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of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

DEBATES and PROCEEDINGS (HANSARD)

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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
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
CHEEMA, Gulzar	The Maples	Liberal
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
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
GRAY, Avis	Crescentwood	Liberal
HARPER, Elijah	Rupertslnd	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
MANNESS, 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	Rossmere	PC
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PALLISTER, Brian	Portage la Prairie	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, Hon.	Fort Garry	PC
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
Friday, November 27, 1992

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Mr. Speaker: I am pleased to inform the Assembly that the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a notice respecting the election of Mr. Brian Pallister and Ms. Avis Gray as members for the constituencies of Portage la Prairie and Crescentwood.

I hereby table the notice respecting these elections.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to you Mr. Brian Pallister, member for the Electoral Division of Portage la Prairie, who has taken the oath and signed the roll and now claims the right to take his seat.

Mr. Speaker: On behalf of all honourable members, I wish to welcome you to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba and to wish you well in your parliamentary career.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present Ms. Avis Gray for the Electoral Division of Crescentwood, who has taken the oath and signed the roll and now claims the right to take her seat.

Mr. Speaker: On behalf of all honourable members, I wish to welcome you to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba and to wish you well in your parliamentary career.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Guizar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Elizabeth Touchette, Karen Jonsson, Wanda Kellerman and others requesting the government of Manitoba to consider taking the necessary steps to reform the Pharmacare system and to maintain its comprehensive and universal nature and to implement the use of a health smart card.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

**Economic Growth
Government Strategy**

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in every coffee shop, at every farm kitchen table, at every plant, Manitobans are asking us about the length of this recession, the brutality of this recession, asking us to deal with the challenges of this recession, and I am talking about what this recession is meaning for themselves, for their families, for their relatives and for their friends.

Almost everyone we listened to knows of somebody that has been either laid off or knows of somebody that is fearing a layoff in the next couple of months.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the Speech from the Throne, the word "recession" was notably missing from the government's message to the people of Manitoba. This word "recession" was accurately portrayed in 1991 in the two Speeches from the Throne from this government.

I would like to ask the Premier: In light of the fact that the issue of the recession is not acknowledged in the Speech from the Throne, does the Premier believe we are still in a recession, or does the Premier believe as chair of the economic committee of the cabinet that we are out of the recession?

* (1005)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question.

Indeed, as I have acknowledged in many forums on many occasions in the past while, certainly the economy and the difficult challenges that we face not only as a province but as a nation and collectively as a world, the challenges remain.

It does not matter where you go in this country and it does not matter where you go in this world, there are economies that heretofore had been riding high with year-after-year growth of 4 and 5 percent or greater that are now being brought down to very, very modest levels of growth, if at all. That is true of Japan, that is true of Germany, that is true of the traditional engines of growth that have not been

affected by recessions even in the past decade and beyond. Ones that have ridden through those recessions with steady growth are now being taken to their knees in an economic sense.

What is happening, of course, is not just a recession that occurred in previous years but a restructuring that is taking place worldwide in which people are changing from a production economy to a different economy based on new technology, information age and all of those things.

So indeed we continue to face challenges, and that is what the throne speech is all about, how we deal with those challenges and turn them into opportunities by recognizing the realities of the restructuring that is taking place; that is what the agenda is. That is what we have proposed to Manitobans, and that is why we suggest that we learn from the lessons around us and we do not just simply look for the old solutions and we do not just simply deal with it in terms of the way in which we have dealt with recessions or downturns in the economy in the past. We have to recognize what else is happening out there.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the Premier did not answer the question. The Premier did not answer the question of whether he still believes this province is in a recession or whether it is out of a recession.

In 1991, he mentioned the recession and acknowledged the recession was in existence in this province in two separate Speeches from the Throne.

In 1992, the Speech from the Throne fails to mention the recession. How can you deal with the economic challenges that Manitoba families face, how can you deal with the economic challenges that workers face and farmers face when you are not willing to start with the basic assumptions in our economy, when you are not willing to acknowledge whether indeed we are in a recession or not in terms of the challenges of the province?

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier, in light of the fact that the government is sending out letters to agencies, schools, hospitals, all areas that deal directly with the provincial government, that state, and I quote, we are faced with budgetary decisions in 1993 and 1994 that make past challenges pale by a comparison, would the Premier not now acknowledge that we are indeed in a recession, and will his solution of cutbacks and more

unemployment help us get out of the recession that we are in?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that you cannot sort of tie with a ribbon and paint into a little one-word definition what is happening in the world today.

I know that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) cannot get by and needs to have a quick hit slogan for the media, and this is not a time for sloganeering. This is a time for trying to understand what is happening in the world around us. There is a restructuring taking place in economies that is different from anything that we have experienced in the past, that is different from the simple analysis of, it is a recession.

It goes beyond that. His colleagues who are in government, New Democratic colleagues, recognize that. Mr. Rae is referring to things such as downturns, restructuring, things of this nature, because we are looking for ways in which we can describe to people the fundamental changes that are taking place in the economy and the need for us to look at solutions in a different way.

* (1010)

That is what the throne speech is all about—a new way of looking at these things that are happening and looking for solutions. Not looking for just simple one-word answers, because there are not any simple answers. If there were, the Leader of the Opposition would have those answers, but we do not have them, Mr. Speaker, and so we have to look at it in a much bigger picture. We have to look at it in terms of how we respond to the restructuring, take advantage of the opportunities that are created and build a stronger economy by understanding what we are facing.

Employment Creation Strategy

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, why do we not try an action plan to create jobs and maintain jobs in this province instead of the hollow rhetoric of the Premier?

In 1990 this Premier (Mr. Filmon) came out with a Speech from the Throne that predicted that Manitoba would have doubled the growth in 1991 of all other provinces in Canada. We would double the growth of the Canadian average.

In 1991 when his ministers came in and hacked and slashed and laid people off and created

thousands of unemployed, why our 1991 growth rate as coming in this fall in October, the final numbers show that Manitoba's decline in growth was more than double the next closest province of Ontario, and now we see in the letters to all agencies and the letters to all government operations that we have not learned one thing from their recessionary practices of the past. They are going to do the same thing and even more cutbacks in this year's '93 budget.

I would ask the Premier, how many layoffs and how many more people are going to be unemployed because of his direct action in the provincial government of Manitoba? How many more people are going to go onto social assistance? How many more people are going to go to food banks? How many more people are going to have to go to the unemployment line? How many more people are going to have to leave this province because of the lack of action for jobs by this government?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that because of the actions of this government, the Conference Board of Canada reported just a matter of two and a half weeks ago that this province is enjoying growth in this year, 1992, at the rate of 2.2 percent which they say is tied for the second best in the country. That is as a result of this government's action.

In addition, they report that our unemployment rate is the second best in the country, second lowest in the country, the unemployment rate.

In addition, they report that in the last two months 11,000 more people are working in Manitoba today as a result of the employment growth in the last two months.

In addition, Statistics Canada reports that capital investment in Manitoba is private capital investment. We are having the largest increase of any province in the country in private capital investment '92 versus '91. In addition to that, they are saying that total capital investment is expected to rise at the second highest level of all provinces in the country.

In addition to that, they say that manufacturing capital investment will be increasing at the highest level of any province in the country.

In addition to that, they say that manufacturing shipments for the first nine months of this year are up at the highest level of any province in the country.

In addition to that, they say that manufacturing shipments for the first nine months of this year are up at the highest level of any province in the country.

Those are the things that are happening as a result of the measures that we have taken to keep taxes down, to build our economy and to ensure that there are incentives for investment and growth and job creation in the long term, Mr. Speaker.

Education System Budget Reduction Targets

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education.

The government has offloaded millions of dollars to school boards, which has resulted in huge property tax increases and the loss of hundreds of teaching jobs throughout Manitoba.

