



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

41 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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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, Cliff	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
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	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
<i>Vacant</i>	Rupertsland	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 13, 1993

The House met at 8 p.m.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(continued)

BUDGET DEBATE

(Fourth Day of Debate)

Madam Deputy Speaker (Louise Dacquay): To resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), who has 12 minutes remaining.

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Madam Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to be able to continue the debate on the budget, and I am pleased to see the widespread support for it.

(Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

I indicated—[interjection] Well, the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) is maybe wavering a bit in his support, and I sense that he is learning a little more with each passing day about the department for which he is now the critic, as he has an opportunity to understand that right across this nation reform is taking place in health care and that Manitoba is leading the way in that area.

I urge him to stay tuned to what is happening in other provinces to see that difficult decisions are being made by other governments. Again, it brings back that thought that when New Democrats are in government they realize some of the difficult decisions that have to be made, but New Democrats in opposition never seem to come around these problems to the point where they can offer concrete solutions.

I refer again to an article in recent times in one of the local papers where it says: NDP needs to come to grips with the real world. As long as the member for Kildonan is in opposition, I am afraid that he is not inclined to come to grips with the real world. I would ask him to take a good look at what is happening in health care in British Columbia, in Ontario and in Saskatchewan and to realize that you

cannot hide behind that rhetoric and offer no concrete solutions in the way he has been performing in the House.

It is time, if there is a plan that he and his caucus has in that area of health care, that he will bring it forward and offer some concrete solutions. Perhaps in Estimates he will do that. The fact is that we have been listening and all we have heard is rhetoric, condemnation and criticism without any real options, without any real forward thinking on it. Members from the second opposition party and members on this side and, I expect, members of his own caucus realize that, that pretty soon those real recommendations of change will have to come forward from that member. Perhaps he is going to get the opportunity a little later tonight to put some of those thoughts on the record.

At any rate, I think the article in the local paper of a few weeks ago is correct, that the members of the Manitoba NDP still are not realizing that in the 1990s there is not additional income to government, that there are very, very difficult decisions to be made.

I pointed out to the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) prior to the supper break all of the reforms that have taken place in the social allowances field that he as minister had the opportunity to bring forward in the late 1980s, but he avoided those decisions. He did not bring those reforms forward. Instead, the priorities were elsewhere.

Well, I can tell you, Mr. Acting Speaker, that Manitobans realize that this government is here to preserve the vital services in Health, in Family Services and Education with some very, very difficult decisions.

In this Department of Family Services, even though government revenues are flat, the increase in spending in Family Services will again be amongst the highest in government, in excess of 4.5 percent. In order to maintain our expenditures and increase some of the expenditures in social allowances, some very, very difficult decisions had to be made. These are the decisions that members of the official opposition have always avoided.

These are decisions that they want to, from the luxury of opposition, criticize at this time.

I have challenged members present to bring forward some options in Family Services where we can do some cost-cutting measures, where we can do some economizing in order to be able to address the tremendous increased costs in social allowances. Again, Manitoba has one of the lowest number of citizens accessing that program, and I can tell you that the problems we face here are magnified many times over in British Columbia and in Ontario.

* (2005)

That is why ministers and Premiers in those jurisdictions are talking about completely revamping the way social allowances are distributed there, a fact that is also being discussed in Alberta at this time. It is also a factor that President Clinton has noticed in the United States, that we can no longer simply pay people to stay at home. Yet, even in these difficult times, we have been able to make those adjustments to family allowances, make those reforms that were so long neglected by the previous government.

So to do this, we have had to ask some of our external agencies to do with less, to manage with less. I can tell you in meeting with the Child and Family Services agencies, their presidents and their directors, they are going to meet that challenge. They accept that they too must be part of the solution, that they can find those savings from within and still provide the services that are needed there. They are prepared to accept that challenge even though members opposite perhaps are trying to misconstrue some of the comments that are made. There is a recognition. There is a recognition of the challenges that face them, and they feel that they can do that.

We have also had to make some adjustments in the Day Care line, where we ask all of the families who are accessing subsidies to pay a small portion of the cost. As I had indicated earlier, we have seen dramatic increases in the amount of funding that goes to the Day Care line, some 100 percent increase over the course of five budgets where that line has increased from somewhere around \$26 million or \$27 million to this past year over \$50 million.

So in order that we are able to sustain programs like that, we have had to make some minor

adjustments in terms of looking at the number of licensed spaces that are in existence in the system. We have also had to look at the subsidies and put a cap at this time on the subsidies at \$9,600.

I say to you, Mr. Acting Speaker, that the boards and the people involved in daycare I think will make those adjustments. Some will have to use their surpluses and manage through this very difficult time and, just as with the restructuring two years ago with the proper decisions made at that level, they can certainly do so.

Some of the other decisions that we have had to make are reflective of the fact that we have had a 10.6 percent increase in the Income Maintenance line in this budget. As I have indicated in the past, it is the volume of cases that is going up so dramatically. If we are going to preserve our ability to address that volume, some of these other changes have had to take place.

We know what the alternatives are in other provinces. If we are going to keep everything that we did last year, we would have to look at the sales tax, as B.C. and Saskatchewan have done, and increase that.

We have made a decision not to and, as a result, we are eliminating some of the programs. One is the student category, and we have had an opportunity to discuss that. Manitoba was the only province in Canada that had that particular category. Other provinces have indicated and shown that they are not able to sustain a program like that, and that is one of the difficult decisions we have had to make.

We have also had to eliminate some of the funding for groups that bring forward and advocate for various groups in society, but as I indicated, we have heard those groups. They have brought forward ideas in the past.

Some of them in the social allowance field, such as the WORD group and the SACOM group, have existed without government funding. I am sure that they will continue to exist and bring forward excellent ideas and recognize the reforms that we have put in place in the past number of years and recognize the cost to government.

The government of Manitoba, just as in other provinces, realizes that there is not an endless supply of resources that we can use to address those problems, but over the last three budgets in

that particular area, we have made some dramatic changes, changes that were ignored by the previous government.

* (2010)

The previous minister is here this evening. He knows those were changes that he would have liked to have brought forward, but the priorities were not placed on Family Services at that time. There was more priority put on the creation of those green signs that went up all over the province and the spending of resources on very, very short-term, make-work projects which did not train people to have long-lasting jobs across this province.

Now we are saddled with that debt, and as part of that burgeoning debt, that has created the situation where the Department of Finance is the fourth largest spender in government to pay for those expenses of the previous government. We are on a course now with this budget to bring in a balanced budget later in the decade. Other provinces are also moving in that direction.

It appears to me that the only people opposed to that are the members opposite who, as the columnist indicated, have not come to grips with the real world and do not realize that there is a finite limit to what government is able to do.

I can tell you, and I am sure members opposite are finding this too as they travel in their constituencies, there is widespread support for the challenge that we have taken on to reduce that deficit year over year in the next number of budgets to the point where we no longer are spending more dollars than we are taking in. That is the track that other governments across this nation are on, and it is only the official opposition here in Manitoba who do not see the wisdom of that.

On the other hand, the other opposition party talks about enhancing our income without saying that they would raise taxes. They talk about finding additional resources, enhancing their budgetary abilities. The only thing they are saying is that they would increase taxes, the sales tax, the personal income tax, the corporate tax. I can tell you, from the decisions we have made, that is just not on.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Acting Speaker, it is April. Those of us who remember back to school and university days perhaps also remember that April has a double edge to it. It is the time of spring, but it is also the time of exams.

I remember that double-edged sword that we always used to feel in Montreal. We would make a ritual trek down to the Port of Montreal to see the first ships in fact that had come up the St. Lawrence and to always try and put off the evil day of finding the library again and setting forth back up the mountain to the gym where the long tables of exam questions were waiting for us.

That double-edged sword I think is there, Mr. Acting Speaker, for students today. If you are out at the university today, you will find of course the barbecues on the residents' balconies. You will have to duck the flying Frisbees. You know that students have rediscovered the library and textbooks. They, too, I think are primarily thinking of exams and of their own futures.

It is a double-edged sword for today's student as well, Mr. Acting Speaker. Today's students in high school, college, university, face a very uncertain future in Manitoba. It is becoming clear, it seems to me, as I go around my constituency and as I have talked to students at the university and in high school, that both they and their parents are beginning to recognize the uncertainty of both their educational futures and their personal futures in this province. They are beginning to articulate it on a basis which goes beyond the personal and the family futures.

