertaken to provide that area, Carman, Morden, Winkler, along with the Red River communities, with some additional waters including the diverting of some additional waters from the Assiniboine.

Mr. Connery: I thank the minister for that answer, Mr. Speaker. The cities of Brandon and Portage la Prairie depend on water from the Assiniboine River for residential-commercial use as do the irrigators along that river. A shortage of water would cost thousands of jobs to that area.

Can the minister assure this Legislature that no water will be withdrawn from the Assiniboine until dam structures are in place to impound adequate water so that all regions of Manitoba will have sufficient water? I support the initiative to supply water to that area.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question has been put.

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member and the good people of Portage la Prairie, as well as Brandon, that we would not be interested in creating a water shortage problem for either of those communities in our attempts to resolve a problem elsewhere.

The information is detailed and I would be prepared to share that with the honourable member, but let me also say that long prior to any decision by government, these proposals would have to be scrutinized extensively by my colleague from the

Department of Environment. There would be ample opportunity for individuals and the communities as town councils to make representations with respect to any proposals that they may feel would affect them. This certainly applies for the community of Brandon as well.

Mr. Connery: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for those assurances because those cities are concerned.

Mr. Speaker, in 1989 the Assiniboine River was almost dry. Will the minister inform the Legislature of the volume of water that was going over the Portage diversion dam at its lowest point in that year? What is the volume of water that would be required for the diversion into southern Manitoba, and is there an agreement for a minimum flow entering the city of Winnipeg on the Assiniboine River—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question has been put.

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, what I can inform the honourable member is that as a result of these last three or four drought years, the Assiniboine River probably would have been dry had it not have been for the farsighted visionary progressiveness of the Minister of Natural Resources back in 1969, whom I will not bother to name, that built the Shellmouth Dam, which now provides a substantial reservoir, Lake of the Prairies, with the kind of control that enables us to provide a continuous source of water. I will provide the specific data for the honourable member. I may even do it in caucus.

Brandon Mental Health Centre Service Cutbacks

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Health.

Last year a report was prepared for the minister recommending that the Brandon Mental Health Centre be phased out of existence. Would the minister now tell the House whether the government has now made a decision regarding the future of BMHC? How many beds are going to be closed in Brandon, and indeed the Selkirk mental institutions, to allow resources to be transferred to the new, but unwanted, Winnipeg psychiatric institution now under construction?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, in a specific response to the last part of the question—none.

I want to tell my honourable friend that since coming into this responsibility as Minister of Health, I have commenced action—as I urged in opposition, to he and other members of the Treasury bench and the Minister of Health, over several successive debates on mental health where I urged the former government to commence the progressive reform of the mental health system—to move us away from an institutional system to a system of community-based services.

Mr. Speaker, there is substantial support for that initiative. There is substantial background work done to undertake that initiative, including the establishment of regional mental health councils—the first of their kind anywhere in this province, and the first of their kind in Canada—to undertake and plan the progressive reform of mental health in this province.

Not one dollar will go to the new psych building that has been discussed recently, but I can assure my honourable friend that in the reform of the mental health system people will be better served closer to home in a community-based mental health system that I urged on government as opposition critic and now I am undertaking with the co-operation of all involved.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. Vital (Mrs. Rønder) for an address to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor in answer to his speech at the opening of the session and the proposed amendment of the honourable Leader of the Opposition, the honourable Minister of Northern and Native Affairs, and Rural Development.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs, responsible for Native Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I rise to participate in the throne speech, one of many that I have had the opportunity to do so in, and feel that—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Flin Flon, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) has 20 minutes remaining on—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised, the honourable member for Selkirk was speaking on the subamendment, which was disposed of last evening.

* * *

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, there is clear evidence as to the way in which the government, the former administration, left the Province of Manitoba. They really did not know what was going on and have again demonstrated it here in this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this throne speech, which is an extremely important time in the history not only of our province, but of our country. There are two specific areas, and I will spend very little time speaking to the amendment that was introduced by the New Democratic Party, although I will spend a few minutes through my speech at an appropriate time, but not at this particular juncture.

I want to, Mr. Speaker, congratulate you on your resumption of your duties as Speaker. I want to say to my colleagues in the Progressive Conservative caucus how much I look forward to the continued co-operative working relationship that I have had in carrying out the responsibilities of the dispensing and the working of my duties as the representative from that great constituency of Arthur-Virden, and to say to my colleagues in Treasury bench that it has been a very exciting experience, hard-working experience, but one that has been most fruitful. I look forward to the continuation of those activities within our caucus.

Mr. Speaker, it is also important to note at this particular time the continued friendly faces that we see from the pages that do such an excellent job in looking after the members of the Assembly, as well as the welcoming of a new Sergeant-at-Arms to this great Assembly, and the continued efforts of the staff of the Speaker's House and the support staff to the Chamber. The challenges will not get any less, I am sure, as we will proceed through this session of the Legislature. I am sure they will have certain challenges as well.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, I look forward to two particular areas of resolve and times of bringing forward extremely important direction to this country, both to the province and to the country. I look forward with anticipation to the report of the all-party task force on the Constitution.

*(1110)

Mr. Speaker, after some 125 years, I think being the Canadians that we are, in looking at where our country is to go, we all have to be fully aware and fully participatory in that exercise. Canada is a nation that we have all dearly loved, and I hope in the discussions and the work that is going to be carried out both nationally and interprovincially over the next few weeks and months, will give us the kinds of rewards and leave us with the kind of a country that we have all felt has given us the kind of rights and freedoms, the kind of job opportunities, and the kind of general overall home that we have all expected and appreciated as we go through our lives.

I am first and foremost, Mr. Speaker, a Canadian. I want to make that very clear. I want to make sure that everyone, whether they are from Québec or whether they are from any other part of this nation, has a maximum input as to how this country goes and stays on path in the future. That is, I think, probably one of the most major decisions that will be before this Assembly, this Chamber and the different people representing their constituencies over the next few months, not to set aside the importance of the fiscal responsibilities that we have as members and to give the proper fiscal direction to our province and, as well, to our country.

We are, Mr. Speaker, to put it very straightforwardly and very bluntly, in a very difficult financial situation within the nation and equally within the same kind of a financial situation within our province. Therefore, I want to point out within the throne speech another extremely important section. They are all important, but there is an extremely important section which I would like to deal with and put it as an outline, about which I am going to speak.

I refer, Mr. Speaker, to the final page of the throne speech document. I think every member of this House should be very conscious of the meaning of what this page says and what the conclusion of this throne speech means. I would encourage members of the New Democratic Party, members of the

Liberal Party, and members of our caucus, to pay particular attention to the meanings of it.