Since the government on November 19 has told school boards to expect more of the same—in other words, a freeze—how many more teaching jobs and programs does the minister expect will be lost to Manitoba children in the year coming up?

* (1015)

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, one thing that school divisions have asked of this government is to make sure that they are continually informed about the fiscal position of this province so that they can make their plans very well and with enough time.

The letter was to meet the request of school boards, to provide them with the assistance so that they could do their planning in the most effective way for the children of Manitoba.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, since the school boards must present their budgets in several weeks, will the minister advise this House whether the \$17-million cut will come under the education funding formula that has already been revised three or four times since the government introduced it last year?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, the member has obviously not understood any of the message that has been sent out to the school divisions and to Manitobans.

First of all, the number which has been rumoured is not a number which is to look at the new budget.

What we have done through that letter is to advise school divisions of the fiscal position of this province to make sure that in the planning of their budget they are very well aware of the position and they have enough lead time to do the work.

Mr. Chomiak: My final supplementary to the minister is: Has the minister also sent this same letter talking about the fiscal situation of the government and no increases to schools like St. John's-Ravenscourt that received millions and millions of dollars in increases in the last several years?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, the letter which was sent to advise school divisions was sent to the independent schools in Manitoba. I think that answers the member's question.

Economic Growth Government Strategy

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

The Premier a few minutes ago said you cannot come up with a one-word answer. You cannot use buzzwords. He said we cannot deal with the old solutions, I think was the actual phrase that he used. Yet, in his own Speech from the Throne, in nine separate places he uses the word "innovate" or "innovation."

You know, using the word, Mr. Speaker, does not make it happen. Unfortunately, when you look it up in the dictionary, that word comes out with a definition of, introduction of something new. It says that it means that you must effect change. It says that you have to have a new method or a device.

Will the Premier of this province tell the people of Manitoba what new idea—just one—that he has for getting this economy moving?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Well, Mr. Speaker, the ideas that we have are new when you compare them to Liberal and New Democratic ideas, because the Liberal and New Democratic ideas are, of course, to spend more and tax more.

Governments across this country that have tried that have failed. Those are the new ideas that the Liberals and New Democrats want to introduce to this House.

Mr. Speaker, this government continues to build a better base for economic development, for innovation, for investment, the Economic Innovation and Technology Council that had a very [interjection] The Leader of the third party obviously does not want to hear the answer. She has demonstrated to us in the past the lack of answers that she has. That is why she is in the position she is.

Provincial Comparisons

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): We have heard about the innovation council in Speeches from the Throne in 1988, in 1989, in 1991, in 1992. We have not seen it do anything yet, and that is the tragedy.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier likes to talk about our economic position. Can he explain why his own Bureau of Statistics shows that Manitoba is the seventh slowest in increase in housing starts, why Manitoba lags behind Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia in unemployment, particularly below them in youth unemployment, how he explains how the overall total employment pattern is worse than any other province in western Canada? That is the comparison model that he should use. How does he explain that?

* (1020)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): You know, the Economic Innovation and Technology Council held a major one-day forum earlier this year, about four weeks ago, and this Leader of the third party refused to attend. She was too busy, did not attend, did not find it interesting or important enough to attend. That is the kind of interest we get for real initiative, for real innovative ideas. She will not even listen to the people out there, the people of labour, the people of management. [interjection] The members of the opposition do not want to hear answers, they want to sit there and shout.

I repeat for the edification of the member for River Heights that all she has to do is look at the statistics that are being provided by Statistics Canada and the Conference Board: 1992 growth, according to the Conference Board, for Manitoba at 2.2 percent, tied for second best in the country; unemployment rate, the most recent figures, second best in the country, Mr. Speaker; total capital investment in Manitoba

expected to be this year the second best in the country in total capital investment; the best in the country in private capital investment increase; the best in the country in manufacturing capital investment increase; and the best in the country in manufacturing shipments increase, all of those areas.

Now, she can go and dig through the figures and look for something negative, because that is her wont, but the reality is that the figures speak for themselves, that in the key areas of economic growth Manitoba is performing very well in 1992.

Government Strategy

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, if the council's forum had not been so filled with cronyism and they had not accepted some of the suggestions made by opposition parties as to the people who should have been there, then maybe he would have gotten more representation.

Mr. Speaker, the tragedy is that there are 11,000 Manitobans unemployed in October of 1992 who had jobs in October of 1991—11,000 of them. Our participation rate in the work force has dropped. We have a lower percentage today than we had a year ago. People are leaving this province because they see no hope; they see no innovation. What is this First Minister (Mr. Filmon) prepared to do to give a sense of hope to the people of this province?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I repeat, that in the course of just the last two months of figures, according to Statistics Canada, 11,000 more Manitobans are working than were two months earlier. More so than that, with respect to the people who were at that Economic Innovation and Technology Council Forum, we had a former Labour government Minister of Finance from New Zealand. We had people like Dian Cohen. I do not know what her politics are, Mr. Speaker, but I do know that she is acknowledged worldwide as somebody who is an innovator, as somebody who is an economic thinker of the highest level.

There were almost 400 people at that forum. We had 40 people who were from organized labour at that forum. We had people from the academic and the research community. We had people from the agriculture community.

I do not know what she is talking about, Mr. Speaker. All I know is that she had the opportunity to be there and participate and contribute, and she chose not to. We know what her priorities are.

* (1025)

Health Care System Budget Reduction Targets

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, while this government was presenting a shallow Speech from the Throne, particularly on health care, pink slips were being handed out to dedicated health care professions, and professionals and patients were bracing for the Tory bed shuffle. What is so worrisome is that the 261 beds being cut, as announced recently by the minister, is just the tip of the iceberg and that the two teaching hospitals have been handed much harsher cutback targets.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) today if he will now give us the whole plan, the exact budget reduction targets, the total layoff figures, the number of beds being cut in total, and the impact on services and quality patient care.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I genuinely welcome my honourable friend's question and furthermore, hopefully this session, creative suggestions from my honourable friend as to how governments across Canada, in co-operation even with opposition members, can assure Canadians that the system of medicare is preserved for their use, their needs. That means in this province, as it means in every other province and territory in Canada, significant shifts in the way we deliver health care to preserve medicare for the future.

Mr. Speaker, the uniqueness of the process in Manitoba is that starting with May 14 of this year, we laid out a two-year agenda of that kind of change with goals and targets which would preserve medicare for the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, the second implementation phase of that was announced some 10 days ago in which we set targets, on May 15, of 240 beds which we believed the services of which could be reallocated more economically, without compromising patient care, to other locations of service delivery in the

system. That undertook significant investigation by the two teaching hospitals, resulting in the announcement 10 days ago of the types of beds, 264 in total, between two hospitals and where alternative services will be relocated. That resulted, Sir, according to labour law of the Province of Manitoba, in the kind of layoff notices that went out just this week.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there would be no issue if we were not so open with the process of how we intend to work towards protecting and preserving medicare for the people of Manitoba. My honourable friend would have no issue.

Ms. Wasylcya-Lels: Since the minister will not be forthcoming and answer that question, I would like to table for the benefit of members in this House and the public information from his deputy minister showing cut-back targets three to four times higher than the announced cuts of 264 beds at our teaching hospitals.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health how these two teaching hospitals can achieve budget reduction targets of \$19.7 million without cutting more beds, without laying off hundreds of more staff—which in the words of Rod Thorfinnson on Wednesday of this week, he said this would be absolutely devastating. Could the minister now tell us the whole picture, the impact of these kinds of cutbacks on our hospitals?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, again I welcome my honourable friend's question because part of the difficulty at our two teaching hospitals is that through varying circumstances, shall we say, they have been unable to adhere to the no-deficit policy that has existed since my honourable friend approved that policy at the cabinet table she sat in, in the previous government of the Province of Manitoba. So that part of the difficulty at our two teaching hospitals is a carried-forward deficit because they were unable to achieve their management targets of budget in the last couple of years, not the least of which, Sir, are circumstances which have impacted on them, for instance, from information technology, a subject my honourable friend may wish to discuss and debate at a future date.