As I listened to their concerns this spring at the university and on the doorstep, they spoke primarily of the difficulty of finding summer jobs. I know those of you who have children in this age group or who have spoken to those people in your own constituency know that this is prime, uppermost in their minds.

* (2015)

They need the means to find the increased fees for next year. For those of them whose parents have been laid off or who now have only one income in the family where perhaps there had been two in the past, they are finding there is a tremendous and increased urgency for that search for a summer job.

We know that the numbers of summer jobs are down, whether they are those which are being offered by the federal government or those by the provincial government or by those who are struggling in Manitoba's small businesses. They are finding great difficulty in giving students that extra help that in the past they had been able to do.

An increasing number of my students, Mr. Acting Speaker, are also mature students, people who have already been unemployed or in some cases have already lost their family farm. They are in university for a very short period of time in their own minds. They are there to get the qualifications that they believe will give them a job here or elsewhere outside of the province. They are very serious. They are in a hurry, and they are very committed. They have to spend their time very efficiently at the university.

Their concerns are that the rollbacks and the clawbacks to universities in this budget are going to leave them in the lurch. The support programs that are so necessary for them to make efficient use of their time, the counselling services, the financial assistance, the tutoring programs, the ones that enable them to concentrate all their energies on their library and on studies and on their essays, are the ones that they feel are going to suffer and those are the ones that have enabled them to survive in university and which have prevented them from falling through the cracks in what can sometimes be a very large and impersonal system.

All students next year are going to have to cope with the changes to the federal student loan plan which will insist that students take four courses to qualify for a loan. It is a Catch-22 situation, four courses makes it very difficult for you to take on any extra work. The loan itself is not enough to see you through the increased costs and increased cost of living, increased taxes that everyone is facing in Manitoba. Bus fares are going to go up in Manitoba, school supplies will be taxed, journals will be taxed. There will be extra taxes on gasoline. Students, whether as renters living at home or as homeowners, will now feel the brunt of the increased taxes which will affect all households in Manitoba as a result of this budget.

The combined effect of the policies of this Tory government and their colleagues in Ottawa, the Mulroneys, the Charests, the Campbells, all those people who sat around that cabinet table will fall heavily on students. Mr. Acting Speaker, while it is true that most students at the moment have no thoughts on their mind other than exams and summer jobs, the combined impact of Tory policies to ensure that no one outside the upper middle class can hope to have a debt-free education, that will eventually penetrate to people across Manitoba.

Indeed, Mr. Acting Speaker, I have often thought that it is an irony that this Tory government which is spending so much money on cosmetic advertising to encourage people to consider education as an investment for the future, to encourage them to stay in school, to go to college and university, also ensures and encourages that those families and individuals will also and should also in their minds go into debt to do it. How odd then it seems to me, how ironic that it does not seem to make any sense to Tory governments to invest in the future in education. All their budget decisions, it seems to me, are based on an underlying assumption that education is a drain on the public purse. They never see it as an investment of the future of the province and yet there are crucial decisions facing Manitoba in education.

We must find ways to expand post-secondary education in all its forms, whether it is on the shop floor, or whether it is in community colleges or universities, or whether in continuing education. We simply have to expand that post-secondary education in Manitoba. Are we going to continue to accept the high dropout rates that we have from our high schools, our low percentage of students in community colleges and getting lower as a result of the actions of this government, the long waiting lists for courses in technology, the pent-up frustration at the lack of accessibility of basic adult education and literacy and advanced level English programs which are most urgently needed and which, I think, are leaving people feeling very cut off and very stymied in their attempt to become part of this community?

Do we accept the closing of the first year of the Faculty of Arts, the last of the open faculties in Manitoba? Do we accept university science programs with no labs? Do we accept the low ranking in many sectors, not all, but in many sectors that Manitoba universities received in the Maclean's poll? It seems to me, Mr. Acting Speaker, that we have universities which are amongst the lowest in Canada in their support for graduate students and a government which does not seem to recognize that the research which has been done in this province, in agriculture in particular—and I have heard the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) now make much of that in several of his speeches—if he looks into the research in canola, the research in agricultural science or in human ecology, a great deal of that research could not have been done without graduate students from across Canada and, indeed,

from around the world. Do we accept universities whose infrastructure in every single one of our universities is crumbling? Do we accept the 50 percent cuts that this government this year, yet again, has offered to universities to help them compete on a national basis and to produce graduates who will be a credit to this province and to its education system? What a narrow perspective when we put it all together. What a narrow perspective on Manitoba. What a narrow perspective on our future, and with what deception is it offered to the public in this province.

* (2020)

In every level of education there have been cuts from every budget since 1991. It seems to me, Mr. Acting Speaker, that all we hear from the Premier, from the front benches, from the Minister of Education, is cliché after cliché, rhetoric after rhetoric, about education being the key that opens the doors to the future of Manitoba. No one will disagree with that. It is absolutely true, and it is crucial. Yet what we are seeing is cut after cut after cut in areas which are the most crucial to our industrial and to our personal futures as well.

Mr. Acting Speaker, if I were to pick one area of long-term significance for the future of Manitoba, it is this failure of the Film on cabinet to recognize the urgent needs of education. In the last five years, we have seen an unprecedented number of Manitobans lose their jobs. We have seen the movement of jobs to Edmonton and Montreal at the hands of the federal government, and yes, indeed there have been significant changes in the global industrial economy.

If Manitoba is to survive in some form in the future, it must become part of those new knowledge-based industries. The only way that is going to happen is through the expansion of post-secondary education opportunities and, particularly, the expansion of their availability to rural and to northern communities so that we make use, so that we tap into the talents of all our people. It is a form of investment that is absolutely critical to the future of the province. It is a form of investment that will not be served by the working of the free market. It cannot be built with the individual debts of those Manitoba families whose children are in university now.

It is an investment which will serve us all in the production of doctors, teachers, farmers, scientists, researchers, innovators, film makers, writers.

Without such investment, Mr. Acting Speaker, we are destined to become a smaller province and even lower wage province with a high proportion of our public costs being spent on welfare, as they are now, and social services for the disaffected. We are destined to become an aged province with an annual exodus of our young, trained or untrained. Our economic policies will be reduced or restricted to chasing smokestacks, to finding larger and larger tax breaks for corporations to offer us jobs for a few years until they find some other low-wage mecca elsewhere in the globe.

Manitoba, like every other province in Canada, has to invest in education. In British Columbia they are building another university and expanding their community colleges and upgrading some of them to become university colleges. They are expanding because they have an increased population, but they are also expanding and were expanding before that large rush came in, in the last 10 years. They are expanding in areas of technology in their technology institutes and in their community colleges, because they are looking at the future and they are looking at the new economies of the Pacific Rim and of the global knowledge economies.

In Montreal, with unemployment rates significantly higher than much of the rest of Canada, they have decided to invest in the renewal of the island of Montreal. If you have visited Montreal recently, you will know how difficult the conditions are there in their basic infrastructure and services. They have set aside a half-billion dollars for the renewal of the island of Montreal, of which \$50 million is going into the development and reconstruction of the infrastructure of colleges and universities.

It is a question of setting priorities. It is a question of looking to the future. It is a question of a vision for Manitoba which we do not see coming from this particular front bench.

Ontario has moved quickly to set up its labour adjustment boards to deal with the training requirements of the industrial restructuring of North America which has so affected that province.

Even Saskatchewan, which has been devastated by the incomprehensible irresponsibility of the Devine years, has set aside money and focused upon that young and growing aboriginal population and has said that we are going to put our money into the education of those people.

* (2025)

But what do we see in Manitoba? Speeches and rhetoric from the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) about education unlocking the door, but what we see in fact are cuts, cuts every year. It is not just this year. It is not just the 17 programs which were cut at Red River last week. In every year there have been cuts to some element of education in Manitoba and, frequently, cut at the very levels of education which give people the opportunity to get a foot on the ladder.

The English language training, the basic education, the adult education, the literacy programs in the workplace, that is where they have chosen to cut.

It is a government with only one tool in its tool bag—cuts. It is a government without ideas and without vision. We know that people across the globe and across Canada are facing similar problems to Manitoba.

Some of them, like Alberta and British Columbia, have more resources than we do. Some like, I would say, Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan have fewer resources than we do. Most of them have managed to convey the sense that there is a policy, that there is a vision, that there is a plan behind whatever budget they have presented. Many have recognized that it is important to look to the future and to give people a sense of hope.

