



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

41 Elizabeth II

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



VOL. XLII No. 8A - 1:30 p.m., MONDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1992



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, Guizar	The Maples	Liberal
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	Liberal
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	NDP
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	NDP
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Liberal
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
GRAY, Avis	Crescentwood	Liberal
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

Monday, December 7, 1992

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Mona Yvon, Tanis Finney, Darlene Jackson and others, urging the government of Manitoba to pass the necessary legislation/regulations which will restrict stubble burning in the province of Manitoba.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House, and it complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

To the Legislature of the province of Manitoba

WHEREAS each year smoke from stubble burning descends upon the province of Manitoba; and

WHEREAS the Parents Support Group of Children with Asthma has long criticized the harmful effects of stubble burning; and

WHEREAS the smoke caused from stubble burning is not healthy for the general public and tends to aggravate the problems of asthma sufferers and people with chronic lung problems; and

WHEREAS alternative practices to stubble burning are necessitated by the fact that the smoke can place some people in life-threatening situations; and

WHEREAS the 1987 Clean Environment Commission Report on Public Hearings, "Investigation of Smoke Problems from Agriculture Crop Residue and Peatland Burning," contained the recommendation that a review of the crop residue burning situation be conducted in five years' time, including a re-examination of the necessity for legislated regulatory control.

THEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly will urge the government of Manitoba to pass the necessary

legislation/regulations which will restrict stubble burning in the province of Manitoba.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the Annual Report for the year 1991-92 for the Department of Highways and Transportation.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 11—The Regional Waste Management Authorities, The Municipal Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), that Bill 11, The Regional Waste Management Authorities, The Municipal Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi concernant les offices régionaux de gestion des déchets, modifiant la Loi sur les municipalités et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois), be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us this afternoon, His Excellency Ignatius Ollsemeka, the High Commissioner of Nigeria to Canada.

On behalf of all members, I would like to welcome you here this afternoon, sir.

Also with us this afternoon we have seated in the public gallery, thirty Grade 5 students from the Lavallée School. These students are under the direction of Mr. Muzyczka and Mr. Stevens. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme).

Also from the Sisler High School, we have forty-two Grade 11 students under the direction of Mr. Bill Harper. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

On behalf of all members, I would like to welcome you here this afternoon.

* (1335)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Core Area Agreement Federal Participation

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. During the election of 1990, the Premier promised during that campaign to renegotiate an inner city core tripartite agreement to build upon the successes of the past two agreements. Subsequent to that date in 1990, the Minister of Urban Affairs agreed after the election to extend the date of the second Core. Since that time we have heard varying comments of optimism, cautious optimism and concern from the provincial government about the success of the renegotiations with the federal Conservative government on the Core Area Agreement.

Mr. Speaker, in 1991 the Premier himself, who was meeting at that time again with the Prime Minister, said the matter of renewal with the federal government for urban revitalization continues to be a matter of discussion between the two parties. Again Thursday the Premier was meeting with the Prime Minister, and as we understand that was also a matter of discussion between the two Conservative leaders, the provincial Conservative Premier and the federal Prime Minister.

I would like to ask the Premier today in light of the need for a third Core Area Agreement, a need that we believe was passed in terms of extending the date, has the Premier secured a tripartite agreement to revitalize and continue to revitalize not only the physical part of the Core Area Agreement but the human components of our Core Area Agreement?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is quite right in saying that was a subject that I covered with the Prime Minister on Thursday. In fact, in the discussion I indicated to him that this had been a matter that had been open in discussion for more than two years between our two governments. It is a matter that we believe is very, very important to the city of Winnipeg. We believe that it is essential that that agreement be renewed for another period of time.

We as a province have made our commitment. In fact, we have even indicated to the city that we would go with a bilateral agreement with the City of

Winnipeg if no money is forthcoming from Ottawa. It is one of the areas that the Prime Minister has turned over to his senior staff to get back to us on, and we expect to hear from them within the not too distant future on that as well as a number of issues that remain outstanding, and remain a source of irritation between us and the federal government.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I hope that the federal government comes through. I think all Manitobans would not want to see us left with a bilateral agreement. In fact, I am quite surprised the Premier would make that statement in the House today, knowing that the federal government will read his comments and feel not too compelled to follow through on this tripartite agreement. They have just potentially saved themselves \$35 million over three years.

Mr. Speaker, the government chose to extend the 1991 date, and they announced that right after the provincial election in October 1990. We thought at that time that was a negotiating error on the part of the province, that they had allowed the federal government not only to offload by extending the date but they allowed the federal government to be removed from the culminating deadline of the closing of the Core Area components.

I ask the Premier: Now that it was his strategy to extend the date and his strategy now to say that they are willing to go with a bilateral agreement, how does he intend to lever the federal government so that we can get a third Core Area Agreement and that we can get federal money that is absolutely required for the inner city of this province, the inner city of Winnipeg, both on a physical basis and on a human basis?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, there are two things to that question; one is that the Leader of the Opposition is anticipating or assuming that the agreement would be on the same terms and conditions and with the same programs and priorities as previous agreements, and I think that our Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) has already indicated that such would not be the case. So a mere continuation of the previous program is not what we are looking for.

Secondly, with respect to issues such as going it bilaterally, the reality is that the federal government has done as it did in renewing the agreement with the previous NDP government, offered reprofiled money and not new money. We have some concerns about the fact that the previous

government accepted reprofiled money as opposed to getting new money. We have said that if that is all that is on the table, we obviously do not need the federal government in it. They have already got that money committed through EIC, through Pathways and other programs. We are looking for new money, and that is why we believe that it is irrelevant to the bargaining to say that we are committed, along with the city, and we will not let the city down if the feds do not come in with new money.

* (1340)

Core Area Agreement Government Priorities

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Core Area Agreement has received international awards for the training component of the program, for the Infill Housing Programs, for the kind of human programs that are contained within the Core Area Agreement.