* (1030)

Part of the direction that we have given to our two teaching hospitals to be emulated across the system is to no longer use the standard reduction of services of closing beds and lay off nurses, but to look at their management structures, an issue that has come forward every single time to flatten those, to adjust those. We expect to see some significant savings in reduction of management at our hospitals, a topic brought to our attention by the nurses union and other—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Employee Redeployment

Ms. Judy Wasylcya-Lels (St. Johns): Rather than handing out pink slips, would this minister hand out a government-sponsored plan for redeployment, retraining and re-orientation for nurses and other health care professionals so that nurses and others can work in this new restructured community-based health care system that the minister is so wont to tout? Would he tell us exactly, Mr. Speaker, what are the details of his Health Services Provider Commitment Plan outlined on page 47 of his plan of action?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, again that initiative is well in process in collaboration with the management, with the union representation of varying disciplines who are affected in these shifts of services from teaching hospitals to community hospitals and community. Those initiatives of retraining for redeployment are in process.

I have to say—and we knew this when we started the process—one of the complexities in achieving a shift from hospital to hospital, for instance of nursing personnel, is the existence of individual contracts facility by facility which triggers the bumping process which causes some angst within the facility. But we have asked for co-operation from the union, leadership from the union, and we expect to receive same to assure an orderly transfer of personnel institution to institution despite the existence of individual contracts, because that is in the best interests of their membership in the health care system, Sir.

Mining Industry Employment Decline

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the First Minister.

If any group in Manitoba has a reason to feel certain despair over the throne speech and the lack of direction, the drift that is apparent in this government, if there is any group that would have to be concerned about their future in Manitoba because of the degree to which this First Minister is out of touch with Manitobans and with the problems they face, it is northerners.

Since this First Minister took office in 1988 three communities have been closed, in effect, by mine closures, and layoff notices have been handed out in the hundreds.

My specific question to the First Minister is: Can the First Minister tell this House and the people of Manitoba how many layoff notices have been issued in the last week?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, unlike the administration of which that member sat as a government member, this government has been very proactive as it relates to the mining industry in Manitoba.

I can name several of them, if the members would take the opportunity to listen: a \$55-million loan commitment for a \$187-million upgrade of the smelter in his backyard, right in his constituency; major mining tax incentives for a new mine to be established in any community in the North without paying any tax until the capital is paid for; prospectors' assistance.

The members well should know, if they have any experience at all in the communities which they represent, that you have to find new orebodies to have mines, Mr. Speaker, something that is quite often strange to those members opposite.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, that is how out of touch this government is. Six hundred and fifteen people received lay-off notices last week, 615 working people.

My question to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon), who obviously is out of touch, does not know the answer, what does the throne speech offer the people of Snow Lake who are losing their homes, their jobs and their community?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, the day that any mine opens is the first day that it starts to close, because there is a limited amount of ore that is available to be taken out. New mines have to be found. We have put in place, like we did for Lynn Lake with the Department of Labour, from the Mining Reserve Fund, a program to support those people to retrain them and help them during times such as they are facing at this particular time.

Mining Reserve Fund Education/Retraining Programs

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): The Minister of Energy and Mines should get in touch with the people of Lynn Lake, who find the amount of assistance offered by the government disgraceful.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the First Minister, who seems not to care about 615 people losing their jobs or their communities, is: The Snow Lake Community Adjustment Committee has presented a proposal to government for a training and retraining education package. Will the First Minister today, given the extreme difficulty that community faces, accept that proposal, agree to fund that proposal out of the Mining Reserve Fund so that at least the miners and their families may have some other opportunities perhaps in other provinces?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, I want the House to know and the people of Manitoba to know that my colleague the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) and departmental people from the ministry of Mines were in the community of Snow Lake last Sunday, where my colleague passed out a cheque for \$100,000 to assist getting on with some of the work that has to be done.

The program that is in place and the formula is not unlike what was in place when he was the minister, Mr. Speaker, when it was the closing down of Fox Lake. Now if it was not appropriate at that time, why did he not change it at that time? We are in fact looking at other ways that we can help the communities, but the best way is to find new mining deposits so that we can have new jobs and new opportunities for the people of the mining sector.

Education System Budget Reduction Targets

Ms. Avls Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education.

I was looking forward to the throne speech yesterday and hearing some substance, particularly pertaining to education. However, since there was no substance in the throne speech on the area of education we will have to leave that document aside and look at the real issues facing the education system.

Mr. Speaker, it has been reported that \$17 million would be slashed from the Education budget. Will the minister tell this house: How does the cutback of \$17 million fit into the reform plan, and where would those cutbacks be made?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I too was interested in the reform in education plan that my honourable friend attempted to release about three days ago. She released in her plan for education all of the initiatives that this government presently has in place, initiatives like Workforce 2000, legislative reform, parental involvement.

There were absolutely no ideas from my honourable friend, Mr. Speaker. We brought forward a number of new ideas in our throne speech, and I think it is very important for the member to begin to consider that we are looking for true educational reform in this province through the plan laid down in the throne speech.

Parental Involvement

Ms. Avls Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us then if she supports our parents' bill of rights and, if not, what other legislative reforms will she have in order to give parents more of a say?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, we are, as we said in the throne speech, very interested in making sure that parents are recognized as important stakeholders, and it was in the throne speech, in answer to the questions from the other side. We have looked for the increasing role of parents partly through our legislative reform document as well, and

we will be looking forward to sharing that with Manitobans in the very near future.

Department of Education and Training Assistant Deputy Minister

Ms. Avls Gray (Crescentwood): Will the minister tell this House: How does the firing of Mr. Ed Buller, Assistant Deputy Minister for Program Development & Support Services, fit into this minister's plan of education reform?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, in the Department of Education we will be looking very carefully at our process of reform and we will be making very clear that we are looking for very excellent people to be moving ahead with our reform program.

Civil Service Employment Reduction

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of talk from this government about new, but there is a new reality of the hurt, the pain that people in this province are feeling, people who have lost jobs and those who are in fear of losing their jobs.

That is particularly the case right now in terms of civil servants in this province. There are indications that this government is once again going to be cutting back severely in terms of Civil Service jobs in this province.

I would like to ask one very straightforward question to the Premier so that he can give a clear indication to civil servants and their families what the situation is going to be, and that is very simple. How many more Civil Service jobs are going to be eliminated from the Province of Manitoba through the policies of this government?

* (1040)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, there is nothing in the throne speech that indicates that there is going to be a wholesale removal of positions from the Civil Service. The reality is that like every administration in the world today, we have to continue to review and evaluate what we do with the limited tax dollars that we have available to us. We have to continue to strive to be more efficient. We

have to continue to strive to provide services more effectively to the people that we serve and the people who give us their money, entrust it to us, to be able to provide them with services as effectively as possible.

In every respect, we are going to have to continue to do what is being done worldwide, which is to do more, because people continue to have greater and greater expectations of their government—we hear the demands every day from across the way—more without spending more money in order to achieve that.

It is a process of reinventing government. It is a process of ensuring that we can do a better job for the taxpayers of this province. In that, there is the matter of efficiency, and in that there is the matter of always evaluating how we do things and striving to do them better.

In the course of that, from time to time, there are shifts that take place that involve what may be fewer people being able to do the same job. We have to recognize those opportunities. We have to take advantage of those opportunities. We have to do them to ensure that government remains efficient and remains true to the taxpayers' wishes of keeping their tax load down.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I did not ask the Premier for a recollection of all the world's statesmen he has talked to in the last little while and what they think.