It is better to be in education or in a job than it is to be unemployed or on welfare, but the only answer, the only single answer this government has is to cut.

Cut spending and cut jobs. Expand the welfare rolls, cut the places in community colleges. Expand the welfare rolls, and close the first year of the last open faculty at the university. Expand the welfare rolls, cut the places in adult education. Expand the welfare rolls, cut the monies to municipalities which provided for job creation. Expand the welfare rolls, and cut the programs to single mothers and the young people on social allowances, and have them sit at home instead of having them in education, where they should be and where they want to be.

The message that comes through in this budget is that there will be no part of the economic recovery generated in Manitoba. We shall simply sit here

until we attract the passing interest of some new multinational corporation.

Look at the advertisements that New Brunswick offers in the *Globe and Mail* or in various national magazines.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Order, please. Could I have those honourable members wanting to carry it on do it in the loge so I can hear the honourable member for Wolseley.

Ms. Friesen: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

I was drawing the members' attention to the way in which New Brunswick has managed to use its investment in education for the purposes of industrial expansion.

New Brunswick presents advertisements in national and international journals, and it demonstrates the kind of investment that it has placed in university research labs. It uses its university research and its research stations as part of a way of attracting industrial activity in New Brunswick.

What could we put, it struck me, against those New Brunswick advertisements? A community college system whose capital budget has been cut by 50 percent, a community college system whose enrollments and whose courses have been reduced year after year in Manitoba, a university system whose buildings are crumbling and for which the government has this year cut 50 percent of their grants in capital budgets?

We simply cannot stand up to those advertisements and say: Look, here is Manitoba's commitment to education, here is our plan. We may not be able to fund this year, but two, three years down the line, yes, we are going to put money in education.

* (2030)

There is no plan, no sense of vision, no direction to the future from this government. It is simply a government adrift.

We are going to put against those New Brunswick advertisements, that New Brunswick plan, a labour force that is becoming one of long-term unemployment with little upgrading of skills, an education sector that is constantly, yearly being scaled down and made available to a narrower and narrower section of the population.

We have a young and growing aboriginal population whose access programs have again been cut, who have lost their institutional support such as friendship centres and whose political voice, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, this government rarely wants to hear.

The northern college has lost 14 percent of its funding and the Distance Education section of the department, which might have had the opportunity to expand the range of options and the availability of the beginnings of post-secondary education in many of our northern and rural communities, was largely cut in the new changes in the Department of Education.

Where is the investment in research facilities that New Brunswick offers? Where is the open education system that British Columbia is striving for? Where are the worker adjustment and training programs that Ontario has? Where is the pressure on the federal government for the changes in the EPF program and the changes in the student loan programs? Where is the pressure on the federal government to develop some national programs and national co-operation in education? Where are the proposals for regional co-operation in education in Manitoba such as we are seeing in the most recent review on universities in Saskatchewan, where they are looking for co-operation from their provincial partners on either side of them? Where is the thinking in this cabinet? Where is the sense of the future and the direction, the context for Manitobans?

There seems to be no imagination and no vision, no innovation, no assistance even to school boards, trustees and teachers to help them find ways of doing more, perhaps, Mr. Acting Speaker, collectively, with the less that this government is prepared to give to education. There is simply a minister who sits and essentially says, cut, cut.

Where is the planning for co-operation, for regionalization of programs, for some kind of collective action to help these people get through the difficult situation that this government is putting them in?

It seems to me, as I hear from many of my constituents, that it is so very difficult to get through to any government office these days, that this entire government is on call forwarding, passing on to others the problems that they have created.

If we listen to the Chamber of Commerce, the future for education in this province is indeed bleak. In their latest newsletter they tell us the question that we have to ask ourselves is not, how will we survive with 2 percent less in education this year, but, quote, rather, how can I significantly improve the quality of education with 25 percent less.

That is the word from headquarters. That is the word from mission control downtown. Is that the route this government is going? We have no reason, they have given us no reason to expect anything better.

The second area, Mr. Acting Speaker, I would suggest, of long-term significance for Manitobans is the attack on the public sector that has been a fundamental part of all the Tory reforms of the last five years but which have reached a new virulence with this budget of 1993. By reducing the funds for public education and increasing the support for private, elite education over the years, the Filmon Tories are making choices that will affect the future of Manitoba for a generation. By cutting community colleges and giving increased funds to the private sector to train people at the rate of more than \$600 an hour, such as they do in the Workforce 2000 program, they are limiting the accessibility of Manitobans to post-secondary education.

They are spending public money on a form of education which may have some training merit, but which is not open to all, possibly not even all within the company which is offering the training, only to those who are selected by management, on what basis we do not know, and over which we have no influence.

When the Filmon Tories cut literacy programs and cut the entry level secretarial and other skills at Red River Community College, they are limiting the opportunity to even get a foot on the ladder of basic education to those who can afford the \$5,000 or \$6,000 charged by the private schools for such programs.

In education they have cut the public sphere and expanded the private and individual training. It is more expensive. It is more exclusive. It is less likely to result in a portable credential, and indeed it is difficult to believe that any sensible person would reject the cost-effectiveness and the international recognition available in public education.

Fundamentally, Tories reject the public sector. Their attacks this year and last year on public sector

workers should really be seen in this context. Even if there had not been a financial crunch, there would have been attempts to change the nature of government in Manitoba.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is an ideologue, as close to Hayek as anyone I have ever met in government. He believes that government should be minimal, that it should be the purchaser of services from the private sector, and that is the road he is taking us down, some years a little faster than others.

When this government gave public money to Dave's Quick Print to train workers to take the place of Queen's Printer workers, it was merely reflecting the vision of the Minister of Finance. The privatizing of the sign shop in Dauphin, the privatizing of agricultural labs, the privatizing of data services, the turning over of roads to volunteers, the privatization of the therapists in the Department of Education, the turning of them into private contractors is all part of the same pattern.

In all of these changes, it is likely that the wages of the majority will decline, enabling us to compete eventually on the same level playing field as Mexico. The wealth of a few will increase and the living standards of the many will decline. It is here in those declining living standards, in that loss of jobs and the increase in long-term unemployment, that you will really begin to feel the impact of the loss of the public sector, for these Tories hit you twice: once when you lose your job; and again when you try to find a place in the shrinking community college, when you try to find public transport, the public library, the public culture of zoo or museum, the sports event that receives public money but which is now priced beyond your means, or you try to take your family to the recreation centre that the Tories at City Hall tried to eliminate in their last budget. Though I would not endorse everything that Mickey Kraus advocates in his treatise on civil liberalism, I do believe that he is right to draw our attention to the role of public institutions and the public sector in maintaining a sense of community in an increasingly unequal society.

The public sector, the museum, the gallery, the zoo, the community clubs, the schools and colleges, which I heard the member across the way simply refer to now as the public trough—yes, that is exactly what they think of it. That is why this government has no sense of vision and no perspective on the

future of Manitoba. Those institutions, those public institutions, that public sector are where the immigrant family and the Tuxedo family meet as equals, where aboriginal students and those from rural and northern Manitoba meet for the first time, quite often, and as equals.

Beyond that sense of equality that the public sector gives us, the provision and maintenance of public services in health, parks, transport, et cetera, enable us all to have some access on an equal basis to some of the elements of a common minimum standard of living. The attack on public services puts this in jeopardy. The loss of a thousand civil servant positions, the loss of trust of our public servants as this government broke its promises again and its contracts yet again with its own labour force are all part of this drive to diminish the role of the public sector in Manitoba, and we must see them together. They follow. They are in context. They follow, I believe, from a very different perspective on our community.

* (2040)

When Tories diminish the public sector, they are not only altering the social relations of our community, they are also taking large areas of our daily life out of the light of public accountability. It is a policy which fits well with the broader goals of the national and multinational corporations who form such a substantial part of the list of financial supporters of this and every Tory government.

Limited government means limited public accountability. That is the political environment of choice for those whose goal it is to maximize the profits for their shareholders, but it is not necessarily in the best interest of the community of Manitoba.

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

Madam Deputy Speaker, this is widely recognized, not only in the press but across Manitoba as a mean budget which has fallen heavily on the poor, the elderly and, I would add, the students. It betrays a government with no vision and very little hope or imagination to offer for the future. It is this absence of leadership which is particularly striking, especially from a Premier who has been in office since 1988 and in public office for a good deal longer.