I would like to ask the Premier today, the human investment that was featured in both Core I and Core II, the human investment in people as well as the physical investments that took place in Core I and II, the Forks being one of the notable ones in Core II—are the human dimensions and human investments not contained as priorities of the provincial government in a third revitalized Core Agreement? Can we know from the government today, what are the actual priorities of this government? Would they have allowed the federal government to extend the agreement? They have allowed the federal government not to participate in the third agreement; we have no new federal money, as we did in Core I and Core II. What are the priorities of this provincial government, and why are we not succeeding in terms of a Core III with the federal Conservative government?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, certainly the human elements, as the Leader refers to them, contained in past Core Area Agreements have been successful in large part. Things such as the core area training program and so on, I have had an opportunity to be there to see the kind of people who have graduated from those programs, to see the benefits that the programs have brought to those individuals. We would want to see those kinds of things continue in a future agreement.

We are, Mr. Speaker, not tied to any specifics at the moment, because I have publicly committed the

government to hold public hearings along with the mayor and hopefully Mr. Epp or whomever is the senior member of the federal government in order to hear what the people of the core area want, what they see as their priorities, what they see as the successful programs that were contained in the Core Area Agreement of the past and what new ideas have come forward. We have some new ideas ourselves, and we will be unveiling those at the same time so that people have an opportunity to comment on those very excellent programs that we have had in the past and on the new ideas that we will be bringing forward in the future.

Chris Davis Wheelchair Purchase

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): The situation facing Chris Davis who has spent five costly and unnecessary months in hospital, who requires this government to purchase a specialized wheelchair in order to live in community and receive care at a third of the cost now being paid by this government and taxpayers, that situation is unresolved to this moment. Just before Question Period the minister spoke with Chris Davis and asked him the question, what is the hurry?—the company, surely, can be asked not to act so hastily and to delay its decision in moving the wheelchair out of the country.

My question to the Minister of Health is, what is his delay? He has known about this situation for five months. Why not give Chris assurances today that the department will purchase the wheelchair, so that at least one aspect of the community care requirements of Chris Davis are met and he is cared for?

* (1345)

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend makes the case that all we have to do is purchase a wheelchair, one of 10 in North America, and the issue is resolved. That is not as simplistic as resolution of this circumstance is.

Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend further alleges that I personally knew of the individual circumstance for five months. I did not, because in many circumstances the Department of Health, working with other ministries, attempts to find appropriate community placements for individuals for whom hospital care would be an inappropriate location. This individual is one of those.

Mr. Speaker, what we are attempting to do, and this has been an ongoing process, is to find the most appropriate community placement for living to assure that the medical needs which are not simple medical needs are able to be met for this individual so that placement in other than an acute care hospital can assure the individual's safety.

Mr. Speaker, my statement to Chris today was, the issue came to light on Friday because the supplier of the specialized wheelchair announced on their own initiative that they were pulling the chair by five o'clock on Friday. I suggested that was an inappropriate time line for the supplier to undertake because we expect, through co-operation between the departments and with Chris, to resolve this problem, Sir.

Ms. Wasylcia-Lels: Mr. Speaker, the impossible was more possible several years ago.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health how it was possible for this government several years ago to purchase a similar wheelchair for someone with similar needs to that of Chris Davis, that person now living and doing very well in Fokus housing.

Why is it harder now, after this government's health care reform initiative, to move towards cost-effective community-based care than post his announced plan of action?

Mr. Orchard: Again, Mr. Speaker, I do not know of what similar wheelchair—because it is my understanding that this wheelchair is one of 10 of the new model. It is not, as my honourable friend alleges, the one that we purchased two years ago.

Let me explain for my honourable friend how the ministry works, and this is not unusual because this is a similar process that has taken place for a number of years. We provide modified wheelchairs, motorized in the case where needed, where mobility is impossible without a motorized wheelchair. Depending on the circumstance of the individual's need, those wheelchairs are modified and modified quite significantly.

Mr. Speaker, that opportunity exists for this individual. The specialized wheelchair, yes, is one that would meet his needs, but there are also programs for modifying wheelchairs to also accommodate that need. Overriding that, the wheelchair is not the only issue. What is needed to be determined and provided is a safe placement for this individual that will meet the individual's medical needs with assurance that they will not be

compromised. That is the process that has been ongoing in terms of stabilizing the individual, assessing medical needs and planning for safe placement other than in a hospital.

Service Co-ordination

Ms. Judy Wasylcia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, since the minister raises the other issues, let me ask about the absolute lack of co-ordination between the three ministers and three departments involved and ask why there has been no attempt to resolve this kind of issue, why there are at least three other individuals spending months in costly hospitals without this government taking any initiative to provide some sort of co-ordinated housing program with supports to meet their high care needs?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, as usual, my honourable friend considerably stretches her facts. Let us deal with some of the special needs individuals that were there in 1988 when this government came into office. Let us consider the head injured, on their desk in 1988 when we took over government. What is the solution today?—a special wing in Deer Lodge Hospital for the head injured of Manitoba, and plans at municipal hospitals to make that a permanent part of redeveloped municipal hospitals. I might say to my honourable friend, municipal hospitals were a nonresolved issue by the previous administration.

Let us deal with another issue of the young disabled, Mr. Speaker. What we are doing is working with a number of proponents in the health care community for the provision of young disabled placements in the community to meet special medical needs, more appropriately met in specialized facilities.

Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend says there has been nothing going on. The only thing that has not been going on is my honourable friend's understanding of significant change in the health care system under this government.

* (1350)

Portage Avenue Explosion Investigation

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro.

I think everyone in this House is relieved that there was no loss of life or serious injury as a result of the

explosion last Friday. I would like to know from the minister if he can tell us if this incident is being investigated by Hydro officials or has he directed an impartial independent authority to examine what happened and to make public their report.

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for The Manitoba Hydro Act): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question. As well, it was raised earlier with my colleague from Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) as to his concern relating to the accident of Friday.