Let me start with this particular sentence, Mr. Speaker: "With our limited revenues, you will have to make choices between what you might like the government to do and what you feel the government must do." What that is saying, Mr. Speaker, we have come to a time in the administration of this province where we have to clearly define what is clearly the responsibility of government, as to what it must do for the people of the province of Manitoba and whether or not we support, in our society, what the people of our province and what you, as members of this Assembly, would like to do.

There is a tremendous difference between the words "like" and "must." "Like," I have to put very bluntly, is something that would very much satisfy the political whims and wills of those members who are elected to this Legislature to satisfy all their constituents, Mr. Speaker, because there is not anyone in our society who does not have a like that they would not like to have satisfied. Everyone has a wish or a dream that if they have that opportunity to do so would like it delivered.

I could give you some examples, Mr. Speaker, of what some of the likes are, but I will not take the time to do that, because many of you sitting here can clearly identify, in your own mind, in your own family, in your own home and in your own constituency what you would like to do.

You may like to take a trip to the southern climes of this world to get some relief from colder weather in the wintertime. You may like to do that, but the economic affairs within your family budget may not allow you to do that. You must feed yourself. That family must feed themselves. So it is important to keep very clearly in your mind what your responsibilities as a family member are, what your community is all about and what your necessities are.

I think we have to make it very clear in our minds in administering the affairs of this province in direct relationship to that of administering your family or your community. It is very, very critical at times like this, when we are going through very difficult economic times—probably as difficult if not more difficult than what some of our families faced during the times of the 1930s. Not only did we have very difficult economic times, but we had very difficult weather climatic conditions that severely affected

the production capability of western Canada, with the dry weather conditions.

We, Mr. Speaker, have gone through over the past four years, probably the past 10 years, an extremely difficult time in the south-west corner of the province, particularly as it relates to a lack of moisture. People have been struggling with weather conditions. They have had to take a look at how they spend their monies in a priority way.

I want to make it very clear that we are not unlike some of the difficult situations that our families went through.

I do not want to say it is depression and recession, Mr. Speaker. What I am saying is we have to come to grips with less opportune times than those which we would desire to have put upon the people of this province. So it is clear. It has to be made clear, the very differences we as a government have to do and that is to look after the needs, the absolute needs of the people of this province and whether or not we determine the expenditures on the likes of the people of this province.

We cannot look after the wants or the likes. We have to look after the musts and the needs. That is what our agenda is. That is what this government's agenda is. I want to make it very clear. As unpopular—and I say this very sincerely—as some of the decisions may be, they have to be made.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear—and I will reference to some of the comments that are made in the resolutions of the New Democratic Party, as to what some of their solutions are. Again, they are back to that hidebound, socialist philosophy which did not work for 15 years out of the last 20, but actually put us where we are today of spending your way out of a recession or spending your way out of debt. It just will not work, Mr. Speaker. You just cannot spend your way out of debt.

When will they learn that you cannot spend your way out of debt? It is very clear that you have to earn your way out of debt. You have to work your way out of debt. It may not be the most pleasant task in life, but it is an essential thing that we all have to face. We have to become more productive. We have to share the resources and put those resources to work. That is what this province has to do. That is what this nation has to do. We do not need more consultants and advisers to tell us how to do it. We need people who are stimulated and motivated and have some of the burdens of the taxes taken off their

backs so they feel that there is an opportunity for them and their children.

I was so disappointed, Mr. Speaker, to hear the comments of the Liberal Leader this morning when she asked a question of our Leader as it relates to who has the responsibility in what we are doing. I commend our Leader, our Premier (Mr. Filmon), for the tough decisions and the tough direction that this province is going.

Do you think we like sitting hour after hour making decisions that are darn tough? No, it would be easy to succumb to the likes, it would be easy to succumb to the political posturing that the Liberals and NDP want to take, but that is not an option today—that is not an option. Our options are very limited. We have been told in the election of last September not to take more money from the taxpayers but to use the money we have more responsibly.

When did it become a measure—you know, and that is really what our problem is as a society, that our measure today is this, and I would ask, I am sure the member for The Maples—somebody please make the case, from either the New Democratic Party or the Liberal Party, the direct correlation between putting more money in the health care system and getting better health for the individual. That is the case that I am hearing the NDP make and the Liberal Party make. Put more resources in—(interjection)- no, I am challenging them as I am challenging them in Education, I am challenging them in Health, I am challenging them in Education and in social services, those are our priority money, that the answer to the problems is to put more taxpayers' money into them. I heard it yesterday in Question Period; I heard it today in Question Period.

* (1120)

Mr. Speaker, the time has come that we have to use those taxpayers' dollars better in the systems that we have available to us and, God help us, we have an excellent health care system. We have an excellent education system, and it is not threatened by the Conservative philosophy or the Conservative government that is going to in any way erode it. What will erode our education and health care system if we do not make tough decisions today is the inability of the people of this province to carry the tax load that we the people in trust of those taxpayers have to put into it. That is where the danger lies for the health care, for the education system and for our family services. That is where the danger lies. If we

continue to say the answer lies within the disbursement of more money into the system, which will automatically equal better health care for my family or my constituents' family or a better education, it is a fallacy. It is a fallacy which has put us where we are today.

(Mrs. Louise Dacquay, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

The New Democratic Party, let me give you another example of stimulating the economy and helping out when times are tough. They set up a corporation to put \$27 million of our hard-earned valuable taxpayers' money in Saudi Arabia. I, for the life of me, Madam Deputy Speaker, have yet to find one economic benefit unless it was to help Saddam Hussein in his endeavour to take over the whole Middle East countries in his endeavour. Let me say, I am sure the people of Iraq talk to the people of Saudi Arabia on telephones at some time.

Let me say, Madam Deputy Speaker, what motivated the New Democratic Party was to say to the people who worked for the telephone system, we do not want to lay you off. We do not want to face you and say—because they are labour driven—we do not want to have to have a layoff in the Manitoba Telephone System, so we will go off on this airy-fairy dream to Saudi Arabia with \$27 million to waste of Manitoba taxpayers' money, so we do not have to lay off 10 people in the Manitoba Telephone System.

Absolutely ludicrous, Madam Deputy Speaker, and again what I am hearing from the New Democratic Party, as speaks clearly in their amendment to the throne speech, is an absolute ludicrous position. The people of Manitoba are tired of that kind of poisonous medicine. That is exactly what they have told us. They are tired of that poisonous medicine. Do not spend, do not try to spend our way out of debt. My God, it never worked for 15 years out of the last 20. What would make you think it would work today?