But he no longer has the luxury of those good economic times when he and his colleagues in

cabinet were on City Council and created those huge capital debts and left us with an overextended suburban city. He is no longer leader of the opposition when he could launch his political attacks on the government of Howard Pawley who had a lower debt, were committed to public education, had a lower unemployment rate, and in 1988 left them a surplus of \$58 million that even his own minister now admits to.

In a few months, the Premier will no longer have Brian Mulroney to kick around or to fight elections against.

An Honourable Member: Kim Campbell.

Ms. Friesen: Kim Campbell—will he be fighting the next Manitoba election on what my son calls those overexposed shoulders of hers? He will have to face the voters, those who are appearing every week on the steps of his own Legislature. He will have to defend the six years of his government. The crisis of leadership I think is an important one, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I had the pleasure of talking to a Tory pollster on my phone before I came here tonight, a polling company which did not exist in the phone book which only had two questions: Are you going to vote Tory, and, what is the issue? That is what they are phoning around for this very night as we speak. I am sure that the Tory polling and the Minister of Education's (Mrs. Vodrey) focus groups have told them of the anxiety and uncertainty that is present at all levels of our community.

Indeed I think that the public relations, the marketing of this budget, you know, the Finance minister with his head in his hands, the most difficult decision in my life, et cetera, all of these are attempts to play on Manitobans' fear of the future I think are indications that the government does understand some of the apprehension and the anxieties which are out there in the community today.

How much more reprehensible it is, Madam Deputy Speaker, then to offer a budget of no hope, to offer a budget which cuts people off from any opportunity, which cuts off their ambition to improve their lot, a budget which tells them not to expect any assistance from their community, from their neighbours, and a budget which is couched again in the big lie that this government has maintained since its inception, that it has not raised taxes. Now to this outright deception they have added another

insult to the collective intelligence of Manitobans that we are all being asked to share the pain equally.

As I reflected on the quality of leadership which the Tory front bench is offering, I was reading at the same time the autobiography, a West Indian autobiography, C.L.R. James, a writer on international affairs particularly known for his sports writing but also a man with a very international outlook who, in reviewing the affairs of his own life, the international events of wars and destitution and famine and changes in colonialism and imperialism that he had seen, said he finally came to the conclusion that old empires would fall, times would pass, new empires would take their place; the relation of countries and the relations of classes all would change. But what I discovered, he said, is that it is not the quality of goods or their utility or perhaps even their distribution which matter, but it is that sense of movement of a community, not where you are or what you have, but knowing where you have come from, where you are going and the rate at which you are getting there.

It is that sense of perspective. It is that sense of historical context, and it is that sense of purpose which we expect from our political leaders to give people that sense of context and direction that they are taking us.

This budget has told us where the debt is going and how the minister plans to deal with that, but the government, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) has given us no sense of where we are going as a community. Nor is this an accident or an oversight, because this government fundamentally believes that it is society's role to fulfill the goals of the market economy. It is society's function to serve the economy. The Premier himself believes that his only job is to stand aside and let the market rule.

We believe and I think most Canadians believe that economies should serve societies, that they should serve clear social goals. Our main focus as a community should be directed to how we are going to face the future in a new North America.

How can we create a new Manitoba from the mix of recent immigrants, old settlers, farmers and urban aboriginals? How can we find jobs for our people in the so-called jobless recovery? How do we educate our young people so that they can create a future for themselves in this place? How can we find new strategies for co-operation with our neighbours to the east and to the west and to the south? How can

we maintain a public sector which fosters that sense of community of which we are proud in Manitoba and which has enabled us to create a society which has maintained a kind of harmony over the years?

Should we not expect a budget to address those issues? Should we not expect some social vision from the Premier (Mr. Filmon) or the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness)? European political commentators have written recently on the loosening of the bonds between the citizen and the state as right-wing governments like the Manitoba Tories have continued their undermining of the social role of the state. As Martin Woollacott put it in February this year, quote: The bond between nation and citizen is in danger of snapping. Our economic crisis is going to become unmanageable unless we can find a language of common appeal which brings us together.

In this budget, we find no such common bond, only an assault on the poor by those who temporarily hold the reins of power. As states fail to honour their bond with their own citizens, so citizens withdraw their allegiance. We face a future like that of Los Angeles or Liverpool, Detroit or Belfast, of so many other areas of the globe where warfare between peoples within the state are part of the daily lives of so many families.

As a community, I think, we face the prospect of a loss of confidence, and our recent history has brought us to this. The retreat from governance by this and other Tory governments has weakened the ties that bind us to each other in a diverse multicultural community such as we have in Canada and Manitoba. It is the state amongst others which gives us a framework for our sense of community.

When we thus reduce the role of the state, we are gradually but inevitably diminishing our public and formal sense of responsibility for each other and our sense of who we are. Multicultural states may be, as Benedict Anderson would argue, imagined communities, but they are our larger community in Canada and in Manitoba.

Recent commentators who have looked at the impact of the last 20 years of the free market and its governments have underlined the changes in community confidence that all of these have eventually brought. The loss of sovereignty to larger trading blocks and the loss of democratic control to transnational companies have all been significant, but equally so has the growth of

unemployment in states where previously the citizen could count on a policy or even a prospect of full employment. It was one of the conditions of citizenship for so many people since the Second World War, and the state, just as it is here in Manitoba, is one of the ones which is throwing its own people on the scrap heap.

* (2050)

If there is to be a restoration of confidence in government, in the community, in our self-confidence, it has to begin, it seems to me, with some of four pillars of common sense.

We must have a clearly articulated goal of full employment. Citizenship requires it.

We must have an education system, particularly at the post-secondary level, which teaches and educates in many ways a much more substantial proportion of our population.

We must have a firm commitment to a public sector which expresses our sense of equality and which encompasses the basic decency and fairness of Manitobans, and we must have a Premier and a government who can be trusted to keep a contract, who have the honesty to call a tax a tax and whose instinct is to protect the poor and the powerless.

We need a government with the experience of community development in job creation, committed to public education and dedicated to the idea that Manitoba is indeed a society and not merely one million individuals at the mercy of the global market.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Madam Deputy Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise today to congratulate our Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) on a finely crafted budget and a presentation of a plan for the future economic stability of this province.

I am, I suppose, somewhat amused when I listen to the Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer) and his dissertation of our Leader and his criticism of our Minister of Finance and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of this province.

I want to say, Madam Deputy Speaker, that if this province had continued on the economic path that the socialist government of the previous number of decades in this province had been allowed to be maintained, had the electorate chosen to re-elect those who now sit opposite, I fear that we would be in a very similar type of a situation that Ontario is, or

that other provinces in this country face today, and/or maybe even we as a nation face today.

The reason I say this, Madam Deputy Speaker, is because the mentality of those who have governed in this province, that mentality simply dictated to those people governing here, that in order to solve a problem you have to throw money at it. The more money you throw at a problem, the easier it will go away. I make the case before this House today that that is why the unemployment rolls in this province have been as high as they were and are on the downward trend in this province because of the budgetary finesse and the budgetary daring that this government has chosen to implement over the last four years.

I say to the members opposite that had we kept on increasing expenditures in all of the departments, as the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) just indicated we should, had we kept on spending without concern for those who have to, in the final analysis, pay the bill, we would, in fact, break the backs, or have broken the backs of our children and their children. So it is time we realized that we must spend within our means, and those of us who think that we can wildly spend without consideration of who pays the bill sometime down the road or who pays the interest cost of debt that we incur today are only fooling themselves. I think we have in this province fooled ourselves for too long, because it is the financial institutions, not within this province, not within this country, but financial institutions outside of this country that have told provinces such as Newfoundland and Saskatchewan that you better get your economic house in order or there will not be any more borrowing.

That is the situation that we face in this province as well. If we would do as the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) said we should do, if we would just continue the mentality of spend, spend, spend, borrow, borrow, borrow, we would soon have borrowed ourselves into oblivion. We would in fact be faced with a situation whereby, whether we chose to or not, we would have to face the socialist type of approach to government that countries such as the U.S.S.R. and other socialist countries have faced for the last 70 years and look where it got them.