I can inform the House that we are extremely fortunate, all Manitobans, that there was not any loss of life or limb, or in fact any injuries. We are extremely thankful for that. As well, Mr. Speaker, there is a full investigation being carried out by Workplace Safety and Health, as well as Manitoba Hydro. At this point, we are trying to work to co-ordinate all activities as they relate to that issue.

It is my understanding as well, the Fire Commissioner's Office has it under full investigation. I want to take this opportunity, if the member does not mind, to acknowledge the hard work and effort of all the people, individuals and agencies that participated and helped on Friday with people who found themselves under the stress of the extreme incident. I can assure the member that it is being fully investigated.

Compensation

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, there is a serious question about insurance that has been raised for those businesses and, more importantly, the individuals who have been affected, nearby homeowners and tenants, some of whom have no dwelling whatsoever to live in. Processing of all of those claims will obviously take some time.

Can the minister give us any information today with respect to interim compensation, particularly for those people who have immediate needs such as window replacement and in some cases alternate accommodations?

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for The Manitoba Hydro Act): Mr. Speaker, again, I regret, on Manitoba Hydro's behalf and the government's, any inconvenience that has been caused to individuals. It is a very disturbing situation, as we are all aware.

As far as interim arrangements are concerned, I am prepared to work with other agencies that are involved in government to make sure that there is in fact support provided. There is a municipal responsibility as well, as it relates to that. To what amount Family Services are involved, I am not sure, but we are working to try and co-ordinate some support.

Mr. Speaker, there is, of course, until all the investigation work is done, some question as to who in fact was responsible in a legal manner as to the accident. Until the full investigation is done, I cannot respond any further on that.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us if the department will be working with claimants in order to ensure that those claims are made as rapidly as possible and that they are settled as quickly as possible?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, again, it is a matter of making sure individuals are accommodated to the best way possible. I want to assure the member that we are prepared to co-operate and work with all agencies that will in fact try to accommodate individuals during this difficult time.

As far as insurance claims and settlement, there has to be a lot of work done as to the responsibility as to who in fact was responsible. The investigation, I am sure, will clarify a lot of those details.

The Pas, Manitoba Justice System Backlog

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Justice.

Over a year ago, when the AJI report was released by the Minister of Justice, he stated that there was nothing that he was working harder on. The St. Theresa Point Youth Court received funding after a press conference in our office here not all that long ago. Later on, the Hollow Water Healing Circle also received some funds, as have a few other joint projects with the federal government, including the Swampy Cree tribal justice project and the Island Lake Tribal Council family violence project. Since then, almost nothing has happened, Mr. Speaker.

My question is: Since there are over 300 court cases outstanding in The Pas, with delays of up to nine months now, as we are speaking here today, will the minister now hire a second Crown attorney who is familiar with things like healing circles and

other aboriginal justice systems to clear up the backlog that is in The Pas?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for raising this question, because he should be advised that the Department of Justice is in the process of hiring a second prosecutor in The Pas. There has been a delay, and that delay is occasioned by the desire of the Department of Justice, if possible, to hire locally. That creates some challenges for us. We are dealing with that, and that prosecutor will be in place shortly. In the meantime, we are dealing with the situation as best we can through the use of Winnipeg prosecutors.

* (1355)

Aboriginal Justice System Program Funding

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to ask a question to the same minister.

Given that the year is almost over now, will the minister release the complete list of all projects that have been funded from the AJI budget that was set aside for the fiscal year '92-93?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice is working very closely with some aboriginal communities in this province through the auspices of the Aboriginal Court Worker Advisory Committee. That advisory committee has membership representing the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, the Manitoba Metis Federation and the Indigenous Women's Collective of Manitoba. That work is going forward with the specific communities towards the ultimate goal of putting together tribal court models which we believe will serve large segments of the aboriginal population in some isolated places in Manitoba far better than they have been in the past.

The honourable member will know that just over a week ago I attended a native justice round table discussion in Ottawa. This was sponsored by the royal commission which has been struck to review aboriginal matters. An extremely interesting conference was had at that time with participation from people like myself, the Attorney General of Saskatchewan was there, the Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations was there, and perhaps I will have other opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Speaker, I still say that we should have a list of those projects that have been funded through the AJI budget for '92-93.

Aboriginal Justice Inquiry Recommendation Analysis

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): My third question is again to the Minister of Justice, Mr. Speaker, and that is, the department has been doing analysis on the AJI recommendations; I want to ask the minister if he is prepared to release that departmental analysis of all that was done on the recommendations of the report so that Manitobans can see for themselves why so many of those recommendations have either been dismissed or are not implemented or are being shelved and for whatever reason.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Many of the recommendations in the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry flow from the key recommendation that there be separate and sovereign systems of government for aboriginal people. That is not a recommendation that we are in a position to accept so therefore a number of the recommendations in the justice inquiry are not able to be acted upon.

As I was saying in my last question, this was a matter that was debated between the Assembly of First Nations Grand Chief Mercredi and myself just over a week ago. Obviously Grand Chief Mercredi, like the honourable member, will continue to put forward the concept of separate sovereign systems of government which include separate sovereign justice systems for aboriginal people.

As I said to Ovide Mercredi, I will say to the honourable member, we can debate that until we are both very, very old and in the meantime we will not have done anything. That is not good enough, because the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry says that too, and there is general agreement that where we can work co-operatively with communities we should indeed be doing that. That is precisely what we are doing.

The discussion of political will came up, the issue of political will to create better systems of justice. The political will has to come not only from provincial governments and the federal government but also from aboriginal communities. The honourable member's community is one of those communities that has demonstrated it has political will and has moved with the government to—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

* (1400)

**Emilio Garcia
Parole Review**

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. It is ironic hearing the minister's comments this morning that the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry also stated that aboriginal people represent a disproportionate amount of people who were incarcerated because many cannot pay fines and have trouble understanding the justice system.