In fact, if you are ever going to pay attention, it should be now. There is a chance to work collectively as members of the Legislature to get Manitoba on a sound, solid foundation. Build on real jobs, take the taxes off the backs of taxpayers, and let them excel as they feel fit to excel, but do not burden them with too much government. Do not burden them with too many taxation policies.

For God's sake let us give them some freedom from that burden. That is what we are asking for. Let us give them some freedom from the burden of socialism. Let us give them freedom from the socialism of overtaxation. Let me not say that we do not all have a responsibility. I want to talk, and I know the member for the north loves to take some attacks at me for some of the positive actions that I have taken in the north.

Let me ask the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) to put on the record how successful, let me ask the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper), let me ask the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) how successful the New Democratic Party policies were for employing the Native people of the north. They were a disaster, Madam Deputy Speaker, and they had 15 years and how many millions of dollars, how many millions of dollars?

An Honourable Member: Did they solve a problem?

Mr. Downey: No, no. What is the unemployment rate of the northern communities, Madam Deputy Speaker? What do the member for Rupertsland and the member for The Pas say is the problem with the north? No job opportunities for the Native people after 15 years of New Democratic policies. They were a disaster, 15 years of misdirecting the Native people of this country to continue to think that it is the government that has their answers.

Why do they want self-government, Madam Deputy Speaker? It is because the New Democratic Party and the Liberals of Ottawa failed dismally the Native people of this country. It is not because the Native people are wrong. It is because the bureaucrats and the politicians are continually wanting the Native people to depend on government.

The Native people do not want to depend on government. They want to be free, Madam Deputy Speaker, free of all the shackles of government and socialism. That is what they want, and I want the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) to take a look in the mirror—

An Honourable Member: Freedom, freedom.

Mr. Downey: Madam Deputy Speaker, that is right. That is what the people want. That is what the Native people want: freedom.

Madam Deputy Speaker, do not let the members get exercised. This is—

An Honourable Member: How is your decentralization program going?

Mr. Downey: I will deal with that. The Leader of the New Democratic Party, whose term as Leader will never take him to be Premier of this province—let me put that clearly on the record. He had the chance and let it slide through his fingers. I will take it and put it in this context. What he will be seen as at the next election is yesterday's man for the running of this province, because the old socialist ways, Madam Deputy Speaker, will be so far behind and so outdated, the people, the young people of this country and the voters-to-be will see that the decisions that are made by the Gary Filmon government, by the Progressive Conservative government, will give them a future in this country, will give them a future without having to go to government asking the government to do the things that they would like done. They will ask the government to do the things that must be done—

An Honourable Member: Tax breaks for corporations.

Mr. Downey: Madam Deputy Speaker, who do corporations hire? They hire people. They give jobs to people. What do people do? They pay taxes. What do those taxes do? They give us the musts in our society. They give us education. They give us health care, and they give us the capability to help those who are less fortunate in our society to help themselves.

It does not take a rocket scientist, like the Leader of the New Democratic Party thinks he is, to figure that out. Who generates the wealth?

He is always going after the corporations, Madam Deputy Speaker, as if they are some terrible thing in our society. Why does he have to continue to pick on that path? Because it is great political hidebound, socialist lying that seems to sell to a certain group in our society. When is he going to be part of the solution to get the tax burden off the backs of our people? -(interjection)- That is correct. He continues to be part of the problem rather than the solution.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to make it very, very clear that we have an opportunity, a window of opportunity as members of this Legislature to redirect this province, to redirect it out of the misguided ways of 15 years of socialism, which has truly failed, truly failed in the north, truly failed in the south, truly failed the farm community, truly failed the production groups in our society, Madam Deputy

Speaker. Let us not be driven or let us not be fooled to continue those ways, those ways that have so dismally failed our province and our nation.

I want to make a little more reference to the north, because I think it is extremely important that I clear up the record. Let us take a look at the north as it has evolved under the administration of the New Democratic Party and the Native communities. We have signed an agreement to create employment opportunities by the sale of the Manfor complex to Repap.

* (1130)

The member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) had better assess what is going on in her own backyard. She better come and assess what is going on in her own backyard. I have never read, yet reported in the newspaper, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the Swan River valley, if it were not for Repap and the chipping operation going on in Swan River that there would not be one job in the bush this winter or on the roads with truckers who are operating a chipper because the lumber industry is flat. There is no lumber industry and the need for the additional chips -(interjection)- that is all that was going on in the Swan River forest was the lumber industry. There was not a chipping operation. Now, there is something like 19 trucking firms that are employing people hauling chips. There are some 60 people working in the chipper-related activity in the Swan River valley as it relates to the Repap station.

If the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) would listen once in awhile he may hear that there is something going on rather than a few government jobs that he thinks people should depend on. Let us let the private sector generate the wealth to drive this nation. That is what drives this nation. Swan River has a lot of benefits going for it with the chipping activity, and I would suggest to the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) that she do some work and take a look at it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, let us look at The Pas where we have so many people there looking for employment opportunities. There is a commitment to provide those employment opportunities through private sector funding and Repap, which will give most people an opportunity for jobs.

We cannot provide those jobs, or Repap cannot provide those jobs until the necessary environmental work is done. The member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) has to realize that you cannot

create employment until you do the proper environmental work, or is she, the member for Swan River, suggesting we should ignore the environmental work that has to be done? If so, let her stand in her place and say so, but let us not have her come forward with the rhetoric of no jobs and then say, well, it is a failure to have Repap take on the Manfor operation.

I will refer to what the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) told me about editorials once is he did not really care what the editorials said because nobody reads them anyway. Now he is asking me if I should read them. Well, after having heard that from the member for Concordia I actually quit reading them. -(interjection)-

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Downey: I will get to decentralization if the member will give me an opportunity to do so. I am touching on the north because it is important that I make it clear.

This government acknowledged from Day One, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the policies of the New Democratic Party had failed the north. There were no job opportunities because the Native communities were telling me they had 90 percent unemployment. Recreation was a major problem in the north, but there were not any recreational opportunities. This government, through the co-operation of my colleague, the honourable member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson), and strong support of my Premier (Mr. Filmon), has put in place some 27 recreational districts, some 27 recreational people to help motivate the skills of the young people through sports so that they can become more productive and involved in their communities. Why has the NDP not put in place a recreational program?

An Honourable Member: They started it.