I asked him very simply: What is he as Premier going to be doing in terms of Civil Service positions in this province? Is it going to be like last year when he said there were not going to be any cuts, and in excess of 300 positions were eliminated? How many people are going to lose their jobs?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, you see, this is the interesting thing. This member is interested in featherbedding. He is interested in the old kind of mentality, which is to keep upping the numbers, to keep puffing up the numbers.

There were only 39 actual layoff notices that were given last year—39. That is all he is talking about, Mr. Speaker, and he puffs that up to 300—yes, indeed.

How many people, that is what we are talking about, 39 people, Mr. Speaker, because we as a government continue to strive for more efficiency, for more effective delivery of our programs, because

that is what the taxpayers believe we should be doing. That is what they depend upon us for.

All he wants to do is drive up the numbers, put more people on the payroll and raise the taxes of people like he did for six and a half years in government.

That is not acceptable, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, all I want is an answer. If the Tory benches think that was an answer, they have more serious problems than even I thought.

They eliminated 954 positions in their first majority government budget. They eliminated in excess of 300 last year. How many jobs are going to be eliminated by this government in the upcoming year—how many jobs?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I want to repeat for the edification of the member for Thompson, our goal, our objective is not to have to raise taxes in this province. In order to do so, in times when we are having reductions in transfers from Ottawa, when we are having as a result of losses carried forward by corporations lesser revenues than we would like to have, Mr. Speaker, the only thing we can do is ensure that government operates more efficiently and more effectively. That means that we have to restructure government in certain ways and make it more efficient, and that is what we are going. If he believes that we should not be doing that, then he should say so, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Nonpolitical Statements

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, may I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

I simply want to acknowledge and recognize that our football team in this city is on its way to the Grey Cup this weekend. I want to ask and invite all members to join in wishing them well in their competition in Toronto on Sunday.

This is an important event not just in the sporting community, but I think it is an event that has united Canadians in the past and will again in the future. The game is in Toronto but involves two teams from western Canada.

I think we all wish them well, wish our team well in Toronto, look forward to a highly competitive and

highly entertaining game as usual. Of course I think we would be remiss, and I would not be totally open if we did not say that we of course hope or at least I certainly hope that the Blue Bombers emerge victorious, but we look forward to a competitive game.

Now one other thing the members have been indicating in Question Period that my colleague the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) has been wearing Tory blue. In fact, it is Blue Bomber blue today, Mr. Speaker, that she is wearing. I simply wanted to clarify that. Thank you.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I certainly on behalf of all my colleagues—

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable First Minister have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Filmon: On behalf of all my colleagues in government, I certainly want to join with the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) in wishing the Blue Bombers well. I will not be so timid about my partisanship as I normally am, but I will tell him that I have no hesitation in saying that we are firmly 100 percent behind the Winnipeg Blue Bombers. We do not worry about people who might want to cheer for the Calgary Stampeders. We believe that we have the best team in the Grey Cup, and they represent the best city and the best province in Canada. We are going to be out there cheering for them, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Jerry Storle (Flin Flon): May I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to join with my colleague from St. James and the Premier in wishing the Winnipeg Blue Bombers all the best, of course, in the upcoming game. We expect that the Blue Bombers will win and my caucus certainly, to a person, is going to be I think supporting the Winnipeg Blue Bombers.

I did want to say that there is another team in Toronto working on behalf of Manitobans. I think it would be appropriate for this Legislature and certainly our party to wish Mayor Thompson well in seeking to re-establish Winnipeg as a home for the next Grey Cup game or the Grey Cup game in the future. The Grey Cup event here in Winnipeg had been a significant boom to tourism and to the local

business, and I think that other team should also be encouraged. We hope that Mayor Thompson will bring back good news that Winnipeg will be again the site of a Grey Cup in the future.

MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock), that under Rule 27.(1) that the ordinary business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely, the Introduction of Sunday shopping in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker: Before determining whether the motion meets the requirements of our Rule 27, the honourable Leader of the second opposition party will have five minutes to state her case for the urgency of debating this matter today. A spokesperson for the government and the official opposition party will also have five minutes to address the position of their party respecting the urgency of debating this matter today.

* (1050)

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, there are two specific rules in the House which leads to the introduction of a debate under Rule 27. One is that notice be given, and I believe that we have in fact dealt adequately with that having given notice just at midnight last evening of our desire to do this; secondly, there has to be no other reasonable opportunity to debate this particular motion.

Now normally speaking, Mr. Speaker, we would be in a Speech from the Throne debate which is a wide open and public process and any matter could be debated at that particular point in time, but we are dealing with a very special day in terms of the Throne Speech Debate. It has been traditional in this House that today's debate would be given to the mover and the seconder of the Speech from the Throne. It is rare that any member of the opposition gets an opportunity to debate on this particular first working day of a legislative session. If Sunday shopping was not taking effect until the following Sunday, then it could indeed be ruled, I think, that the Throne Speech Debate was an adequate opportunity for people to dialogue on this very

critical matter, but this is not the situation. This action is taking place this Sunday.

The mover of the Speech from the Throne, if the mover takes the traditional time, will in fact be speaking until about 11:40. The seconder will then be speaking until 12:20. We adjourn at 12:30.

That does not give any opposition member in this Chamber the opportunity to present to this government why we believe they should hear a range of opinions with respect to Sunday shopping and not simply the narrow views of that expressed by their own cabinet. We believe that there are even members of their own back bench who might like to participate and express their concerns about an initiative which I think all of us would recognize is not truly a valid study. Anything which is put into place for five months generally becomes a fait accompli. All we have to do is look at the actions of the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Mitchelson), who changed gambling hours for the summer and then they went on forever.

Mr. Speaker, we truly do believe that this meets the obligations under Rule 27. There is indeed no opportunity for members of the opposition. There is indeed no opportunity for members other than those two who have been designated by the government to be the mover and speaker on the Speech from the Throne. In order to deal with this matter, which is of concern to Manitobans, we must deal with it today.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Indeed there are a number of tests that we apply in this House as to whether a matter of urgent public importance is in order. I think if one looks at the situation, there is some argument that can be made in both senses. Obviously, we are in the Throne Speech Debate and, normally, that does allow a fair amount of leeway in terms of allowing debate on a wide range of issues but, on the other hand, there is a very specific role.

This is perhaps the one day of debate, as the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) pointed out, that is very specifically by tradition reserved for the speeches of the mover and seconder from the Speech from the Throne. In fact, in the years that I have been in the House I have never seen a divergence from that, Mr. Speaker.

We believe that that is important. It is a very important opportunity for the mover and seconder of

the throne speech to be able to speak, and I believe that it is a tradition that we all share an interest in. That is the dilemma that faces us today, Mr. Speaker, and you in your ruling as to whether there is another opportunity.

The second point indeed, Mr. Speaker, as has been pointed out, is that this issue of Sunday shopping has apparently been decided in cabinet. It is being implemented this Sunday before we have even had a debate in this House on legislation to bring that in. I would take from the throne speech that we are going to have retroactive legislation on Sunday shopping in this province, and that is absolutely reprehensible.

It places us in a difficult position today in the sense that even if we have this matter of urgent public importance debated, it will be nothing more than a generalized debate and will not give us the opportunity to do what we really want, which is to deal with the issue in a bill so that we can debate it and we can vote and have a decision made by this House.

Let us not forget, this issue has traditionally been dealt with on an all-party basis. It was dealt with by the NDP government by all parties. This government showed its new level of highhandedness, its autocratic behaviour by ramming through something in its cabinet and then dictating that to the province of Manitoba before it is even dealt with in the Legislature. That is unacceptable. For those reasons we would certainly welcome the chance to debate this.