We have learned that Emilio Garcia, a lawyer in the city of Winnipeg who was sentenced to 64 months for probably the largest trust fraud in the history of Manitoba is now out on the streets after three months on bail. I am wondering if the minister can advise the House how this has occurred.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I am not sure how the honourable member's, the two parts of his question tie together. We did not need an Aboriginal Justice Inquiry to tell us that there were a disproportionate number of aboriginal people involved in our justice system. The honourable member should have known that long before the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry. The members on this side of the House certainly knew that.

The justice inquiry did provide some useful advice to government and to aboriginal communities, but surely for the honourable member to tell us that he did not know about that before the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry says something that is rather disturbing about him and the members on his side of the House. The honourable member asks about a specific case. I shall conduct some inquiries and ascertain some information for the honourable member on that case.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary to the same minister. Talk about a sovereign system—how is it this individual got out when the rules on parole that any of us are aware of—it is totally contrary to rules on parole to be out after three months on a 64-month sentence. The minimum rules that we are apprised of are one-sixth of your sentence before you get out on day parole, and how did this individual get out? Talk about a sovereign system.

Mr. McCrae: The reason for my taking notice of the honourable member's question is I want to ensure

that the information the honourable member is bringing forward is correct. We have certainly seen plenty of examples—not as many times from the honourable member as from some of his colleagues who occupy the front benches—of incorrect information being brought forward. Certainly three months on a 64-month sentence does deserve to be looked into and that is exactly what I told the honourable member I would do.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if the minister can also apprise the House whether or not there is an ongoing investigation as to the \$3 million that is still outstanding in terms of this trust fraud in light of the fact that the Law Society is concerned that some of that money may have been moved out of the country.

Mr. McCrae: My understanding is that when this kind of matter comes forward every member of the legal profession in this province is extremely concerned for various reasons and all of them very good reasons. On that question, I will take that question as notice as well.

**Universities
Tuition Fees**

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Education. Since this government took office, fees at the University of Manitoba have risen some 82 percent and now as the government is getting into its budget cycle, we are beginning to hear more and more stories about double-digit increases at the province's universities.

I would like to know from the Minister of Education, what is this year's policy on student fees? Are they intending to hold the line at all?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I have some laryngitis and so I am going to try and answer the member's question as well as I can, and I hope that he will be able to hear me.

I think that it is very important for the member to understand that we also have great concern around the issue of student tuition fees. We are in the process now of going through our budget cycle in the Department of Education as a department in government. We are making every effort to take into consideration issues relating to university funding and the impact on student tuition.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, the policy to date has been to transfer the cost of universities off the general revenues onto the debt loads of students. I

would like to ask the minister: Will she recommend through the Universities Grants Commission to the universities that they hold university fee increases this year to the cost of inflation?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, the issue again of student tuition has been of concern to this government. We have made every attempt to assist students, where tuition fees have risen, to make sure that those students then have available to them student aid which may be of assistance to them to allow them to continue in their educational process.

Mr. Speaker, that is correct. The government has allowed the students to pick up on their debt load with its inability to fund the university.

Student Financial Assistance

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the minister if she can report to the House what progress she has made in her discussions with the federal government, discussions she was quite proud of in Estimates last year, and whether or not she has been able to encourage them or get them to increase basic support rates for students.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, I have had two face-to-face meetings with the federal minister responsible. I have also communicated by letter to him. I have met with the student presidents from Manitoba to make sure that their concerns have been incorporated into any communication that I have had with the federal minister.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the Council of Ministers of Education from across Canada met here in Winnipeg. As a group of ministers, we also sent a letter to the federal minister and made sure that he was fully aware of the concerns.

Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation No-Fault Insurance

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

Mr. Speaker, this minister has acknowledged that Autopac rates could increase by as much as 90 percent in the next seven years. The previous NDP government asked Judge Kopstein to recommend ways to reduce Autopac costs. The major recommendation of Judge Kopstein is in the report, and I will read that one major recommendation: In

my opinion, the inclination of a pure no-fault automobile insurance system is the issue which requires most urgent consideration by the government of the province of Manitoba, because that system offers the greatest opportunity to raise costs and increase benefits.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is: Why has the minister refused to act on this recommendation, which he has had over four years, in order to really bring Autopac costs down?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): Mr. Speaker, obviously, the member has been reading with some interest articles that he saw in today's paper.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that we have been looking very carefully at the cost containment in terms of the total cost to the people of the province. Over the last three years, since we saw the 28 percent that his previous government imposed on the people of this province, the cost increases in the corporation have not been that dramatic. The fact is that there is a trend beginning to develop again in personal injury costs that we need to examine.

Public Utilities Board Process

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I want to be very specific with this minister about costs.

Will this minister confirm that when the group representing Autopac brokers and agents raised the matter of limiting agency fees and commissions with the MPIC, the corporation told them to go to the Public Utilities Board like everyone else?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if I even followed the member's question, but I do not think I have any knowledge of whereof he is speaking.

Mr. Leonard Evans: The minister asked me to repeat that question, my second question. Well, Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that they were asked to follow the proper procedure, and this cabinet was prepared to abort the proper procedure.

Agents' Fees

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, my last question to the minister is: Will the minister now reconsider his position, in light of his

acknowledgement of rapid increases in the future as well as those in the past? Will this minister reconsider his position on agency fees and allow Autopac to proceed to cap agency or broker fees to 3 percent now instead of allowing them to rise to nearly 10 percent? Let us have some action now. Let us save a million dollars right now.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): Mr. Speaker, in the incorporation of the changes of Autopac 2000, as I have said to the member several times, there will be a dramatic change in the way the corporation does business and the way that they do business with their agents as well as the public.

Mr. Speaker, in putting together that proposal that has been taking place for over the last three and a half years, it has been one of the primary focuses of the corporation to move towards these cyclical renewals. Why would you now decide that in the middle of those discussions, you should all of a sudden change direction?