Mr. Downey: Started it, my foot! It was a new initiative by my colleague, the honourable member for River East. -(interjection)- I would hope the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) would take time to take her head out of the rhetoric which she is hearing around her from the New Democrats and pay attention to some facts, because there are 27 northern and Native people working in our recreation communities helping to keep these people more productive in our societies, helping through sports to motivate these people, helping to get them more into the mainstream of life rather than

to get involved in drugs, alcohol and abusive substances. They are trying to redirect them. I am saying the work is to try to redirect them from the abuse of alcohol.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I believe the northern communities see the positive things that are taking place as well as the major contributions that my colleague, through Community Places, made to recreational facilities, to arenas, to all those things that are important.

Let me take on another subject for the north. Why did the New Democratic Party not show more progress in the settlement of the Northern Flood Agreement? Madam Deputy Speaker, we have moved very aggressively to try and resolve the long-outstanding problem which has hurt the communities that are affected by the northern hydro developments.

An Honourable Member: We agree.

Mr. Downey: The member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) agrees. Why do I not hear that in a speech from the members from the north? Why does not the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) for once in his life stand up and say, we appreciate what you are doing? The member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper), at least in private at times, does acknowledge that, except he said he started it. Yes, he started it, Madam Deputy Speaker, but he could not get his colleagues to deliver anything for the north. We have had major development with Repap in the northwest region. We are seeing major investment by Inco. We have seen major resolutions to some of the Northern Flood activities.

Let me talk about Easterville and Moose Lake communities for a few minutes. For 25 years, Madam Deputy Speaker, those communities pleaded for some relief from the forebay problems that were caused in their communities, pleaded for hydro, pleaded for Northern Affairs communities to be looked after in some way, in a compassionate way. The lawyers said there is not a responsibility.

My Premier (Mr. Filmon), the member for Tuxedo, said this is not good enough. He wrote a letter to the Chairman of Hydro, Mr. Brian Ransom, and directed Brian Ransom to give a full investigative review as to what could be done to help those people. Do you know what happened? There was action. There were millions of dollars flowed to Moose Lake, to Easterville, directly to the hands of those people.

Let me say, Madam Deputy Speaker, the NDP did not have the ability or either the commitment to do it. It was a Conservative government to do it and, darn it, I want the people of the province to know that.

Why do we not hear the NDP stand up and give some credit once in a while? I am very proud of our record as it relates to the hydro settlements. -(interjection)-

Well, the member said, we did not settle The Pas and the other bands. There was a process put in place which would identify those communities that in fact should have some compensation paid. It was not our decision. It was a group of people who were employed to do it who had knowledge of the issue.

Let me carry on again, Madam Deputy Speaker, as it relates to the north. Why do we not hear the member standing up and say, we are very pleased to get on with Conawapa; we want to co-operate fully because it means employment opportunities? I have not heard one member of either the New Democratic Party or the Liberal Party stand and say, it is a major initiative; \$5.5 billion will employ northern and Native people; will employ those people who should have jobs, not jobs that are less important in society, those jobs that lead to management, those jobs that lead to a say in the direction of their part of the country. That is what my desire is.

Let me conclude my northern comments by saying, why did the New Democratic Party not give seven communities or nine communities in the northeast area hydro-electric power so that they could live a normal life? Why did they force those people to continue to generate their hydro from diesel fuel that has to be hauled up over winter roads in the most expensive way possible? Why they did not move in that direction, Madam Deputy Speaker, is because there was no commitment to people. It is commitment to politics in the New Democratic Party. That is what their philosophy is. Stay alive, stay in power for their own skins, Madam Deputy Speaker, not for the interests of the people, not for the interests of the community but for the interests of their own self-betterment. That is the New Democrats of northern Manitoba. I can tell you. I can put proof after proof on the record.

* (1140)

Now let me talk briefly and most seriously about Rural Development. I want to make it very clear that

it is my intention to continue to work on the excellent work of the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner). His job as Rural Development minister was excellent. The groundwork that he laid was excellent, and I continue to work and work in harmony with that good friend and colleague, as I intend to work with my colleague and friend from the Portage la Prairie community, who, by the way, Madam Deputy Speaker, has shown through investment, has shown through commitment, in the vegetable industry, employment opportunities for many hundreds of people in Portage la Prairie. I look across the way to see how much commitment there has been from any one of the socialists when it comes to an investment of the magnitude of that member. -(interjection)-

No, Madam Deputy Speaker, that man knows what commitment is. I will stack his record up with any one of these members of this Chamber. I will stack his record up with any member of this Chamber as to his commitment to his province, to his country and to make it worthwhile for people in this country to be part of it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, agriculture is, of course, one of the most important parts of our society. I ask you the question, though, I ask members of the Legislature the question, why are we where we are at with the state of agriculture in today's situation? Why am I getting calls from farmers day after day? I can tell you one of the reasons and why we are having such a difficult time is because society today has said to governments and to policy makers, we want you to look after our likes and we are not so concerned about—we are concerned about our needs, but we have let priorities get out of line. We have let the production of food, the eating of food—although we all like to do it. We have taken for granted the very basic industry that has given us the kind of lifestyle that we have all become accustomed to, and the quantities of food which we have become accustomed to.

Some underdeveloped countries spend 90 percent of their working hours of their population producing a very, very low quality food and a very minimal amount of food. Today the average working person in this country probably spends about 10 percent of their income on food, down from some 15 percent to 17 percent some 10 years ago.

Over half of the food expenditure today is not purchased to eat in one's home. Probably 50 percent of the purchase of food is to eat out of the

home, to eat in a restaurant. I have no difficulty with that but it is a far more expensive way to eat, we all know that.

We have become a society that has forgotten where our priorities are and that is why agriculture and our farm producers are in desperate situations. We as a society have to address that problem and, yes, Madam Deputy Speaker, we can in some way do a patchwork on it again, whether it is through a beef program that we have seen the former administration implement. By the way, we spent millions of dollars and still lost our beef industry as it relates to the packing house industry and the slaughter cattle industry.

We have spent millions of dollars to try and support our farmers through low interest rates on the purchase of farms, and what are we seeing today? We are probably seeing agriculture, because of weather related, and because of a societal lowering of a priority of our agriculture community in our society, we have probably seen that as the biggest devastation as anything going. Yes, we are trying through a patchwork of helping the farmers through GRIP and helping them through this difficult time, but there are some basic structural things that have to be changed.

I am going to dare to walk into territory that one politician should never go, but I am doing it as a Rural Development minister. As long as this nation, as long as this country is prepared to subsidize raw product on rail systems out of this country into foreign markets that are absolutely and totally blocked out because of massive, massive dollars for international country expenditures by, whether it is the European Economic Community or the United States, forcing us, a natural competitor in that field, out of that marketplace because of foreign subsidies, we will have a difficulty, Madam Deputy Speaker. You cannot subsidize a product out of this country and then expect to compete in a subsidized market. It is absolutely and totally not responsible.