I would suggest that if the government has concerns about a matter of urgent public importance, the way we could deal with this matter right now is for them to announce when they are going to bring in the bill, the retroactive bill, and announce when we are going to have the opportunity, as members of the Legislature, to speak out on behalf of our constituents. In my case, point to the mistakes this government is making by pushing ahead, ramming this through, when even some of their own caucus members do not even agree with this.

So the bottom line is, Mr. Speaker, we want a debate on this issue. More importantly, we and the people of Manitoba, and not just the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, but people in the city, people in the rural areas and in the northern areas, want more than a matter of urgent public importance

for debate. They want to have a say, and it is about time the government of Manitoba let them have a say.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, the great left-wing coalition of this province is still alive. Here we have a situation today where the opposition parties are trying to argue for the urgency of debating Sunday shopping.

The throne speech makes reference to the fact that the government will be bringing in legislation dealing with this issue. Let me say that I have given notice, at least my office has given notice to the Clerk's Office. I believe that the Order Paper on Monday, if not Tuesday, will indicate that the bill dealing with Sunday shopping will be introduced for first reading next week. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, as soon as the Throne Speech Debate is concluded, we will obviously be calling that bill for second reading at that particular time.

Let me point out, Mr. Speaker, the bill will be enabling only. It will not force anybody to shop on Sunday. It will not force anybody to work on Sunday. So the argument is not whether or not this bill is debated before Sunday coming. That is a ruse.

Mr. Speaker, let me also say, though, that the weakest argument put forward by the opposition is that tradition dictates that members opposite cannot speak today. That is not a rule. Any member today can get up and speak after the seconder. I am led to believe that the total number of minutes that our mover and seconder will consume for the Throne Speech Debate totals roughly between 40 and 50 minutes. So there will be ample time for the Leader of the Second Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs), if she so chooses, to get up and make her presentation. It is a wide open debate.

For those reasons, Mr. Speaker, I say to you that there obviously is no urgency. There is obviously an incredible opportunity to debate this issue over all of next week, over all of the Throne Speech Debate and, indeed, more importantly, my promise to the House that this will be called in a bill fashion for second reading as soon as we have considered the Throne Speech Debate.

* (1100)

Speaker's Ruling

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank all honourable members for their advice as to whether the motion proposed by the honourable member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) should be debated today.

I did receive the notice required under our subrule 27.(1). According to our Rule 27 and Beauchesne's Citations 389 and 390, there are two conditions to be met before a matter of public importance can proceed. They are: (a) the subject matter must be so pressing that the ordinary opportunities for debate will not allow it to be brought on early enough; and (b) it must be shown that the public interest will suffer if the matter is not given immediate attention.

With the respect to the timing of the discussion of the matter, there are no other opportunities for this Assembly to discuss the matter before Sunday shopping commences on a trial basis in Manitoba on Sunday, November 29.

Regarding the second criteria for discussion of a matter of urgent public importance, that having to do with the urgency of the matter, I am not convinced that the matter is so pressing that the public interest will suffer if it is not given immediate attention by being debated today. I am aware that members view the matter to be a pressing one, and I understand this issue will affect a large number of people in the work force and business, but I am not convince that the public will suffer.

Therefore, I am ruling that it does not meet the criteria set by our rules and practices. Further, there will be an opportunity for the matter to be debated when legislation is before the House to provide for Sunday shopping.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, with respect, I challenge the ruling.

Mr. Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been challenged. Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained? All those in favour, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Mr. Lamoureux: Yeas and Nays, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Call in the members.

The question before the House is: Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?

* (1120)

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

Yea

Cummings, Dacquay, Derkach, Downey, Driedger, Ducharme, Enns, Ernst, Filmon, Findlay, Gilleshammer, Helwer, Laurendeau, McAlpine, McIntosh, Manness, Mitchelson, Neufeld, Orchard, Pallister, Penner, Praznik, Reimer, Render, Rose, Sveinson, Vodrey.

Nay

Alcock, Ashton, Barrett, Carstairs, Cerilli, Cheema, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Edwards, Evans (Brandon East), Friesen, Gaudry, Gray, Hickes, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Maloway, Martindale, Plohman, Reid, Santos, Storie, Wasylcia-Leis, Wowchuk.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Yeas 27, Nays 25.

Mr. Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been sustained.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

(First Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: Consideration of the speech of the honourable Administrator.

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister), that an humble address be presented to the honourable Administrator as follows:

We, Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, in session assembled, humbly thank Your Honour for the gracious speech which Your Honour has been pleased to address us at the opening of the present session.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Dacquay: Mr. Speaker, I regard the challenge of moving the acceptance of the throne speech as both a privilege and an honour. I would

like to thank the Premier (Mr. Filmon) for providing me with this opportunity.

I would also like to begin by extending my congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, on your reappointment to the Office of the Speaker. I have experienced the challenges of the Chair and I congratulate you for your patience. I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to you and your office, the Clerk, the Deputy Clerk and all of the staff in the Clerk's Office, Hansard staff, the Sergeant-at-Arms and the Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms for their assistance and co-operation extended to me as my role of Deputy Speaker.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all honourable members back to the Chamber for another session and, in addition, I would like to extend a sincere welcome to the two new members of the House, my colleague the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister) and the opposition member the honourable member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray).

I would also like to extend a welcome to our new Pages, and we are impressed with their first initiative this morning: Matthew Jenkins from Selkirk, Jeffrey Peters from Oakville, Trevor Rudge from Portage la Prairie, Tina Sontag from Dugald, Karen Tymofichuk from Winnipeg and Gaetane Manaigre from Lorette. I am sure you will find your time here in the House both rewarding and exciting.

Mr. Speaker, I am always mindful that I would not be here if it were not for the support of my constituents. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the residents of the Seine River constituency for their continuing support and for the input I receive from them as I go door to door and as I attend functions, events and meetings throughout my constituency.

I always enjoy opportunities to meet with constituents and hear them express their views on the state of Manitoba today. I am proud to say, Mr. Speaker, that one of the views expressed most often by my constituents is the confidence and the trust that they have in our Premier, Premier Filmon. As well, they have expressed great confidence to me in our government's ability to properly manage Manitoba's economy.

Mr. Speaker, we are all keenly aware of the difficult times that have been facing Canadians from coast to coast. Conversely, I think that as Canada moves out of this recession we are all aware that

Manitoba is leading that challenge to better times. In 1990, this government made a strong commitment to Manitobans to make our province strong. We are keeping our commitment as Manitoba emerges in excellent shape, because the Filmon government made the right choices.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few moments to put some of the good news on the record. This government has managed to cut and hold the line on taxes for the past four years. I consider that a major accomplishment. We have, while keeping the deficit down, maintained spending levels on the services Manitobans depend on the most—Education, Health, and Family Services.

Manitoba's economy is improving. The unemployment rate is the second lowest in the country. In the last two months, the total number of employed people has grown by 11,000 in Manitoba. That is the best growth rate in the country. As well, recently the Conference Board of Canada announced that Manitoba's real gross domestic product growth for 1992 will share first place with Alberta among all Canadian provinces. I consider that also good news.

More and more employment opportunities are being opened through government initiatives. In the past year, we have developed a number of programs, one of which is Partners with Youth. This is a partnership between business, youth and our government, and it did create jobs for young Manitobans. Another program which benefitted the youth of Manitoba was the program Ready Green Team. This job initiative helps prepare youth for careers in the future.

As I travel across my constituency and across Manitoba, I am extremely interested in hearing what Manitobans have to say. One of the comments that I hear most frequently is the pride that Manitobans have in themselves and in our great province.

A few weeks ago, the Economic Innovation and Technology Council held a forum which brought together representatives from business, labour, government and education to discuss common problems and possible solutions for Manitobans. I was pleased to participate in this forum. From all indications, it was a success, as new contacts, ideas and solutions were developed. This is, I feel, the type of approach we need to the economic challenges which face our province.