* (1410)

Labour Force Development Government Initiatives

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolsley): Mr. Speaker, over 70,000 Manitobans are now dependent upon social assistance. The vast majority of those families want and need training and retraining, but we have a government in Manitoba that has no labour force development strategy and apparently no immediate plans for announcing any.

I want to ask the Minister of Education: Will she tell the House when she will sign that agreement with Ottawa, and when can those Manitoba families expect any help or direction from this government? Is it this year? Is it next year? Is it sometime—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has put her question.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, we have been working on the signing of the Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Development Agreement. We are, I believe, very close to making sure that the interests of Manitobans are now represented in that agreement, and I expect to be looking at signing it very shortly.

Consultations

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolsley): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister to change the policy that she announced in this House last Thursday, when she said that she would not consult any further with the labour movement or with education until after she had signed that agreement. I want to give her the opportunity to retract that.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I believe the member has misconstrued any remarks made.

We have in fact met and are very willing to consult with business, with industry and with labour to make sure that their interests are represented and most particularly, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that their interests are represented in the formation of any boards which then will flow from the signing of that agreement.

Crop Insurance Review Report Release

Mr. John Plohma (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture.

The crop insurance review was undertaken last year, after a general concern that was expressed throughout the province about inequities in crop insurance, crop insurance distortions in various areas of the province. The minister undertook a review with a committee that was appointed that travelled throughout the province and provided him with a report that he received last June. That is over five months ago. Since June, this minister has not released that report, despite repeated requests that have been made by myself and many others for this report.

I want to ask the minister: Why will he not release the crop insurance review report that was undertaken? What is he hiding?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, we are hiding nothing. We had a very open process of 10 people going around and hearing input from producers and agribusiness people, whoever wanted to come forward and make some comment to the Crop Insurance Commission.

On behalf of the board of directors of Manitoba Crop Insurance and the minister and the federal minister, all three parties are reviewing it. Many of the aspects in the review are now being implemented by the Crop Insurance Corporation, and the board is reviewing the final details in order

to be able to release the document. It will be released before too long. The board is reviewing and acting as fast as they can on many of the initiatives in the report.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, this is incredible. How can this minister say he is implementing this report when farmers, the Keystone Agricultural Producers, the committee members themselves are asking this minister to release it? When will he release that report?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, the farmers of Manitoba asked for a review. A review was done, and action is occurring on many of the recommendations that were brought forward. All that member worries about is release of it; he does not ask were we doing anything with the recommendations, which we are doing all kinds of things with.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, in doing all kinds of things in secret, is it not a fact that this minister is hiding this report because he has been proven wrong in basing GRIP completely on the basis of crop insurance, and the distortions that were in crop insurance are magnified many times in GRIP because of it?

Mr. Findlay: That member is saying revenue insurance is no good for the farmers of Manitoba. I would ask him to go and talk to anybody who lives north of the Yellowhead Highway, who know this year that if it was not for revenue insurance, they would be out of farming. You ask any farmer in Saskatchewan who does not have the base of support that farmers in Manitoba have.

That member does not want Manitoba farmers to have support. He does not want to support the revenue insurance program, never has and probably never will, even though the farmers of Manitoba thank me over and over again for putting that program in place, even in his constituency, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister responsible for Sport): Leave to revert to ministerial statements, please?

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable minister have leave to revert to ministerial statements?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: It is agreed.

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, I have a ministerial statement to circulate.

I am honoured to rise before the House today to salute the many Manitobans who contributed to the city of Winnipeg's successful bid to the Canadian Olympic Association this weekend for the endorsement to host the 1999 Pan American Games.

As well documented through the media, Winnipeg was selected over Toronto, Sherbrooke and Edmonton. The selection of Winnipeg as the Canadian city to proceed with a bid to the Pan American Sports Organization is no small tribute to the dedicated corps of volunteers, under the leadership of Don MacKenzie and Barbara Huck, in what was truly a team effort. The success of this bid was the result of the co-operation that existed between the City of Winnipeg, the Province of Manitoba, the Manitoba Sports Federation, the multicultural community, the corporate community and the community at large.

*(1420)

These special community-minded and community-spirited citizens, who pooled their skills and abilities and devoted their time and energies for the better part of two years, and in certain individual cases longer, are to be duly recognized for their contribution to what will result in long-term benefits to Manitoba.

While the ultimate decision still rests with the Pan American Sports Organization, it is generally felt endorsement from the Canadian Olympic Association was the biggest challenge toward securing the games.

In proceeding now with what I feel will be another successful bid, the investment we will make to hosting the games in 1999 will create 2,000 full-time jobs, add \$136 million to the Manitoba economy, result in new and improved facilities, enhance sport development and once again provide Manitobans with a strong sense of pride and achievement.

Mr. Speaker, both the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and I had the privilege of being in Toronto for the presentation and subsequent announcement on Saturday. Words cannot describe the pride that we shared as Manitobans and in those who portrayed Winnipeg and Manitoba so brilliantly to the COA delegates.

I would ask all members to join me in congratulating those dedicated volunteers who

served on the 1999 Pan American Games Bid Committee and in offering encouragement and support to the host bid committee and the Canadian Olympic Association toward securing the endorsement of the Pan American Sports Organization for Winnipeg as the host of the 1999 Pan American Games.

Thank you.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Yes, responding to the ministerial statement that we reverted back to, Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the delegation on behalf of the city of Winnipeg, and the full delegation on their success in having Winnipeg nominated as the Canadian community for the hosting of the Pan American Games in 1999. We look forward to the ultimate decision that will be made by the Pan American Committee in 1994 and we look forward to the deliberations that will take place on the ultimate decision.