I believe we have to come to grips fundamentally with our province becoming the province that has the grain that is produced here, processed here, the sugar beets, all of the diversification that we can muster. -(interjection)- Well, the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) says that we lost. How can he stand up and say you want diversification in processing in this province, and continue to say you want to subsidize the railroads, subsidize those big

multinational companies, the shipment of grain out of this country?

The producers of this country have to be paid and paid fairly. Whether it is through subsidy or whether it is through the marketplace, they have to be paid adequately. Until we come to grips with the fundamental question, then we will have difficulties in rural development, we will have difficulties in agriculture, and we will have difficulties in our society, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I am very pleased to have been given the opportunity to represent northern Manitoba, because I believe if we could get some co-operation, we can work with the Native leadership and resolve some of the difficulties that their young people are facing. If we have the opportunity as a nation to fairly work with some of the fundamental structural problems of policy in this country, we will work to a resolve, but as long as the New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party want to play politics, trying to look after the likes and the wishes and the dreams, then we will not, Madam Deputy Speaker, accomplish the end goal of a great Manitoba, of a great Canada which we are all so proud of.

I will continue to strive for those objectives as long as I have the chance and the privilege to serve that great constituency of Arthur-Virden. Thank you.

Committee Changes

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to make some changes to the committees for next week.

I move, seconded by the member for—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The honourable member for Gimli wishes to make some committee changes.

Mr. Helwer: I move, seconded by the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows: the member for Rossmere (Mr. Neufeld) for the member for Arthur (Mr. Downey); the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) for the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose).

I move, seconded by the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: the member for Springfield (Mr. Findlay) for the member for

Rossmere (Mr. Neufeld); the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) for the member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard); and the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) for the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer).

* * *

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Madam Deputy Speaker, before I go into my throne speech, I want to express the sincere thanks on behalf of my constituents to the two ministers who served in the past cabinet. They have done a tremendous job, from their point of view. Also, I wish the two new ministers the best of luck in their new portfolios and, hopefully, they will do their best job.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I just want to point out I will be addressing my main speech on the health care issue, but I just want to start from the beginning to say that for the last three years since I was elected for the first time the member for Kildonan till today, I have never heard a speech so lacking in ideas. We can sum up that speech in one word. The speech was lacking in any ideas. The Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) has tried to make some comments, and he tried his best. He was very excited, but again without any substance.

* (1150)

Madam Deputy Speaker, I just wanted to point out a very important issue that Canadians are facing today is basically the dismantling of the medicare system in this country. As everyone knows, in 1946 Tommy Douglas introduced the hospitalization act in Saskatchewan, and that was the first thing in the whole western nation to provide the best basic medical services in good times and bad times irrespective of your income level and to take care of the vulnerable population.

Later on, in 1966, the national medical care insurance act was succeeded. Eventually, with the threats of user fees and the other problems with the medicare act, the new Canada Health came into effect in 1984 with the help of the Liberal Party, the NDP, and that time the Tories also supported it, because they were in opposition.

Since 1984 they have changed their tune, and there is no better evidence than the present Bill C-69 that the federal Tories have passed in the House. What that bill will do, Madam Deputy Speaker, is basically dismantle the medicare system in this country over a period of either six or eight or 10 years.

They have done again during this present budget, what they have done, they have frozen the equalization payments, and that will have a serious impact, especially to the provinces like Manitoba, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Newfoundland, because without equalization payments, with the present formula it will be even difficult to maintain the system that we have today. With Bill C-69, they have simply cut the blood line to the health care system.

Madam Deputy Speaker, our Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) spoke for 40 minutes. He did not even touch that issue, which is very, very important. -(interjection)- No, he did not mention about Bill C-69. Bill C-69 is a very important issue in terms of how this government will react to the policies of the federal government. Basically what this bill will do is have a serious impact on the Canada Health Act. The Canada Health Act at present guarantees the health insurance services to all Manitobans and all Canadians. With the present system the medical system will not be sustained as we know it today.

What have we done in Manitoba? We have not done anything. What are they going to do? They are going to offload their problem to the taxpayers of Manitoba and also to the people of Manitoba. How will they do it? They have done this morning by refusing to fund the hospitals. They have done by refusing to fund services, and they are delaying services. When you delay services you are basically cutting services, and they have done this systematically for the last three years in a very smart political way, but the ill effects of their smart ways are coming to the forefront now and people are suffering. Every day there are line-ups for all kinds of medical procedures, all kinds of surgical procedures. What they have done is they have already provided a base for a two-tier system.

If you are rich, if you have enough money, you can get your health services. If you do not have enough money, good luck, wait for six months to one year for even eye surgery. If you have \$800 extra in your pocket, then you can go and cross the line; and if you do not have money, then wait for another six months to one year.

Problems in the health care system are enormous. We have consistently said they will not be solved in a day or month or a year or two years. Basic planning is required. How that basic planning has to work, that planning must work to spend the money in a more efficient way, not necessarily all

the time you have to put more money, but manage the money more effectively. That has been lacking.

We have to have a new direction on how that money will be spent in the future. That answer has not come from this government. Instead, they are looking at cutting services by delaying services. It is a very serious matter, because what the present Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) will do, what his administration will do will have a serious impact for the next five or 10 years, because every time the questions are asked in this House the Minister of Health, in his own way, he said that there was a problem with the previous administration so they have this huge debt, but you do not cut services, you do not do damage to the most vulnerable population at the time when the economy is not doing well. Those are the individuals who suffer the most. That is the wrong direction this administration is taking.

The one who is at the root of this problem is the present government. They have failed to set the directions and priorities for the health care in this province. Instead of taking actions, they are hiding behind the committees.

Alone, the Minister of Health has established almost 25 committees—25 committees for the last three years to look at all the problems. Any problem that came up in a day he had this quick response team, or he has these long-term care plans. So all these committees are being put in place. At the same time about \$100 million over a period of three years has not been spent in the health care, which was approved in this House.

There was \$36 million alone this year so far, and yesterday -(interjection)- give me a chance to explain. Yesterday, the Premier said that we are saving money from Pharmacare. If some saving is coming from Pharmacare, that is well and good, but why do you not spend money in community-based health care, spend that saving for a cost-efficient way to save money in the long run?

We are not asking you to spend some extra money. We are asking you to have -(interjection)- \$100 million over a period of three years cannot be saved only from Pharmacare. Money has been saved from various other sources—

An Honourable Member: Home care services.