This great province of ours has endless opportunities for everyone within its borders. In the past four years, more and more people outside of Manitoba are also realizing this. A number of companies are deciding that Manitoba is the best place in Canada and for that matter the best place in the world for them to do business. Companies like Apotex, Medix and Ayerst in Brandon are just a few that are investing in Manitobans and Manitoba.

Outside of Manitoba, many cities, provinces and countries are discovering what Manitoba has to offer. Last year, Manitoba's merchandise exports were \$3.1 billion. This year, our province's exports are anticipated to grow by 13 percent. For our economy to expand, this type of growth must continue.

We are also attracting many new visitors to Manitoba. One of the best tourist attractions in the province is our feature at The Forks. This government is committed to this area, and we are confirming our commitment with a contribution towards the relocation of the Manitoba Children's Museum to once again enhance The Forks site and its potential as a major tourist attraction. In addition, a brand new, state-of-the-art tourism centre is to be built once again on that magnificent site, our meeting place.

In fact, Statistics Canada recently announced that our province is expected to have the second largest increase in total capital investment of anywhere in Canada. Manitoba ranked No. 1 in private capital investment intentions and No. 1 in manufacturing investment intentions.

* (1130)

The world is a rapidly changing place. As a province, we must be prepared for these changes, because there is a tremendous opportunity for Manitoba to grow, and we must seize the moment. Manitoba has to continue attracting new business to our province for a number of reasons, two of which are to keep the economy growing and to continue the expansion of the province's tax base. The expansion of the tax base means that taxes can be kept down, which makes my constituents particularly happy and all Manitobans extremely happy.

Equally as important, attracting new business will provide an environment conducive for companies to invest in Manitoba. It is a chain that is held together only because each link is strong, and the chain's

success depends on the strength of each link. The government of Manitoba is committed to keeping taxes as low as possible, not only for the benefit of the citizens of this province, but also so we can continue to attract new business from around the world.

As these businesses grow and expand, there are more companies and employees in the province who are going to pay taxes which will allow our government to provide the most important human services—Education, Health and Family Services. Undoubtedly, one of the most important services we provide is that of education. The children of today must be properly cared for, nurtured and educated. We must use the tools of today to ensure that the work force of tomorrow has all of the tools necessary to succeed.

I applaud this government's commitment to education in our province of Manitoba. I particularly welcome one of the government's latest initiatives in continuing its strong role in education, namely, the construction of the new K-9 school, Ecole Highbury, which opened in the River Park South area this past September. I had the pleasure and honour of attending the official opening of this school together with my colleague the honourable Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. Vodrey) just this past Wednesday. This is indeed a facility to be proud of.

In the past year, I have had the opportunity to visit a number of schools in my constituency of Seine River. This provided me with an opportunity to speak to both educators and students and to listen to their concerns about their schools and the education system in general. As a former educator and a proud grandmother of three preschool grandsons, I am deeply concerned about education. My constituency is primarily comprised of young families who have children entering the public school system.

I am pleased that our government will be exploring options toward improving standards and increasing province-wide testing and evaluation in the most important areas such as science, mathematics and language arts. Parents want quality education for their children and we, as a government, must always be looking to improve our education system. To that end, our government will be hosting an innovative forum to discuss the implementation of vital education reforms. Our government has and will continue in the future to make education a top priority. The education that

we provide for today's youth is the inspiration and the training for tomorrow's career.

Another of our government's programs which has enjoyed success is the Community Places Program. This past fall, I had the distinct pleasure of working with the H S Paul School parent association who participated in this program. The parents' association worked tirelessly to raise funds independent of government, and our government assisted by approving a Community Places grant to construct a long-awaited neighbourhood play space and recreation area. I am confident that it will provide the community with lasting benefits for many years to come.

Health care and education are on the minds of my constituents and on the minds of most Manitobans. Our government has maintained priority spending on these vital human services. The necessity and protection of these services cannot be overstated.

In Manitoba one of the most important issues and challenges facing our government is health care. We, as government, have a duty and an obligation to protect and preserve one of the finest health care systems in the entire world. In Manitoba it does not matter how rich or poor you are, how old or young, what your race or your religion is, you are simply entitled to the best medical care that can be given.

As a recent user of our health care system, I am grateful for the excellent, efficient health care that is provided to Manitobans. Recently, our government has taken steps towards improving our health care system. The challenges and problems of the current system have meant a shift in the health care services from high cost institutions to community-based facilities. This is an important move by our government, one which ensures that our children and our grandchildren will have a health care system which will adequately address their needs.

It is the need of Manitobans which guides the government as we attempt to provide Manitobans with the best health care possible. We must take advantage of the latest technologies. With that in mind, I am pleased that the development of computerized health card technology in the area of Pharmacare is a priority of our honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard).

Our government has taken many steps to improve the health care system in Manitoba. This past spring I had the honour of participating in the

opening ceremonies of the Family Birth Centre at Victoria General Hospital with my colleague the honourable Minister of Health. This is a first; it is the first such facility in Canada.

The Victoria General Hospital not only employs numerous constituents of my constituency of Seine River, but it also provides health care services to those residents. This centre was made possible by a \$700,000 capital grant from our provincial government. This innovative centre combines labour, delivery, recovery and postpartum in one room. As well, the patient's stay at the hospital is reduced by half to now 48 hours while reducing costs by combining two separate nursing areas.

* (1140)

As I have mentioned, two of the most important areas of concern to our government and to all Manitobans are education and health care. These two areas came together this past spring to form a partnership in education.

This was once again an initiative of the Victoria General Hospital, and a tripartite agreement resulted between the Victoria General Hospital, Glenlawn Collegiate and the Royal Bank. This initiative saw the hospital assisting students through job training programs and various other educational programs related to the health care field. The Royal Bank and the hospital hosted the students at seminars and conferences and introduced them to skills required that relate to banking and health care. It is a program that I know will be beneficial to both the students, our youth, and the hospital.

One of the things I am most proud of in my constituency is the level of volunteerism. In particular, at Dakota Community Centre, many volunteers give endless amounts of time and energy to the community and our youth. I had the honour of hosting a Canada Day celebration this past summer that included a salute to volunteers. Over 150 volunteers were given certificates and a Manitoba spruce tree was planted to commemorate this special day.

As a member for a constituency with a large number of families, I know how important it is for people to become involved in their community. Many constituents volunteer in numerous organizations, such as Pride, Brownies, Girl Guides, Cubs and Scouts. We all need to lend our wisdom, experience and knowledge to Manitoba's youth.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with this Chamber another example of volunteerism and Manitobans pulling together to accomplish a goal. This past fall was the occasion of the Annual Terry Fox Torch Light Run in St. Vital Park. Once again, together with my colleagues the honourable Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme) and the honourable member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), I had the privilege of participating in this exciting event which is organized and run by many people, including teachers, administrators and students of the St. Vital School Division. Terry Fox is still and will always be a national hero to all Canadians. His legacy of courage pushes all of us to volunteer, to work and to strive for a better tomorrow.

This past spring, I also had the honour of hosting and participating with many dedicated constituent volunteers in the Manitoba Cancer Research Foundation fundraising fashion show. A number of volunteers worked long and hard to make this fashion show a success, and I thank my colleagues who participated. We raised over \$1,200 towards this most worthwhile charity.

Despite the challenging economic times in Canada, the province of Manitoba is leading the way to recovery and prosperity. The government has played a large role in helping to build a stronger Manitoba. Our government is working together quite successfully, I believe, with the private sector and all Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, the basic concerns of people in Manitoba are being heard and are being dealt with. I am particularly proud of our government's record of accomplishments, and I am confident that our government will continue to work with all Manitobans to build a stronger Manitoba, strengthen our economic growth across the province and provide a positive future for the youth of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I am personally committed to those goals, and I will continue to listen to the concerns of the people of Seine River and to work diligently to address those concerns. Thank you.

Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage la Prairie): I expected to be heckled, Mr. Speaker, but by the other side of the House.

I would like to begin, Mr. Speaker, by thanking you and this House for the opportunity to speak today and to second the Speech from the Throne. To begin, I would like to praise the people of my

constituency who have been so supportive and helpful of me during both the election campaign and since that time. As well, I would like to pay tribute to the previous member from Portage la Prairie for his six years of dedicated service to our constituency.

As members of this Assembly, we have a common desire, and that desire is to shape the future of this province. Although our visions may certainly vary at times, I believe that we have that common thread running through all of us. We are not prepared to accept the false fact that our future is one that is predetermined. Instead we choose to believe that we have power; we recognize that other jurisdictions and circumstances may limit the extent to which we are able to influence the future but we persevere in the attempt nevertheless.

I think this is a noble attempt. Other honourable members have preceded us in this esteemed Chamber with these same desires, their circumstances perhaps more similar than different to ours. Their successes or failures, history will judge, but I salute them for their efforts and I salute you for yours. I am deeply honoured to join with you in the attempt.

I believe it is customary, Mr. Speaker, at this time to spend a little bit of time educating my fellow members on my home constituency and I will do so now.

Portage la Prairie is Manitoba's third largest city outside of Winnipeg. It is home to 13,000 people.

Our city and our district offer an impeccable quality of life. From the spectacular features of our beautiful Island Park to our new 18-hole golf course, the deer pens, our exhibition grounds, to the beauty of Crescent Lake, where national water skiing competitions have been held, where car ice racing has been held in the winter and York Boat races have been held as well, the city is indeed a winter and summer wonderland with a multitude of family and individual entertainment opportunities. From organized and casual sporting events at the Centennial Arena to the Republic of Manitobah Park to an eclectic mix of art programming at the Portage and District Arts Council, there is opportunity in Portage la Prairie to get involved.

Indeed we are involved as a community, Mr. Speaker. Our involvement is highlighted by the annual Portage Exhibition, the Strawberry Festival, and perhaps most recently was illustrated in our

successful hosting of the World Junior Curling Championships which saw over 350 volunteers give of their time to put on an event which was of a world-class nature—a credit not only to my constituents, but to all of us in Manitoba.

Urban living blends with country style in my community, Mr. Speaker. We have over 100 community volunteer organizations, a superb educational system from kindergarten to high school.

I believe the presence of two new Pages from Portage la Prairie—Mr. Trevor Rudge and Mr. Jeffrey Peters—is testament to the quality of education in our area.

We offer post-secondary opportunities at the Red River Community College, Patal Vocational Institute, as well as the Yellowquill College. These educational institutions provide excellence in both regional learning venues, and focus as well is placed on our daycares, churches, modern equipped general hospital and personal care home, our new Douglas Campbell Lodge, as well as our fine Herman Prior Seniors Centre. Portage la Prairie is a lifestyles focus of the central region of this province.

Portage la Prairie's government service sector is also significant. It is a regional service sector for the Province of Manitoba. It is home to the Manitoba Developmental Centre. It is the location of Southport Aerospace Centre as well as others. Government recognizes Portage la Prairie as a significant provincial community.

In terms of tourism, I have long felt that Portage la Prairie was the hidden jewel of this province. It is located along major transportation corridors and is ideally located as far as tourism development. Currently there are multitudes of conventions held, sports events draw people from around the province, and in addition our National Strawberry Festival draws tourism dollars from other parts of the province and the country as well as from the United States.

* (1150)

The Delta Marsh, Mr. Speaker, located just outside of our city has long been recognized as a world-class waterfowl staging area, and it has proven to have magnetic appeal to nature lovers the world around. Many of my fellow members, presently and in the past, have enjoyed the beauty of this area. It is interesting to note that in fact in the

1930s and '40s, such people as Clark Gable, Carole Lombard, Ernest Hemingway, Dick Powell visited this area, and it has long been an attractive area in this province.

An Honourable Member: Harry Enns.

Mr. Pallister: And Harry Enns as well I believe.

Agriculture is at the heart of our economy, boasting the richest agricultural land I believe in western Canada, Mr. Speaker. Capable of producing a mix of high-value vegetable grains, special crops, fruit crops, the central region of our province, with Portage as its hub, is indeed microcosm of the entire province's economic base. Farming in the Central Plains Region is big business. Urban and rural economies are married.

In terms of industry, in Portage la Prairie our industry is linked intimately to its agricultural advantage, as it should be. The Agri-Food sector in Portage la Prairie translates into such operations as McCain Foods, Woodstone Foods and the new Can-Oat Milling plant. It translates into a provincial and federal acknowledgement of this strength through the presence of the Manitoba Food Technology Research Centre, as well as the Prairie Agriculture Machinery Institute and others. It is a solid base upon which we have built, Mr. Speaker. It is responsible for thousands of jobs directly and indirectly. It is our natural strength.

In terms of location, Portage la Prairie is ideally situated. We are astride the Trans-Canada Highway and the Yellowhead Highway route. We are along the CNR and CPR main lines complete with one of two Canadian diamond crossovers of those main rail lines. We are positioned strongly as a transportation and distribution centre.

Portage's daily newspaper, The Daily Graphic, and the local radio station CFRY help to keep our area's citizens well informed on local, provincial and national issues, as does Manitoba's only independent television station which chose Portage la Prairie as its home. This adds an outstanding dimension to a community of this size.

Because of its many resources, chief of which are its fine people, the Portage la Prairie of today is indeed a vibrant and attractive community—a community which I am indeed proud to call my home.

Mr. Speaker, it has been said, and wisely so, that "History is a great teacher." I believe this to be a

true statement, so please allow me to provide you with some greater insights into my community by going back in time, back, way back, long ago, to an ancient time, before the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) was in this House, before this House was built in fact, before there were partisan political parties, perhaps even before the birth of the member for Rossmere (Mr. Neufeld), before all of these things, there was an awesome land, much of it unknown even to its inhabitants, and there was a river, the Assiniboine River. It was the major transportation route and the major communication system of what is today Manitoba.

Via this route in 1736, Sieur Gaultier Varennes de la Verendrye, whose marvelous statue graces the east entrance to our House, came to Portage la Prairie with three sons in birchbark canoes.

His voyage of discovery had commercial motivations as he established trading posts to assist in the French fur trade.

Fort La Reine was established near the current site of Portage la Prairie and became one of the chief trading posts of the French in the West throughout the 18th and early 19th centuries. The locality was used as a carrying place for the native people as they travelled between the Assiniboine River and Lake Manitoba, hence, the name Portage la Prairie.

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, my constituency has long been a well-located commercial center.

Archdeacon Cochrane, of the East Church Mission Society, is credited with having established the first white settlement in Portage la Prairie in 1851.

He had been giving spiritual guidance to the Red River settlement 80 kilometres to the east and, perhaps in frustration, travelled that short distance to Portage la Prairie along with 15 loyal members of his congregation, forming a nucleus of the settlement.

The settlement grew and as it did the problems of governing it also grew. There was extreme lawlessness and a fair number of unsavoury characters, in direct opposition to the meeting I attended this past weekend with some of my colleagues where we had a very civilized gathering, Mr. Speaker, and perhaps more resembling a meeting held the week earlier attended by some members opposite.

In response to the lack of attention being paid to these problems by the territorial authorities in Winnipeg, a local group of concerned citizens, led by grocer Thomas Spence, declared independence and founded the republic of Manitoba. They set up a courthouse and jail, and they even tried to collect taxes.