Mr. Speaker, the minister has mentioned the volunteers who have worked actively on behalf of the Winnipeg bid, and I would like to also extend our congratulations to Mr. MacKenzie and Barbara Huck on their co-chairmanship of this bid.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to a couple of other volunteers who I think it is very important today to remember in this ministerial statement. One is Jim Daly, who led the 1967 Pan American Games and the tremendous voluntary activity in 1967 in Winnipeg, which truly put our community on the international map. The thousands of volunteers who worked throughout those games, I believe, made us all very proud. I know my own personal experience with my father, taking time off for two weeks working in the swimming events, and I know of so many others who just took their whole vacation period, thousands of Winnipeggers under the leadership of Jim Daly, who H[interjection] the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) may want to make light of it, but Jim Daly, I think, made a tremendous contribution in hosting or chairing the Pan Am Games in 1967, and I think we would be remiss if we did not mention his contributions.

I also think that Art Mauro deserves a tremendous amount of credit, because the hosting of the Grey Cup last year with community volunteers, when you compare that with the hosting of the Grey Cup in Toronto last week, I am sure made the difference of the one vote in terms of the voting delegates, and I

think we owe some gratitude to those people who were involved.

I know also that we were seized with this responsibility in 1987. I know that Minister Desjardins visited down to Indianapolis with the former deputy mayor, now the Minister responsible for Sport, in 1987 in terms of the initial lobby.

I also recall, Mr. Speaker, that former minister of Sport Parasiuk had to deal with some of the capital concepts of hosting the Pan American Games, and I want to bring to the attention of members opposite, one of the capital considerations that he had before him and that I would ask the government to consider. One of his criteria for contributing with the Sports Federation and the province in contribution with the city and the federal government was to ensure that all the sports facilities that will be left behind, all the investment that will be left behind for amateur sports and community quality of life will be spread evenly throughout our Manitoba communities and not be just relegated to one area of the city or another. I would raise this with the minister now, because it will be an issue that we will be watching for to ensure the kind of fairness that we asked for the federal government last week is the kind of fairness that we see with facilities that are required in the Pan American Games.

I would also raise one other issue—and I mean this very seriously—to the government, because I do congratulate them on their successful activity in getting this bid. I want to say that not only to the Minister of Sport but to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and all others who were involved in the bid presentation this weekend.

One of the things we were worried about in 1986 when we were dealing with the initial bid requirement was the fact that we had to get a Core Area Agreement in place with the federal government, because it would not appear to be fair to some people in our community who are most vulnerable for us to have a federal-provincial agreement on the Pan American Games and not have a federal-provincial agreement on the Core Area Agreement.

I say very seriously to the government today that this will be perceived as a void in our celebration. So we hesitated for at least a year before we started our lobbying, until we got the second Core in place before we started actively pursuing the Pan American Games in 1999.

I congratulate the government. I congratulate all who presented the briefs. I congratulate all the volunteers from 1967 on. We pledge our cooperation with the government on this very important project, but I would ask the government to consider those two points that I raised here this afternoon. Thank you very, very much.

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to join with the minister, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the members of the House conveying our best wishes to Mr. Don MacKenzie and Barbara Huck and all of the volunteers who have worked so hard to make sure that we got to the first place to have the Pan American Games in Manitoba.

Our task will not end at this day. It is the first step. It is a very important step, but the final step will take some time, more effort and more organizations and support from the government in making sure that we get to the final stage so that we not only get the financial benefit, but also games are such an important thing in the world today. That way we can not only gather the financial resources but also convey what Manitoba has done for this country and for the world.

When there are so many tensions, the games are one of the avenues where we can really do very well. I will certainly join with the government and the people and the volunteers who have worked so hard and make sure that we will be successful. Thank you.

Nonpolitical Statements

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like leave to make a nonpolitical statement, if we are reverting now to that.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable Leader of the Second Opposition have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, 75 years ago yesterday was the largest man-made explosion, up to the disaster of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This was the Halifax explosion.

In the Halifax explosion 1,600 were known dead, but many other bodies were unfortunately never recovered because they were part of a tidal wave that swept them out into the ocean and were never heard from or recovered. There were an additional 10,000 people injured in that explosion, some of

whom, like my grandfather Richard Connolly, went on to die within the year from gangrene as a result of the wounds that he suffered in the Halifax explosion.

My father was a student of 16 on that day of December 6, 1917. He was actually sitting in his classroom when he looked up and saw the enormous ball of fire and watched as his teacher actually, who had the peculiar habit of his desk apparently facing the window, lost one eye immediately. Most of the boys in the room were covered in cuts and wounds—and I am taking much of this account, by the way, Mr. Speaker, from my father's memoirs—and they gradually worked them out of the school. When they arrived outside, they began to separate and go to their own homes.

My father went home with a young man by the name of Dan McTiernan, but when they got to Dan McTiernan's house, the house had disappeared. There were no houses anywhere near this particular home, and Mrs. McTiernan was one of the dead. My father then became concerned about what had happened to his own home. When he arrived at his house, the whole top part of the house was destroyed, and so they camped, literally, in the basement and on the first floor for several weeks.

We often like to poke fun at the neighbour to the south of us. Sometimes we are not at all in sync with their political and sometimes their economic policies, but my father accounts that it was the people of Boston, Massachusetts, who were the first to come to the support of the people of Halifax. The transportation links had been cut off every place else because of damage to the rails, and it was Boston that was able to mount a ship filled with nurses and doctors and medical supplies. They came to Halifax as soon as they could because that night there was an enormous blizzard. They managed to make it in, and it was because of the work of the people of Massachusetts that many lives were in fact saved.

That is why it was with interest last week, when I picked up a story from the Boston paper—and they talked once again about the Christmas tree that was put up in the Boston Common. The Christmas tree that is erected each year in the Boston Common is a present from the Nova Scotia government, a present from the Nova Scotia government in grateful appreciation for the work that Bostonians had done in helping to save Nova Scotians and Canadians

from the Halifax explosion of December 6, 1917. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (1430)

* * *

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Government Services): Mr. Speaker, may I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed my pleasure to rise in the House today to congratulate the Dakota High School Varsity Boys Volleyball team who once again won the Provincial AAAA Volleyball Championship. This comes on the heels of last weekend's victory by the Dakota High School Freshman Girls team who won their provincial division.