Mr. Cheema: —for example, home care. That money must be spent for the community health care to save money for the long run. You can do it. It is a positive step and also it is possible.

We are not going to stop you to spend money in a cost-effective way. We are the ones who have been asking you to spend money in the mental health -(interjection)- I will explain to you.

It is a very difficult proposition, because in the government when you are there, if you are going to spend money on prevention, the effects of prevention are not going to show up in one year, two years, three years. It may take five or 10 years, so what you will do today will save money in the long run.

What I am simply asking is that you have four years planned, four years where you at least do the four years, if you spend money more efficiently in community-based health care and preventative health care, you will save money in the long run and that is the one way of doing it. That is why I am saying that the \$100 million which was saved over a period of—

An Honourable Member: You would save a lot of money if you banned smoking.

Mr. Cheema: That \$100 million could be used more effectively, and the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) knows full well that that money could be used more effectively. That is why I think he is in a very fortunate situation that he has the support from our party on mental health issues, which we think is a very important area where money can be saved in the long run to have the community-based health care, the mental health care.

That credit may not come to your government in the short term, but eventually people will see that you are doing something good for the future. That is what I am trying to say, simply spend smart, spend in a more efficient and effective way and there are pretty good risks for that because if you do something today, you are not going to see the result tomorrow because it is not like a building a building and putting a monument somewhere that says we have this 20-bed hospital, so vote for us, no.

* (1200)

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

You are in a way politically taking a risk, but for the good of people that must be done because if we do not do it today, we will have the problem in four years time and the health care funding and the expenditures will not be controlled.

It does not matter who is the Minister of Health, who is the deputy minister, who are the bureaucrats;

basically, the system has gone out of control. The system must be put under control in a more efficient and more community-based care and that will come with time, but we want to see some direction from the Department of Health, from the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). That is why when we raised the question yesterday, I asked if you had saved \$100 million.

I suggested to the Minister of Health that some of the money can be saved immediately from Pharmacare. That is one way, but that money should be used in the other community-based program to make sure that you will be able to save money in the long run and I hope that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) understands that point. It is a difficult one in the short term, but for the long term, for the good of the people of Manitoba, it is very important.

People all across the nation, they have taken the mental health reforms in this province in a very—they are really giving a good look at our mental health reform and they have faith that something is being done in terms of how you are going to transfer the institutional care to the community-based care.

Right now we spent almost more money than any other province on mental health, but are we still healthy? Are we more healthy than anybody else? The answer is no, simply. Our suicide rate is less than somebody else? No. The problems are still the same, but how are we going to manage those dollars effectively? How are you going to say that the balance in the budget, in terms of the institution versus the community-based mental health care?

That is why when we raised the question of the Health Sciences site, the new building, that was my major concern. You are putting a \$43 million building without planning, and the Minister's own counsel has said that is wrong. Why do you do something which is not right? For a short political gain, if we are going to just do the same thing that the other administration has done, you are not doing any good to anyone, because ultimately it is going to show up. We are accusing the NDP, and some day the other party will accuse you. You have a chance to do something good, and we are asking you to move into that direction.

Then when we ask those questions in the two minutes of Question Period, we are trying to put everything together. You just pick up the one where

we want to ask you to spend more. We are not. We are asking you to spend smarter. That is all we are asking you—\$1.7 billion on a 1.1 million population is a lot of money. We are spending as much money as the other parts of the western nations. I think it is very important that we should move in the right directions.

I just want to go into some of the deficiencies a bit before I give all the good ideas. What did we have? In the first or second throne speech, we will have the best cancer screening program. We had full discussion in the Health Estimates why the program was not put in place, and the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) said there was some problem with some of the research articles which came. It was at that time, we wanted more study, but now we want the Minister of Health to initiate that program, which will save money in the long run. He knows that the statistics are very clear, that one in nine women will develop breast cancer and, if you can have the mammography done at an earlier age, it is very cost effective, cost efficient and saves a lot of human lives in the long run. That has not been done so far. -(interjection)- Yes, we will wait.

The other area is the area of home care services. The minister says that for the last two years they have saved—I do not have the exact figure—or they have underspent some amount of money in the home care. The minister says that the money was saved because people were not asking for services. That may not be true. We do not have specific examples, because it is very difficult for people to come forward with their names. I would be the last person to use somebody's personal name in this House unless we get their permission. It is a very effective and very efficient way of saving money in the long run. People would like to have their grandparents in their own homes or extended care facilities or personal care homes so, if you combine the home care services with the personal care homes as well as the extended care facility, you will save money in the long run.

Mr. Speaker, what do we have now in terms of the shortage of professionals? We have a shortage of almost every category of specialists, except the primary care physician, in the city of Winnipeg. We have multiple problems. We have a system where we have too many physicians in one part, and we have no physician in some parts of the province. We have at least 15 to 20 communities at any given time which do not have a permanent primary care

physician. Are we doing anything to improve that? In spite of the Standing Committee on Medical Manpower for the last so many years, much improvement has not been achieved, but that can be done. I will continue to press for my program which we proposed, that there is a way of solving that problem. That was given to the Minister of Health. He said that was okay. That is a good suggestion, having a two-year internship program.

We have all these people who would like to work, and they are here. Why not use them? That will solve the problem for five or 10 years to come. That may not be politically popular for your government, but it will be good for the people of Manitoba.

What have we seen, though? The Health Sciences Centre is without a head of the cardiovascular surgery department. Dr. Parrott left for a number of reasons, and he is a good doctor. We have a drain of so many specialists who are leaving the province because of a disparity of the fee structure between the different provinces. Nothing has been done to solve that problem. We have a shortage of anesthesiologists in almost every hospital. We have raised that question a number of times. What has the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) done? He has done nothing in that area, absolutely. He is lucky that we have at least emergency coverage. It was supposed to be withdrawn at a couple of hospitals, but it was solved.

How long is it going to be? Every week you have to go back to the table and solve all those problems? Some permanent solution must come. You have a four-year mandate; do it properly. Do it sensibly and spend smart.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen the strike of the nurses' union. It was the longest strike in the western nation, not only in Canada, but in the rest of the western democracy. With a strike for one, or more than one month, we saw allegations and counter-allegations, but there was no positive direction of good faith coming from the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). I will criticize him on this point, because he had the opportunity to put forward all his proposals through the MHO. He promised us in this House that he will do it. It took him more than a week to do that. That created a problem, and it created a sense of animosity. I think that is the wrong approach. When we are on the verge of developing new policies and reform in the health care system, you do not pick fights with your partners. You work with them, and that is one way of doing it.