Although the republic's life was not long, messages are clear: Any government that ignores the people of Portage la Prairie and area does so at its extreme peril; and secondly, my constituency is politically active as evidenced by the large number of influential representatives it has selected over the years including four Manitoba Premiers: John Norquay, Douglas Campbell, Walter Weir and Sterling Lyon as well as one Canadian Prime Minister Arthur Meighen.

The Portage la Prairie of today faces many challenges, Mr. Speaker, as you know, but the Portage la Prairie of the past faced challenges as well. Shortly after its incorporation in 1880, its main street was destroyed by fire, and the council declared bankruptcy and resigned, and the school board resigned as well, but Portagers rebuilt, phoenix-like, rising from the ashes. They established the province's leading brickyard and within a very short time were producing two and a half million bricks a year. Portage brick, in fact, was essential for the construction of many buildings in Winnipeg at that time as well as in other communities of this province.

By 1900, Portage la Prairie had been transformed from a clapboard frontier town with a muddy ox cart trail as its main thoroughfare to a modern, civilized community—I repeat civilized—with attractive multistory brick buildings of distinct architectural quality lining the most developed and visually appealing main street in this country, west of Winnipeg.

Economic devastation is not new to Portage la Prairie, Mr. Speaker. The Lake of the Woods Milling Plant was one of Canada's leading producers and suppliers of ground flour. It was Portage la Prairie's largest single employer for over four decades. In the early 1940s, this plant downsized and then closed, giving as its reasons consolidation with its eastern Canadian operations, similar to the recent closure of the Campbell Soup plant in our community.

Portage la Prairie regrouped and quickly re-established a viable economy. The Portage la Prairie area has been knocked down before, Mr. Speaker, but we have steadfastly refused to stay down. The past is prologue. My constituents' predecessors faced challenges ranging from fire and flood to disease and drought. Whatever the challenge, these people, my people, have responded with intelligence and energy and have dedicated themselves with successful results.

Today's challenges are more similar than different to those of the past, Mr. Speaker. You are aware of the recent closure of the two major employers in Portage la Prairie, but it has been said that through adversity we grow stronger, and such is the case in Portage la Prairie.

The strength of cooperation among various economic development agencies in our community was a key factor in the procurement of the privatized flight training contract for the Department of National Defence. A co-operative community economic development forum, the first of its kind in this province, was established in Portage la Prairie in order to harvest the skills, energy and dreams of concerned constituents. Our Chamber of Commerce became increasingly proactive and established industry and agriculture committees. These are increasingly involved in the pursuit of opportunities and in the achievement of goals that we all share for a progressive Portage la Prairie and area.

People who had been content to spectate, Mr. Speaker, and to delegate responsibilities for the community's future are no longer on the sidelines. Today, in my community, they have entered the playing field. They have done this because they recognize the consequences of apathy, or worse, of petty criticism.

In our past, in my community, Mr. Speaker, we may well have had an overabundance of critics. It has been said, and I do direct this comment to my new friends opposite, that a donkey can kick a shed down, but it takes a carpenter to build one.

In my community, we have an ever increasing number of Portage la Prairie's people, Mr. Speaker, who understand the simple wisdom of that statement. Unfortunately, it appears that the members opposite are simply wishing to supply further evidence of their lack of understanding of the statement. My constituents and I will build, Mr.

Speaker, and we will build because it is our legacy to build.

In the fall of 1928, disaster came to a family farm just outside of Portage la Prairie. A couple was awakened by the screams of animals. Looking out into the night, they were horrified to see the glow of fire in their barn. Although able to free the livestock, they could not extinguish the blaze, which totally destroyed the barn. In these times, the barn was most often a more significant investment than was the home, and such was the case with this young family. Within hours, the community was aware of the dilemma and they responded immediately as was the custom of country communities of this time. Within 10 days, through the combined efforts of neighbours and friends, a new and a better structure was erected, better than before. This, for the benefit of my urban colleagues, was called a barn raising, perhaps the greatest example of how our pioneers worked together to build from adversity. They worked together, and they were builders.

* (1200)

Today, Portage la Prairie faces adversity, Mr. Speaker, and together my constituents and I will respond. We will build. We will build because our will is strong. We will build because we love our community, and we love our province. We will build to give our children and grandchildren the opportunity to make their future in our city and district and in this province of Manitoba. We will build to preserve our careers, our families, our futures. We will build because it is our nature to do so, because that is what our pioneer predecessors did. It took skill. It took a co-operative spirit. It took vision, and we have an abundance of those qualities in Portage la Prairie, and I believe we have an abundance of those qualities in this House and in this government.

Mr. Speaker, I am asked will Portage la Prairie succeed in the future, and I say of course, certainly. History is an excellent teacher. My new colleagues of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly, we have each been shaped by our past experiences whether within the confines of this lovely building or in the real world outside it. We bring with us many skills, many diverse skills.

I am a resident of rural Manitoba. I appreciate the greater challenges of distance and time faced by half the residents of this province, and I applaud the efforts of this government in their attempts to assist

rural development through such initiatives as the REDI and Grow Bond programs. Building a stronger rural economy is an essential part of Manitoba's economic renewal, Mr. Speaker.

Growing up on what is today a fourth generation family farm, I have a personal sympathy for the great challenges faced by our farm operators. This government has been cognizant of the needs of our farm sector and rightfully so, for though we have a diverse economy the agriculture sector will remain a key influence on this province's future success. I encourage and support the initiative of a forum bringing together strategic partners in agriculture in order to identify directions in diversification, value-added processing and exports.

Having taught high school in your own constituency, Mr. Speaker, in the beautiful community of Gladstone, I have an understanding and concern for the challenges faced by our educational system, and I am pleased to learn that the government will host a Manitoba education innovation forum. This is the type of leadership Manitoba needs in order to achieve the opportunities of the future and unlock the potential that exists in our young people. I am particularly pleased with the establishment of a program to recognize excellence in education, thus recognizing the pivotal role which our teachers play.

Having built a financial services firm from nothing to a reasonably successful operation—at least it had been successful until my present foray into this Chamber—I have first-hand understanding of the challenges faced by the small business person in our province today. I congratulate this government in its struggle to hold the line on taxes, while at the same time providing meaningful education and training supports such as the Workforce 2000 program.

As a financial consultant, I am fully cognizant of the unlimited difficulties faced by all of us in managing very limited dollars. I will encourage this government to avoid the course of action mistakenly being followed by other provincial jurisdictions. The idiocy of spending one's way out of debt makes no more sense in government than it would make sense in your own home or business. The spendaholic tendencies of previous provincial and federal governments were short-term solutions which now contribute to long-term problems. Surely, we must learn from the mistakes of the past, Mr. Speaker.

Our Manitoban and Canadian society is a changing one. Any success that I have experienced in my life has come about because of a willingness to respond to change and a strong work ethic. Genuine responsibility and genuine responsible leadership must set an innovative and dedicated example. I look forward to serving my constituents in such a manner, both as an individual and as part of a talented group whose commitment to the people of this province is unquestionable and which I share.

Many have asked what is in the future for Manitoba. My fine and talented colleagues of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly, whose common desire it is to shape a positive future for this province, to know what is in the future, look to the courageous past. Manitoba is a province of pioneers, people who came here, whether in previous centuries or in this one, with dreams of a better life. In the past, Manitobans have repeatedly demonstrated their willingness and their ability to

face challenge. They have done so as well or better than any Canadian province.

Will Manitoba succeed in the future? Of course, Mr. Speaker, certainly, because history again is an excellent teacher. Our predecessors rose to face the challenges of this era, of their era. Our task is to face the challenges of today successfully, with courage, with cooperation and with vision, and I believe we will. Thank you.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I move, seconded by the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), that the debate now be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 12:30?

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

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Friday, November 27, 1992

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