Let us take a real hard look today. Let us look at agriculture and let us do some comparisons. Let us

look at the U.S.S.R. and look at how efficient their productive system was. I just heard the member for Wolseley say that we are in fact selling off agricultural land to the private sector. Who best can operate and who best can produce food in this province than the private sector farm community? We have not had—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Ms. Friesen: On a point of order, before the member gets carried away and so that he does not get too much into this I did say "lab," not "land."

Madam Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Wolseley does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Penner: I apologize if I have treaded on the sacred feelings of somebody who has just caused us to listen to three-quarters of an hour of dissertation as to why they should be in government and we should not. Let me tell you, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is my view that the people of Manitoba have chosen wisely to banish them forever from governing in this province.

I had the opportunity to attend today two functions, and we have heard some criticism about the education system in this province and the so-called decrease in spending to education in this province. Well, let me say to you that I attended today a graduation exercise of 30-some-odd students who were not in the normal classroom setting. These students went to school at the Friesen college. It is a newly opened college, which is a college that teaches business and the practical application of business on the job.

Madam Deputy Speaker, these people learned the art of printing and the printing industry, and these 30-some-odd students were graduates today of that industry, and they will contribute to the wealth and the well-being of the people of this province. They will be able to approach the workforce with confidence that they have the ability to provide the services that are needed today in today's society and be productive citizens of this province.

I congratulate those graduates for taking the initiative to further their education on the job, Madam Deputy Speaker, on the job. And the Friesen college was largely funded by a program that we initiated, the Workforce 2000 program, which, if you

look at the budget, contributed almost \$3 million toward the betterment of adults and those in this province who want to increase their knowledge and be able to become better equipped to serve the businesses they work for.

* (2100)

Madam Deputy Speaker, as you can also see in the Workforce 2000 presentation that was made only a short while ago, the business community in this province contributes another almost \$6 million to that program, so we, in fact, attract private sector funding to education on an ongoing basis, which I believe is very beneficial to education as a whole.

When you package those amounts of money, the total amount comes to almost \$10 million, and if you subtract that amount from the amount of the so-called decrease in education spending that the opposition socialist party refers to, you will find that we are almost equal to the same amounts of dollars spent only in different areas and in different ways, and different sectors pay in a different manner for the education of some of our people in this province.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I believe that truly that is the way of the future. Education, in my view, will be an ongoing thing, that people will refer time and time again back to, to ensure that they are, in fact, able to meet the demands of a very quickly changing world.

But when you listen to the opposition members today and over the last four or five days of the debate of this budget, you would believe that these people had in fact no vision at all. They sit there and they say that we must do things as we used to do or else we are on the path of destruction. Well, let me say to you, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the only way to ensure an economic disaster in this province is by maintaining the path that the NDP government was on prior to us taking over.

Some people would say that we in fact were not tough enough in the application of reduction of spending, and I believe, Madam Deputy Speaker, that in some areas we could have made more revisions to our spending Estimates. When I look at the budget and the percentage of reduction in the various departments, I would propose to you that there is room to define even more closely our expenditures for a future period of time.

I see this budget as a four-year guide that will lead us, in the final analysis, to a balanced or a better

than balanced budget, and if our revenues keep on increasing ever so slightly over that four-year period of time, the people of this province will be in an excellent competitive position to attract not only industry but to attract people to invest internally to expand our business sector and our service sector.

That is where the employment opportunities are. When I visited the D.W. Friesen plant today, and we looked at their operation employing better than 400 people in a small rural community, and when I looked at the graduates who had just graduated from the D.W. Friesen college and how they applied their skills to compete in the international marketplace, I saw a sense of pride, not only in the owners but in the employees as well, because they were proud of what they did and who they worked for and how they were able to contribute to their community.

I have heard on a number of occasions, whether it is the critic for Health on the NDP side, whether it is the critic in Education, whether it is the critic for Agriculture, talk about not spending the entire amount of a budgeted line in a given department.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, on our farm and in our business, a budget is simply a guideline that we set for ourselves so that we can sort of determine a path for the operations of that given business or given farm. It is a guideline that we try to stay within. They are estimates of income and estimates of expenditures over a period of time. I do not think government is any different than a business is or a farm is, and when we do not spend, for instance in our fertilizer line, the total amount of money at the end of the year, we do not go to all extremes to ensure that all the money will be gone. If we can, in fact, negotiate a better price for the fertilizer than what we had estimated it would cost, we save money at the end of the year, and there will be a surplus shown in that budgeted amount. I do not think that government is any different.

The experience that I had when I was the Minister of Rural Development indicated clearly to me that if we could buy the material that we wanted to buy at a lesser price than what we had budgeted for, we would have a surplus at the end of the year in that line. Similarly in Health, if we can do things economically and serve people better at the same time, we are going to end up with, in a given line, a surplus.

Should we go out and ruthlessly at the end of the year make every effort to spend every dollar that we can to satisfy the needs of a printed number?

Madam Deputy Speaker, that is what the NDP philosophizes to do, and that is what they say we should do. Well, that is what they have done for the last 15 years prior to us taking over government. What did it get us? It got us a debt of which we incurred some \$550 million worth of interest on, which our children, your children and my children, are going to have to keep on paying the bills for, whether we like it or not.

Can you imagine the kind of additional health care, the additional education, the additional natural resources or the additional expenditures that we could encourage industries to establish here to provide jobs, with \$550 million annually? Had they been fiscally responsible, had they chosen to not spend beyond their means, we would not only have a balanced budget this year, we would have a surplus of some \$300 million.

We could have reduced the taxes by a very significant amount. The honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) could in fact go home and say, yes, your taxes will be reduced. Yes, we have a greater amount of money that we can support your agriculture in your area. Yes, we can go look after the beaver problem that you are incurring in that area. There is money to do these kinds of things. But now there is nothing.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I have heard from people whom I have had the opportunity to talk to over the last week, and I have talked to many. I think I visited virtually every coffee shop in my constituency over the last week. It gave me a great deal of pleasure and gave me a desire to come back here to relay some of the things that I have heard, because they were congratulating this government on its budget.

They were in fact telling me that we should have taken more of the property tax credit, because they said we are only fooling ourselves, because the property tax credit is taking it out of one hand and giving it with the other. They said we should have taken it all because it is only a fudging of numbers. I think they are right. We should in fact have reduced the property tax credit by \$325, and then the taxes would really reflect what the true costs are of operating within a given municipality.

* (2110)

I recognize that it is not always possible to do that, and when you give something away one year, that it is three times more difficult to take it back the next. Therefore, I have a great deal of reservation about providing credits and all those kinds of things because I believe that when you stop them—and there are times when you must stop them—people in fact look very critical, but this time around they were not critical.

This time, they congratulated this government for taking the right kind of action, for reducing our fuel to our transportation system, that our transportation system could in fact be enhanced, that we could in fact remain viable, because farmers in this country and in this province depend probably more than any other sector of society in this country anywhere else, because our agricultural produce depends on a good solid transportation system, whether it be through the highway system, the railway system or other means or by water. We depend on a good transportation system to move our goods to market.

That, Madam Deputy Speaker, is what we have targeted, in a large part, provincial and federal dollars to, to ensure that the transportation system will in fact be in place. We have done some other fairly innovative things, I believe. We have encouraged industries in this province, and that is not a new phenomenon.

I can look at the sugar industry in this province; that is a relatively unique industry. It takes a product from its rawest form, processes it, packages it and sells it across the counter in this province. There are very few other industries like it. Yet that industry competes directly with subsidized industries, I should not say "subsidized," with tariff industries in every other sugar-producing country in the world. Canada is the only country in the world that does not tariff, to any great degree, raw sugar coming into this country to allow it to be refined and used here.

I was talking to some of my American friends over the weekend. One of them was the vice-president of the Crystal Sugar Company and he produces sugar beets right across the border from me. He was interested in why this country, why Canada would not apply a similar type of a program to its sugar that the Americans do, because the Americans apply the same type of a tariff to sugar coming into their country that all other sugar-producing nations do, all 42 countries. Yet we do not.

We, Madam Deputy Speaker, asked our province and our federal government and the producers to join together in what is called a tripartite stabilization program and are asking producers to pay into a plan to maintain an industry that is being largely abused by foreign interests. The competition is not real competition that we face, or that the sugar producers face in this province, and that Manitoba Sugar that processes the sugar beets in this province faces. It is an unfair competition that they face, because it is only the surplus sugars that other countries do not use that are dumped into Canada for whatever they can get. The real price of sugar has no reflection on what raw sugar is sold for in Canada, and yet we have asked the producer to support and maintain his own industry.