He should have worked with them and that was not done. It took more than one month, and the backlog created during that time is going to show up now. It will show up. We will have many stories.

An Honourable Member: The best settlement, Gulzar, ever offered to them, a tremendous settlement, outside of Sterling Lyon—

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, we are not talking about only the settlement in terms of the financial gain, we are talking about the whole package, how that profession would play a significant role in the future. That was not being discussed at the earlier stage.

An Honourable Member: Tell us how much more money you would have given them if you do not like what we did, because you have not offered any solution except more spending to date, Gulzar.

Mr. Cheema: No. We are offering you a lot of solutions. What did the Premier (Mr. Filmon) say? The Premier was more busy with his canoe in the campaign rather than talking about the real issues affecting the people of Manitoba. Ultimately, the canoe is going to tip to the right.

Mr. Speaker, all these examples are telling us that we are seeing a slow death of the health care system. Whether it is by the federal government or by the funding structure or by the decision makers or by the previous administration, basically we are in a mess, but that mess has to be solved. Somebody has to take the responsibility, and who will be a better person than the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), when he is in charge of making decisions? That has been missing.

* (1210)

Mr. Speaker, the minister set up his Health Advisory Network task force almost two years and close to, I do not have the exact figure, but close to a million dollars we are supposed to spend on this network. Only a single report has come so far, just a single report, and that report was on Deer Lodge Hospital. I think that is really a sad story, absolutely a sad story.

Why do we have all these committees when they are not going to bring forward their reports? Every time you ask him a question, wait for the network's report. Is that a right way or an open way of doing things? No, it is not.

Whatever is happening in the whole system, it has created a two-way system, as I said earlier already, one for the rich and one for the poor, and it is going

to happen ultimately. It does not matter. It is just a matter of time if the things are not addressed now. Every health care professional, all leading people, irrespective of their political affiliation, and they are talking about the same thing, but we have to have answers, and answers must come in terms of a compassionate way to take care of the vulnerable population, take care of the poor and those individuals who are not able to take care of themselves.

You must support the vulnerable population of society. That can only be done if you have the social network put in place, families services along with health care and education. At a time when the -(interjection)- All those factors are important. Your government has given 2 percent basically for the Education funding.

Education is the background of any given community, and I think we should have learned from the Native communities what was done by not providing education to them. We have almost killed their generation, and if we are going to do the same thing now, you are not doing anything good for anyone. Education is the most important asset of a human being.

Without education, you are just putting yourself a generation back. What has the government done? They have offloaded their problem to the school boards, and the school boards are going to offload their problems to the taxpayers, and what have they done?

The other issue which is very important, at least to one-third of the population of this country, is the English language. One-third of our people do not speak the English language in their homes. It is not their first language. If you want them to come here, if you want them to progress here, if you want them to be very productive, give them the ways of doing things.

Cutting their English as a Second Language does not make any sense. Putting that program in the Department of Culture and Heritage does not make any sense. I mean, what will be the best place for the education, school board or your Culture and Heritage department? It is politicizing the whole system. That is the problem here.

Mr. Speaker, I am telling you very straightforward and very sensible things here. If they do not want to listen, it is their problem, but that ESL program is very important and must be re-established and must

be a part of the school board rather than the Minister of Culture and Heritage (Mrs. Mitchelson) so that she can politicize that department in the long run. We have seen that, how they have done with MIC, how they have done with the other cultural grants. It is a matter of time when things will come out from her department as well.

Mr. Speaker, let us talk about the economy. We have an unemployment rate at 9.5 percent. Many people in my constituency even do not have \$5 jobs. They do not have jobs. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) gets up from his chair and says, you cannot throw money, we cannot do this, let people take responsibility for themselves. You do not do that in bad economic times. Help them. They need the help of the government. There is not a single word of a new program for people who are unemployed in his speech. No idea, single word—this speech was without any specific ideas at all.

What are the indicators of poverty? Soup lines, food banks, unemployment rate, domestic violence, alcoholism, suicide rate—they are all there, but they cannot see for themselves. Absolutely. I am really astonished that the government has not put a single program for improvement in the unemployment and providing the training spots or doing something to enhance the economy. Absolutely, it is a disaster.

He simply has to go to The Maples and see how many of these people have lost their jobs. Start with Varta Batteries. Start with all the garment factories, \$5.40 jobs, and they expect them to pay the mortgage, pay the car payment and pay for the immigration \$250 fee from that \$5.40. That is their philosophy. Absolutely, I think they are not in touch with the reality of people. -(interjection)-

Absolutely. It is the only democracy in the western world where the election was decided only based on a basketball team and a canoe. It was very sad. The election was decided on a canoe and a basketball team. A canoe and a basketball team was the platform. I mean, we do not need actors. We need the educators. We need the reformers. We do not need the actors on the shows.

Mr. Speaker, what has been happening to the other issue I want to discuss, the Native people of this country? These people have been ignored politically, socially and economically. The death of Meech Lake followed by the crisis at Oka has given rise to the new sense of obligation to the Native people of this country. Society at large finally has

come to acknowledge that the various governments have used the policy of divide and conquer among the aboriginal communities, and finally they are working under one roof. It is very positive. -(interjections)-

Mr. Speaker, I am having some difficulty because of the discussion going on between two of my colleagues across, the left and the right. I just want to request you to let me—

The Native people must be given the right that they deserve in our society. They are the owners of this country. They should never be ignored ever again and they will not be. I was going through some of the research articles. It is very interesting to see how the health care of the Native community has been ignored for almost 100 years, as of 1867 when the first BNA Act was signed.

In the first treaty there was no clear indication of any health obligations and every government said it is the responsibility of the next government so they have been ignored, 300,000 people of this country have been basically ignored for almost 110 years. Is that not a sad story? Then finally somebody woke up and said, too much, we are going to stop this. I think it was done in this House and that was a very proud moment for me personally.

Mr. Speaker, there was not a single word of any aboriginal thing in this Speech from the Throne—again justify the word. There is no substance in the whole throne speech. I was very sad.

* (1220)

Mr. Speaker, I will sum up my speech now. We are in tough economic times. The tough economic times, we must manage our economy, we must manage our health care and social services and education system, and to improve that, what can we do? We must spend smarter. We must spend efficiently and we must stand against this Bill C-69, the federal government's bill, which has almost dismantled our health care system. That may be too late because Brian Mulroney will never ever, ever be Prime Minister of this country again and not even a part of his Tories.