This speaks very loudly for the fine athletic programs that the St. Vital School Division provides for their students. The training does not begin in high school, but starts with our elementary and junior high schools by very many dedicated teachers. Virtually all of the champions have come up through the system, and probably some of them, Mr. Speaker, will participate in the Pan Am Games in 1999.

Some of those could be of the following: the freshman girls team coached by Lisa Hill and Lara Winstone and consists of Jacqueline Bilodeau, Crystal Brown, Dayna Butterworth, Cheryl Clark, Cynthia Croatto, Kyla Hanec, Cadence Hays, Kathleen Holmes, Dana Klatt, Katie Marie, Jill McAndless who was the tournament's most valuable player, Shea Telfer, Holly Thiessen and Amy Tuck.

The varsity boys are coached by Phil Hudson, Sandy Prabhakar and Carmine Sparanese. On that team is Sean Barr, John Causon, Brunei Delorme, David Foster, Steve Graham, Dan Hudson, Rick Huff, Brian Martens, Mike Martens, John Minkevich, Mark Schmidtke, Bill Schoen, Ken Unger, Dan Webb and Bruce Winstone, who was also the tournament's most valuable player this year and last year. Well done, Dakota.

Point of Order

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I would like to apologize to the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Penner). In debate on Friday, I forgot the name of his fine constituency. I also referred to it in unparliamentary terms, and I apologize for that, as well.

The honourable member invited me to visit Emerson which in fact I have done. I have preached at Emerson, Dominion City and Greenridge United Churches. I visited Stuartburn and Gardenton, and indeed it is a fine constituency.

I would also like to invite—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member does not have a point of order. That is clearly not a point of order.

* * *

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, may I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Speaker, at this time of the year, we see many provincial volleyball tournaments around the province. Indeed, my constituency, the town of Roblin, was the site of the AA Boys Volleyball Championships on the weekend. I would just like to congratulate all of the teams for their excellent sportsmanship and their conduct in the participation of the tournament.

More importantly, I would like to congratulate the Goose Lake High Boys Senior Varsity team for being successful in achieving the Provincial AA Championship in volleyball this year. Coached by Hugh Newton, Mr. Speaker, they did an excellent job throughout the year in terms of practices, and indeed they have shown that Roblin Goose Lake High produces some top quality athletes in this province. So congratulations to all of them.

* * *

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, might I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Kildonan have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Chomlak: The member for Roblin-Russell truly did speak when he said that it was sort of the volleyball season in sport season. I want to join together with other members of the House in congratulating the Garden City Collegiate girls volleyball team for winning the first provincial championship in their history, which they won on the weekend, Mr. Speaker.

On behalf of all colleagues in the House, I am sure you will join with me in congratulating the girls volleyball team. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY
THRONE SPEECH DEBATE
(Seventh Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) for an address to the honourable Administrator in answer to his speech at the opening of the session, and the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) in amendment thereto, as follows, standing in the name of the honourable member for Point Douglas, who has 33 minutes remaining.

Mr. George Hlckes (Point Douglas): Mr. Speaker, before I continue, I would just like to clear up a little misunderstanding from some of my comments on Friday.

Some of the members took my comments not in the intention that I raised them. I was not questioning any member of the House's integrity or understanding of aboriginals or visible minorities. The only point I was trying to make was that I personally would love to see a fairer representation of people living in Manitoba in this Chamber. That is the only point I was trying to make. If I have offended anyone, I apologize for that.

On that, I would just like to continue on with the constituents of Point Douglas who, as we know, are trying to work very hard to try and make ends meet and continue on with their careers and their lives.

When I was talking about the opening of many food banks, we all know that is not the answer. The answer is training and jobs. I hope when we look at training opportunities for individuals in Manitoba that we do look at trying to recognize some of the training and some of the skills that people bring from other countries, to try and look at ways of giving some form of accreditation or recognition of their achievements or skill levels. Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, when people come from different countries they are very skilled in their chosen area, but when they come to Canada they have to resort back to not using and fulfilling their skills, either they have to go for the full term of university or college courses, and they have to try and make ends meet by either working in kitchens or labour jobs. I think that, with those highly skilled people, we are missing the opportunity for them to help us out in a lot of the skilled areas, so on that note, when you add the training and job opportunities—

I think another area that we have to make sure that we do not lose sight of, and we do not lose, is our English as a Second Language programs because those are very important to people that come from other countries, and English will now become their second language. We all know how difficult it is when you travel to another country, or to a foreign place, and English is not your language, how difficult it is to try to communicate or even just to catch a bus or to purchase something. It is very difficult. I hope we do not ever, ever lose those kinds of programs because Canada was built on people coming from other countries, and I am sure it will continue that way.

* (1440)

I would like to just take a few moments to talk about my former colleague, the former member for Rupertsland.

For us aboriginal people, it was a big breakthrough when we finally had a national hero that a lot of the children and aboriginal people could look up to. I am not saying that just because he came from our party. It would not have mattered if he came from the Liberals or Conservatives. There was an aboriginal person that finally had recognition across Canada, and across the world, to have the platform to explain the struggles and aspirations of aboriginals, where, even today, in 1992, you can go into some of the northern communities and they do not even have simple things as sewer and water.

A lot of the housing in some of those northern communities are really second-, third-rate housing, and nobody had really recognized that and really worked hard—well, I guess the aboriginal people had worked hard, but the citizens of Canada, I do not think, were really aware of it until the former member of Rupertsland stood up and got the true recognition across Canada and the world.

When I think of some of the times that I had the opportunity of travelling with the former member and just being at the airport or in an elevator, the number of total strangers that recognized the former member and came up and said, "Thanks," as an aboriginal person, I do not know if I will ever feel as proud as I did at those times.