The 800 producers in Alberta and Manitoba are faced with a situation where they have incurred over the last number of years very, very significant losses due to the fact that sugar was selling in this country for 2 and 3 cents a pound. It was selling for 16 cents a pound in the United States because that is what the tariff applied was plus what the marketplace demanded. The American ag program guarantees the floor price of sugar in North Dakota to 23.39 cents a pound and, yet, last year the sugar sales in this province were seven cents a pound. Yet the province of Manitoba and the federal government did not contribute to the maintenance last year of that industry or the sugar producers. They did it by themselves.

Let me ask those opposite whether that in fact is true competition, whether that is productivity by the raw producers, and whether they can in fact be said to be competitive? I think they are more than competitive. I am not sure whether the refinery, whether the sugar factory in this province, will in fact run this year, because producers have told me very loudly and very clearly over the last week that they simply will not plant unless they get a competitive and a fair price. That to me is only fair.

There are other industries in this province that we can look at that have had a tremendous impact on the farm sector. The other one is, of course, the oil crushing industry. The honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) would well recognize the tremendous benefits that the oilseed crushing industries have had in this province, not only in this province but in all of western Canada, and what the oilseed crops have done for western Canada.

Would it not have been for a small industry such as CSP Foods—who were at first known as CVO, and it was a plant that was owned by farmers, operated by farmers, built by farmers. Had it not been for CVO that had demonstrated that you could in fact produce economically an oil, an edible oil, from a plant that grew well in western Canada, I doubt whether we would have an industry, whether the oilseed industry would be what it is today.

Those pioneers, in my view, need to be congratulated for having the vision, and I believe that we have young people in this province today that have that same kind of vision if we only allow them to exercise and encourage them to exercise them, but that means that we must get government out of their hair. That means that the over-regulated system we are into must be dealt with, because I hear time and time again people saying, why must we have more regulations than legislation? Why must we be bombarded with rules and laws that do not allow us to operate as we will? Why do you not allow us to be truly competitive?

We have a situation whereby we could probably provide all the, or almost all the, product that is needed in North Dakota and in the United States to make pasta. We produce better durum wheat than they ever could hope to produce in the United States. We produce better canola, better edible oil in this country than they could ever hope to produce in the United States, and that applies to many other countries of this world.

Yet we put regulations, restrictions, prohibitions in place that do not allow access into the United States. The people across the way will call it free trade. I call it simply doing away with regulations and legislation and tariffs that have caused us to build artificial walls around ourselves in the name of protection, and by doing so we have relegated ourselves noncompetitive.

* (2120)

So when I talk to my U.S. neighbours, friends of mine, whether it be about the sugar industry, or whether it be about the wheat industry, or whether it be about the canola industry, or whether it, in fact, be about the bean industry which is gaining strength in southern Manitoba and will gain strength because new varieties are coming out that need shorter seasons to grow and mature in, so again, they say, we are willing to provide industries, to build

industries in co-operation with you, if you are only willing to co-operate with us.

I have heard the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) time and time again criticize our Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) for even trying to discuss freer markets. Should we not discuss in Canada, within Canada, a freer movement of goods, or should we keep on building little walls around a million people in this great country of ours? Should we not speak to our neighbours to the east, the 11 million, 12 million people living to the east of us? Should we not talk to them about freeing up the markets in Quebec and Ontario? Should we not in that same breath not talk to our American friends to see whether we cannot allow some free competitive spirit to exist when we talk about marketing our agriculture produce or any other produce? Or should we continue, as they would have us do, to apply tariffs or charges against each and every product that we want to sell into the foreign market?

Whether it is in transportation, whether it is in industry, or whether it is in our most basic ability, the raw resources, it is time that we recognize the need to free up the basic producer from the kind of controls that they have been subjected to by the federal Liberals over the last 30 or 40 years and the socialists in this province over the last 15 years.

If we have the vision and the will to do that, we will in fact find that the revenues that governments such as ours need to operate to provide the basic services in health care and education and family services and many other services, that those revenues will start climbing, be it gradually, but they will climb, and then governments will have the resources without spending, without overspending, without borrowing huge amounts of money, will have the resources to provide the services that my honourable friends opposite talk about. But we must stop spending more, and that is what this budget refers to. We must start increasing our revenues, not by increasing the percentage of tax taken, but by the amount of revenue generated through the sale of goods and commodities and services.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we have talked during the last five days about various initiatives that have been taken. There is one that I want to spend some time on tonight, if I may. That is, of course, the need

for water in many of our communities in this province.

I come from an area where water is at a premium, and we regard good quality water very highly. Many of us have spent tens of thousands of dollars to ensure that we in fact have water supplies on our farms and in our homes. We started building a pipeline system less than 10 years ago, Madam Deputy Speaker, and a treatment plant that now serves some 700 families in the R.M. of Rhineland. It now serves all the towns and villages within that municipality, outside of just the 700 farm families that it serves. Yet I am somewhat taken aback by the approach that some members of our society take when we talk about further expanding water supplies to communities that drastically need water and question whether you can in fact draw small amounts of water out of our given streams and rivers to supply the needs of those communities.

It causes me to wonder whether there is any compassion at all or whether there is any desire at all to create a larger economic base in this province, or whether we in fact want to withdraw and decline our numbers, as members of some organizations have said we should. I am appalled, Madam Deputy Speaker, when I hear the leader of an organization say that southern Manitoba should look at declining its population instead of increasing its population, because it is a natural semi-arid part of the province and, therefore, is now overpopulated, and this province should look at ways and means of removing people from that area.

That is what some of us face, and, Madam Deputy Speaker, I say to you that we should be somewhat innovative. I propose to you, as I did to my cabinet colleagues when I was in cabinet, that we should look at a land and water strategy in this province, that we should seriously consider building structures that would store water in this province that communities could in fact access and use. That, in my view, would be a tremendous revenue generator for this province of Manitoba. We have the people. We have the human resource. We have the land base. We have the natural products. We have the vision to do it. We need the will to bring forward the economic requirements to build those water storage units that we need today.

The Assiniboine River basin could store a lot of water. The Pembina Valley water basin could store a tremendous amount of water if we chose to do it.

That would cause a very significant increase in the economic activity of southern Manitoba. We take a very, very small amount of water out of the Red River to supply some 10,000 people with water today. We could very easily withdraw three, four times that amount out of that river and it would not hurt the flows of that river one bit, Madam Deputy Speaker. That could supply four or five times the amount of people that we supply today.

Those are the kinds of things that this budget addresses and, if we can bring our overexpenditures into line, if we can cut our interest cost, then we will have the financial resources to do those kinds of things. That is the vision that our socialist friends on the opposite side of this House simply never had, never will have nor do they want any part of. They stand there and criticize those communities that want to and those communities that would and those communities that will be innovative and progressive and build this great province of ours.

Thank you.

* (2130)

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Deputy Speaker, actually, I think that members opposite often have a script that is given to them by their communications czar and leader, Barb Biggar, that says there are three things you must do in all debates in answering all questions and in dealing with everything in the Legislature.

Firstly, you must refer to other provinces. You must refer to Saskatchewan, you must refer to Ontario, you must refer to NDP B.C. Secondly, when you get into real trouble, you begin cranking up the U.S.S.R. rhetoric, which I have heard in debate here. Thirdly, you then rhetorically ask the question: What is your solution? What is the solution that you on the other side have offered?

Madam Deputy Speaker, I have sat here all day listening to debate. I have listened to several members on the opposite side. I have listened to several members on this side. I thought the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos) made a very excellent speech dealing with economics and I hope members opposite learned something from that discourse.

I thought the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) made a very eloquent and moving statement tonight dealing with a vision and a philosophy, something

that members opposite and the government opposite totally lacks. I think that very moving statement capsulized something that is evident from this budget and is evident in this government. That is, it is an ad hoc government. It is a government lacking in vision. It is a government lacking in direction and, more importantly, it is a government with no plan.

There is no plan on that side of the House. How else could you explain a government that has been bent on deficit reduction, that has been bent on cutting programs, that has been bent on stepping aside, that has the highest per capita deficit in provincial history? They have the highest per capita deficit in provincial history, and that is the government opposite that says they are going to balance the budget in four years.