We can improve our health care; we can spend smart. We can do better than what the previous 10 or 15 years has been happening and that can be done to have the more community-based, more efficient system and correct the disparities between the professionals, correct the disparities between

the rural and the urban centres, but who is going to do it?

The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) is not going to do it. He is afraid of the unions and doctors and nurses and everyone because he does not get along with anyone. That is the problem. He does not get along with anyone.

An Honourable Member: I like people, Gulzar.

Mr. Cheema: Well, I do not know whether you like me or not, I think that is not important. I think what is important is the basic thing that we are all here to do, the best work possible for our constituents and the people of Manitoba. We will ask the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) to take a positive attitude, have a more co-operative attitude and develop a community-based, cost-efficient way of a health care system and spend smart. Thank you.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate this opportunity on a Friday closing of the House on the Throne Speech Debate to offer my congratulations to our new Sergeant-at-Arms, to our returning pages, and all of the familiar faces around here. I do not welcome all of them, particularly some 20—well, no, I should not say that. After the kindness that was heaped on me by my honourable friend, the Liberal Health critic (Mr. Cheema), how could I be unkind and say, I do not welcome all honourable members of the opposition back to this House?

You know, Mr. Speaker, already we have seen some phenomena in this House, a phenomena which are going to get more and more interesting as this session progresses. Now, I listened with intent to a great deal of my honourable friend, the Liberal critic's remarks. By golly, I want to tell you, he and I have a lot in common in terms of spending smarter. Some of the understanding that my honourable friend, the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), shows of the health care system—it is an understanding that is worthy of discussion in the Estimates process, and I look forward to his contribution.

It also masks a lack of understanding that is voiced often by his Leader, because his Leader does not understand the health care system, the challenges facing us in health care, as her critic, the member for The Maples, does. I will rely on him as I have for the last three Estimates debates, for him to attempt in a very sincere and honest fashion to

bring forward suggestions on how we can spend smarter in health care.

Now that is a challenge that I do not think I can put to the members of the official opposition and have any kind of honest and intellectual contribution from them as I can expect from my honourable friend, the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), because my honourable friends in the New Democratic Party have a significant problem to come to grips with as they approach this session.

My honourable friend, the Leader of the New Democratic Party, the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), is sitting there sort of gloating, telling his caucus—you know, he has used the quick 10- or 15-second news clip to get his point across—you know, we do not have to do anything this session because government has got tough decisions to make. We just sit back and let government make the difficult decisions around what my honourable friend, the Liberal Health critic, calls spending smarter in health care. To make difficult decisions that he knows—my honourable friend from The Maples, with at least intellectual honesty, is saying—needs to be done.

My honourable friends in the NDP are going to sit back and say, oh, the government is just pouring gas over their head and lighting matches daily. That is his 30-second clip of the day. He says we are going to sit back, and we are going to let all this happen, but you know what?

An Honourable Member: Oh, you figured us out, did you, Donnie?

Mr. Orchard: Oh, no. I have not figured you out, but you know what? That is what you have told me you are going to do. I do believe the odd thing the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) tells me -(interjection)- and my honourable friend, the Leader of the Opposition says I should not. He is probably right. That is probably the accurate thing that he has said in this session today.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we are going through a dynamic in this country that has never in the entire history since Confederation challenged all of us. It is not one in which the citizens of this country who elect us to this Chamber are going to tolerate the identification of all of the problems and all of the shortcomings of government without the commensurate solutions being offered from those who would criticize what government is doing. That is why I look forward to the intellectual contribution

of my honourable friend the Liberal Health critic, the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), but I will not get the same thing from members of the New Democratic Party, because yesterday we had the New Democratic Health critic stand up and say we are going to close half of the beds in the hospitals in Manitoba.

What a fearmongering statement, not based on fact, not based on anything and with no other purpose than to try and create fear, animosity, concern that is unfounded and unwarranted. Now, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to my honourable friend the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer), who tells his caucus members, just be quiet, we are going to be government, I am going to be Premier. What they are saying quietly is, not with him. The members of his caucus in the back row may well be saying, we are going to have the next Premier, but it is not the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), because they blindside him, backstab him every day when they set him up in Question Period with false information to pose questions that he has to then go to the press and say, well, you know, I was just a little bit wrong today.

He is going to preface his questions from now on as Leader of the Opposition, I do not think I am right on this, but I want the headline today. Then I will apologize tomorrow for being wrong. That is fine, but the point I want to make to my honourable friend—I say “friend” with the member for Concordia, because he and I could be friends if it were not for

the combative nature of the Chamber. I rather like the guy. He used to be a Conservative. He almost ran for us in the 1986 election, which is the reason why his back bench says, he is not going to be our Premier, because in the New Democratic Party, they demand intellectual purity. You have to be a thrice-dipped New Democrat before you get to the top of the heap in this party.

That aside, Mr. Speaker, I rather like my honourable friend the member for Concordia, but the advice I want to give my honourable friend from Concordia is, do not be the 30-second solution maker for television. The quick fix, the glib tongue, the smart remark, the quick quip for 30 seconds of television coverage is not what the people of Manitoba, the people of Canada are asking from our elected officials. If you have a legitimate complaint about the program, the policy, the direction of this government, you would draw that, but you offer an alternative of what you would do better, where the taxes come from, whether you drive the deficit, whether you cut back elsewhere. That is what you have to—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hour being 12:30, when this matter is again before the House, the honourable minister will have 34 minutes remaining.

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

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Friday, March 15, 1991

CONTENTS

Matter of Privilege

Inaccurate Information re March 14

Orchard	244
Alcock	245
Ashton	246
Praznik	246
Lamoureux	247

Conflict-of-Interest
Alcock; Filmon

251

Members of Manitoba Legislature
Alcock; Filmon

251

Sustainable Development Conference
Chomiak; Filmon

252

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Inner-City Libraries
Barrett; Mitchelson

252

Tabling of Reports

Annual Report, Government Services
Ducharme

247

Inner-City Services
Barrett; Filmon

253

Introduction of Bills

Bill 23, Manitoba Intercultural Council
Amendment Act
Lamoureux

208

Education System
Carstairs; Filmon

253

Assiniboine River
Connery; Enns

255

Bill 22, Manitoba Energy Authority
Repeal Act
Carr

248

Brandon Mental Health Centre
L. Evans; Orchard

256

Oral Questions

Health Care System
Doer; Filmon; Wasylycia-Leis; Orchard

248

ODERS OF THE DAY

Throne Speech Debate

Nursing Profession
Wasylycia-Leis; Orchard

250

Downey 257
Cheema 264
Orchard 270