They have had six years, and they have moved us to a point where per capita we are the highest in Manitoba history, as the member for Rossmere (Mr. Neufeld) stated. Eight hundred and sixty-two million dollars is sitting on their heads, and they have the audacity, Madam Deputy Speaker, and they have the courage to actually stand up and accuse us of causing this problem—six years, six budgets. The highest deficit per capita in Manitoba history and they still—Point 4 of Barb Biggar's primer: Blame it on the other people. Blame it on the other people, Madam Deputy Speaker, and that is precisely what they do. I am surprised, you know, it is the Jules Benson era that we are going into now, the same one that has gone around the school boards and blamed the deficits on the NDP. It has now said: Look, here is the plan. We are going to balance the budget in four years. We are going to the next election on this balance the budget in four years, and you know, we heard the same thing from their mentors in the United States. Mentor Ronald Reagan in 1985 was going to balance his budget, and he ended up with a—

Point of Order

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Just a question. I wonder if the honourable member would mind tabling the memo that he is reading from.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) does not have a point of order.

Mr. Chomiak: I guess Point 5 of Barb Biggar's strategy, Madam Deputy Speaker, is: Interrupt as much as possible to move them off their train of thought. But I am surprising them, my train of thought really is not that lengthy. It is very short, so interruptions—

Point of Order

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Urban Affairs): I was just following Point 5.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The honourable Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) does not have a point of order.

Mr. Chomiak: Which leads us to Point 6, Madam Deputy Speaker. You know I get tired of hearing members opposite constantly claim that we do not offer suggestions, we do not offer advice. The member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), the member for Wolesey (Ms. Friesen) offered very—and I hope members read their speeches again and take some information from that. Perhaps they get back to cabinet and try to develop a plan at least, try to develop a plan.

Let me cite an example of something that I have been—[interjection] The member from Roblin-Russell (Mr. Derkach) is saying, he is not listened to around the cabinet table.

For two years now in this House I have been asking members about the approach to government, the co-ordination of services, and I know the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) and the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) have had on their desks a report from the Manitoba Association of School Trustees, the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents, Manitoba school association of business. The ministers have had this report on their desks since December 1991, asking for a reply by December 1991 for a co-ordination of delivery of service. Now this report does not say spend, spend, spend. This report says, by a better utilization of resources, by a better co-ordination of resources, you could still offer the same services, and it does not take a \$3.9 million consultant to tell you that, Madam Deputy Speaker.

And you know what, Madam Deputy Speaker? There has been nary a word or reply from the ministers with respect to this. In fact, the situation has become worse. Last year, they cut a program

in health; they did not tell the Department of Education.

This year the Department of Health is cutting a program, for example, and I raise this in the House, there is a program, the rehab program was cut. The nurses from the rehab program, four nurses working half-time, went into the schools and started delivering services to special needs children. Now that was in place of teachers' aides and teachers, and I do not want to get into that particular topic because I could probably spend my entire 40 minutes on it, but the point is that they were offering this service at a very low cost as a prototype based on a B.C. model of a prototype program to special needs children in the schools, and we asked the minister to consider extending the program, and the minister stood up and said, there will be announcements in due course or announcements will be forthcoming, which is something we constantly hear. As I understand it, the program is dead. Those students are not receiving the service and that is unfortunate.

That is an example of a program at very low cost that would cross departmental boundaries, that would cross departmental pigeon holes and that would help the children of this province, but that suggestion has fallen upon deaf ears. Numerous suggestions, in fact most if not all of the suggestions from this side of the House, fall upon deaf ears.

Members opposite like to turn it around and say, you offer no constructive criticism, all you offer is criticism and, yet, when positive suggestions come forward, they completely ignore them. They completely ignore them and they come back with their four or five points that they have been told that they must respond to or they must say, and so they cheat the process.

If we on this side of the House are accused of only carping and being negative, those on that side of the House are equally guilty for not responding to the positive suggestions and for not proceeding on that basis.

Madam Deputy Speaker, indicative of what happened in the budget last week is a phone call I received from a nurse's aide. She phoned me and said, it is extraordinary what they are doing in terms of what is happening in nursing homes and personal care homes and the stress that has been put on the staff and the pressure that has been put on the staff and, incidentally, that very same nursing home was

mandated to have its administrative staff cut by 10 percent when there is only two staff, which is a difficult process, mandated by the Department of Health.

* (2140)

She said, I wish you would ask Premier Filmon if he would come and spend some time in our nursing home just to see what is happening in terms of care. I said, well, I will not ask Premier Filmon. Because I am the Health critic, I will ask the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), but, I have to say, the reaction from that otherwise objective and caring individual was quite surprising when I suggested that I would make that very suggestion to the Minister of Health. She did not respond very favourably, to put it mildly.

This is not an attempt to get personal but, rather, this is an attempt to indicate the utter feeling of hopelessness that members in the community have with respect to the Department of Health, with respect to the minister's so-called reform plans and with respect to what is happening in health care today. It extends across all boundaries, and it is very, very sad because if we wanted a climate of reform, we would want a climate where people are willing to go along and are trusting.

Unfortunately, that is not the case. Perhaps we on this side of the House blame it wholly on the government but, certainly, the government blames it wholly on us and, in fact, I often get the impression sitting in this House that the only people in the minister's view who are in opposition to health reform are the 19 New Democrats sitting on this side of the House.

I know that not to be true. In fact, it is my opinion that the vast majority of Manitobans do not agree with what is happening presently in health care, largely because they do not know what is happening, largely because the minister has not communicated, largely because they have refused to communicate with respect to health reform.

Now, I will turn to my comments with respect to the budget. I want to deal with a number of issues.

First is the rule of law. I was very disheartened to hear the comments of the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) with respect to the Sunday shopping law and the fact that that law, despite the fact that it was not passed by this Legislature and was not law, was not being enforced by the government. I think that is unfortunate

because if there is any principle that governs us in this Chamber and our system of government, it is the rule of law, that no person is above the law and that the law applies equally to all, that no one is above it.

In this case, we are dealing with a law that is not being enforced, notwithstanding all of the Premier's (Mr. Filmon) comments with respect to the fact that it is a regulatory—all of that is excuses. The fact is the Sunday shopping law, if passed by this Legislature is one thing, but the manipulation and the disrespect being shown by this government does not bode well and is a terrible example to our youth and to society in general.

As the member for Rossmere (Mr. Neufeld) indicated, a \$862-million deficit is the largest per capita in provincial history, and it is a sad comment in the last six years under this government. The worst aspect of this budget is the mean-spirited nature of this budget. Now, I do not think—the member for Rossmere was quite defensive in his comments. He seemed to indicate that we on this side of the House did not believe that the members on that side had any feeling or did not care. I think I speak for all of us in that this certainly is not the case.

I do not think that members on that side care any more or any less than us on this side of the House. We are all here to do our jobs, and we all believe in certain aspects. However, when it comes to competence, that is an entirely another question. I do not believe that members on that side of the House have competently handled the affairs of this province for the past six years. I believe that this budget is a example, an illustration of an incompetence and something that I strongly believe should result in due course, when the election comes, in the removal of that government from office.

The first issue I want to deal with, with respect to this mean-spirited budget, is the imposition of user fees. I feel very strongly about this, and I think the people of Manitoba feel strongly about this. We saw the imposition of user fees for air ambulance transportation by members opposite, despite the fact the minister tried to call it a contribution, but we have seen the introduction of user fees on medical supplies and services.

If you are in a hospital and require certain of these supplies, they will be provided under our universal

health care plan, but now if you are removed to your home, if you are moved out of a high-cost institution—something we all are advocating, a movement from high-cost institutions to home care—if you move into your home-care facility, you have to pay for those supplies on your own. I think that is wrong. I think it erodes the base of medicare. I think the fence around medicare is slowly eroding, and the imposition of user fees on those particular supplies is particularly galling.

Let me deal with the issue of ostomy, those people who have colostomies, the 1,800 people in Manitoba who have no choice. They did not choose this medical procedure. In almost all cases, it was a result of a life-threatening illness and it saved their lives.

They have no choice but to require these supplies and what has this government said? This government has said you will now have to pay a user fee. You will now have to pay a tax on these supplies. I think that is small-minded. I think that is unfortunate. I think the government could certainly do itself a good deal of public relations by removing that particular provision from this budget. If they are listening, if they care, and I believe they do, then I think that provision should be removed because I think it is particularly poorly implemented and it is, in fact, a user fee.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the personal care home rate, the increase of 74 percent in one fell swoop is unprecedented in this province. No warning. We asked in Question Period whether or not the minister would consider raising the threshold, and I would like the government to consider that. Raise the threshold at least in terms of what you allow people to keep and what you do not allow them to keep. That would be fairer. We are asking that and we are suggesting that.

I have received numerous calls on the daycare situation, on the increase in the daily rate and on the cutback in subsidized spaces, Madam Deputy Speaker. The typical call is an individual who is considering having to now go on social assistance or quit their job and/or quit school because they can no longer pay the increased rates by this minister. That is unfortunate. As the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) eloquently put it, why is welfare the option? Why can we not provide the service to those who require it?

Foster care cuts, Madam Deputy Speaker, are another area that we have received numerous calls on, and it is unfortunate with what this government is doing. When it comes to the opposition, we have to speak for those women and men, mostly women, who require daycare. We have to speak for those families who require foster care assistance. Who speaks in this Legislature for the children, the tens of thousands of children that have had their dental care cut? The members opposite speak nary a word, Madam Deputy Speaker. We are speaking on their behalf. Who speaks for the children in pediatric surgery? Nary a word from members opposite.

The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) relies on Aggie Bishop. I do not know Aggie Bishop. I am sure she is quite competent. The Minister of Health has not yet answered a question in this House directly on the pediatric bed closures, and I will get into that later, Madam Deputy Speaker. Who speaks to the lineups that are forming in the hospitals? We have to speak because no one on that side of this Chamber will do that. Who speaks for the elderly that have seen their cutbacks? No one, unless we on this side of the House speak up for them. That is our role. That is our responsibility not just to them but the people of Manitoba. We will continue to do that.

I want to get into health care extensively in my comments regarding the budget. Firstly, I would like to ask something that I have asked the minister time and time again in the period of time since I have been the Health critic, and that is, where are the alternative services in place that were promised? They are not there. Now I know the minister talks about Concordia, Deer Lodge, King Edward, the municipal hospitals, and the announcement that came July 1990, I believe—[interjection] May 1990, the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema) indicates. He talks about that, Madam Deputy Speaker, but that is it.

* (2150)

We have not seen any increases. Now we have seen a supposed saving of \$6 million in the 74 percent increase in nursing home fees. We have seen a saving of millions of dollars by imposing user fees on those that require hospital supplies. I would presume that money will go into increased home care, although I suspect it is going into deficit reduction. So those people who are paying for the

supplies now know that they are paying down the deficit of Manitoba by virtue of their supplies.

I would like to deal extensively with the pediatric beds issue, which is something that has been—and I think it epitomizes part of the difficulty with health care reform. I will go through it, and I will kind of indicate how we got involved in this in a big way. We got involved in this in a big way, Madam Deputy Speaker, because we were phoned by parents, not one parent, not two parents, not three parents, not four parents, but maybe a dozen parents, maybe more. And we got phoned by doctors who said, we have talked to the minister and we cannot get a straight answer, and we do not know what is happening in terms of pediatric beds at St. Boniface, and we do not know what is happening in terms of pediatric surgery and the consolidation of pediatric surgery at Health Sciences Centre.

I went out and met with some of those groups. I had numerous meetings, and it was always the same. They had phoned the minister's office and heard one thing from the minister. They had phoned the deputy minister's office and heard another thing from the deputy minister, and they had phoned then the head of health reform and had heard another thing, Madam Deputy Speaker. In other words, the plan was not clear. Indeed the plan was, to say the least, chaotic, and it was not clear where they were going.

So I asked questions in the House, and do you know what? We got different answers from the minister. The minister was not clear, and he was very circumspect in his response because he was not giving out the information.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is unfortunate. We had a ward providing excellent care at St. Boniface Hospital, and an initial report that said close most of it but maintain 15 beds for in-patient and five beds for outpatient surgery, and the assumption was that this would continue on. But sometime between that announcement and early spring, all the beds were being closed, and do you know what? When our Leader asked that in December, that question, the minister used statistics, but he used them wrongly. He had used statistics based on a full-capacity hospital. He did not use statistics based on the actuals. But the minister manipulated the statistics and made his political arguments, got us to the point where the pediatric ward closed. The jobs are lost

and parents who have been taking their kids there for 10, 15 and 20 years were told, forget it.

Then, Madam Deputy Speaker, we had a press conference to try to alert it. The minister used the response I had said on CKND, took it out of context, of course, but I expect that from the minister, and tried to imply that we were fearmongering. That does not matter. The point is that we suggested, keep the ward open for 18 months. See what the needs were at the Health Science Centre. See if there was overflow like there was, as we were advised, three times in the last year. Keep the ward open. If after an 18-month period there was no need to maintain a pediatric ward in St. Boniface, then revisit the issue. But no, the minister stood up in the House and said he had a final report that said otherwise, although he would not release the final report. He would wave it in his hand, he would not release it, like so many other reports, so we are left with that.

With regard to surgery, we had the deputy minister saying, yes, in-patient surgery will be moved to Health Sciences, but all other out-patient surgery will remain at the community hospitals, in recognition of the fact that the minister's own document says, Health Sciences Centre, \$800 a day; community hospitals, \$400-plus a day. It is cheaper to do it at community hospitals. We will keep the day surgery for children at community hospitals in the community where they recognize them. That is what the deputy minister said.

But do you know what? That is not what the head of health reform said. The head of health reform said, it is all moving to Health Sciences Centre, and then nobody knew. And now we know, and there have been letters and faxes and all kinds of information, we all know it is all going to Health Sciences Centre. It is all going, and that is contrary to the government's own plan.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that is contrary to the government's own plan, but they are all doing that anyway. We raised the fact in this House that they are expanding surgery in hospital rooms that are not even by modern standards—that do not even meet the minimum requirements of the minister's own department. That is no reflection on the very good work undertaken by Health Sciences Centre and on the very good work undertaken in those operating rooms. Nonetheless, they are putting in 3,000 new procedures into crowded rooms, but the minister

came out of the House, I believe, and indicated to the press that it was not an important issue. I think otherwise.

We are moving to a point where they have now moved all the surgery—and I think it is clear that all surgery is now down at Children's Hospital—contrary to their own health action plan and with no analysis that has been presented publicly, not one analysis presented publicly, that says it is cheaper and proper and more efficient to do it in the one facility.

So I think that the pediatrics issue must be revisited, not only the St. Boniface decision, but the whole question of the surgery with respect to the minister's health reform plan.

Now today we have heard 141 layoffs at St. Boniface Hospital. I ask the minister, is this part of the 380 layoffs that were announced in November as part of health restructuring? [interjection] What was the answer, the member for Arthur (Mr. Downey)? Could you tell me? I do not think anyone in this Chamber—I went out in the hallway and I listened attentively to the minister as he was scrummed. Then I asked the media after, did you understand what the answer was? No one understood what the answer was. I think that is sad.

I think it is sad when 141 people lose their jobs, and we in this Chamber cannot ask the minister whether this is part of the plan or whether it is in addition to the plan and exactly what that is all about. It is tragic that they lose their jobs, but I think it is tragic for this Assembly and for the democratically elected members of this House when we cannot get a straight answer as to why this is happening and what is happening.

An Honourable Member: It would help if you had asked a straight question. You get so carried up in your rhetoric that the question—

Mr. Chomlak: The member says that I get so carried up. I would hold my questions up against the member's questions when he is in opposition any time, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I think, notwithstanding that comment, that the question was very clear, and the answer was as imprecise as possible. I think that is sad, because we do not know what is happening in terms of health care reform, and it is affecting the entire health care community in the entire province of Manitoba. It is affecting everybody in terms of what is happening, and we are getting the calls, and the minister's office is giving them the runaround, and the minister's office is not replying. I think it is unfortunate in the extreme that the minister will not provide proper information to members of this House, never mind the public, after all, who put us here and, after all, whom we answer to. I think that the mood out there is quite conducive to—it takes me back to one of my opening comments. Now I understand why that nurse's aide had such an extreme reaction when I suggested that I would put the question that she raised to the minister.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to turn to a couple of other issues concerning health reform, and one of them is concerning the government's decision in these times of restraint to spend \$3.9 million on a consultant, probably the largest consultant contract ever entered into and forcing St. Boniface and Health Sciences Centre, forcing them to pay her expenses and those of all her associates up to a maximum of \$800,000—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) will have 10 minutes remaining.

The hour being 10 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 13, 1993

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