Now we hear talk about aboriginal self-government, and aboriginal this and aboriginal that. A few years back, you would have never, ever heard those kinds of statements made. I hope, because of the support that is out there now from a lot of the

non-aboriginal people, that a lot of those goals and dreams for our children will be fulfilled because my friend and former colleague had represented the North, and the North right now needs a lot of help.

There is the community of Churchill, which is my home town. They were trying to develop a space port and wanted support from the governments and various organizations and agencies. When you talk about the space port program, you are talking about 500 jobs in refurbishing the rocket range. Those 500 jobs would create a lot of employment opportunities and a lot of dollars for northern Manitoba, because if you have the space port program, then there is justification for keeping the railroad open, and when the railroad is open there should be justification for continuing with a port, because even this summer when the grain ships left Churchill there was a memo that went out from CNR to make sure that there was no grain left in Churchill.

That is very scary, because if they are looking at abandoning the port, they are looking at abandoning a lot of employment opportunities for the citizens of that community because there is really nothing else happening there during the summer months. But if you get the space port program and if it gets off the ground, just like the rockets when they are launched, if it gets off the ground then the railroad should be maintained and hopefully the port will continue on.

When I was growing up in Churchill, I remember many, many times watching the rockets being fired and it was a great thrill. In fact, they used to fire about 3,000 rockets every year and if they could get that kind of commitment from various space programs, then hopefully it will get a much higher rating by interested companies and by governments for that much-needed support.

Also, when we talk about the North, we look at mining. The mining in northern Manitoba right now is in a very, very dangerous state, because we have had five communities—

An Honourable Member: Whose fault is it?

Mr. Hickes: Well, I do not know whose fault it is. I guess to a certain extent you could lay fault, because of some of the initiatives that have not taken place and some of the, I guess, the initiatives that took place that were detrimental to mining in northern Manitoba. When I say that, I talk about the 1.5 percent mining tax that was put on mines in the year of 1989, and it is still on. This is 1992 and the

mines are suffering. They do not need that extra 1.5 percent mining tax burden because right now there is a lot of exploration work going on in the North and hopefully they will find something.

Then, on the other hand, you cannot blame a government when the mine runs out, because the statement has always been made that the day a mine opens, the next day you start planning for it to close because the orebodies have to run out some time. I guess, in anticipation of that, there should have been measures put in place and more exploration done and more investment to find alternative orebodies.

An Honourable Member: They should not have been taxed to the limit, right?

Mr. Hickes: Well, the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laudendeau) said they should not be taxed to the limit. Well, in reference—

An Honourable Member: What did the NDP do? They taxed them out of the province.

Mr. Hickes: In reference to the member's statement that the NDP taxed them to the limit, well, in 1989, his government which is sitting today raised the mining tax 1.5 percent. If they were taxed to the limit, why did the government raise the mining tax 1.5 percent? They should have maybe lowered them 1.5 percent if, as the member states, they are taxed to the limit. If you are taxed to the limit, there is no more room to add tax. There should not be any more room. So I guess the member should speak to his colleagues and ask them why they raised the tax 1.5 percent if they are already taxed to the limit. Ask them.

(Mr. Ben Sveinson, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

When we talk about mines, like planning for when mines are going to close, the dollars that are put in right now for exploration and prospectors and stuff, that is a good program. Northerners and people in Manitoba welcome that opportunity. Too bad it was not started sooner, because we knew and people knew that the mine and the orebody in Snow Lake was running out. In fact, in November 1992, all Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting employees in Snow Lake got their layoff notices. That was November 23, 1992.

So maybe the exploration and prospecting work should have been started three, four years ago, because when you find orebodies it takes at least two years to have that mine into production. So when we talk about that, we can go back and forth

and blame each other, and we do. That is okay, because that is what government is for. Opposition, that is our role.

I really believe that there is more to life than just politics. When we are in this forum here, when we are in the Chamber, this is where our forum is to get our ideas across, hopefully, and the government to justify their actions. This is a political forum. But when we leave this building, I hope that we all remember that we all have families, we all love, we all cry and that there are times when there is no room for politics.

* (1450)

A good example I will give you is some of us members here, we have participated in hockey teams. We have members from all three parties, and we go out there and we have a heck of a good time, a really good time, and we are all people. There is nobody different in that room. When we are on the ice, there is nobody different. [interjection]

Well, I would not jump up and down and say that, but we all go out there and we participate and we have fun together. We are a team made up of different political stripes. That is why I really believe that all the negative stuff that we hear from other people about politicians, that if we could just get that team together and go and tour some of these communities and help them fund raise.

Say, for instance, in St. Norbert if they are having a fund-raising project for whatever, that we put our team together and challenge an old timers team from there and whatever money is brought in goes to that organization. If we did that, say in the East, the North, the West, we would go out and have a lot of fun. It might take three or four days out of our time. I think the people would look at us in a different light.

Maybe some members do not believe in that. I feel sorry if that is the case, because I think it is an excellent opportunity for the people to see us as we really are, I would say, I hope 98, 99 percent of the time. We do not have the greatest team, but we have a lot of fun doing it. In the summertime, we could do the same thing playing ball. [interjection] Yes, we should have mixed teams. I fully agree with you. I really believe that is the kind of stuff that we should be doing. If we did more of that, I really believe that people would look at us in a different light. That is an idea maybe we could pursue further.

Anyway, I would like to get back to some of the issues pertaining to the constituency of Point Douglas. Just recently, we had people who were finally charged in Point Douglas for selling Lysol. Another one was charged for selling cooking wine. Individuals in that constituency—and I am sure right across Manitoba—are very, very concerned about that. Now the citizens are monitoring that very closely to see if some of the measures that government wisely put in place will have an impact on some of the stores that are still abusing that. I hope it does.

When we look at the problems facing a lot of the individuals, whether it is sniffing glue or drinking Lysol or sniffing nail polish, we are doing a lot of damage to our youth and small children. It is not unheard of to see kids six, seven years old with a plastic bag over their mouth and if we could just put measures into place to stop that kind of action. That is one part of the problem.

The other part of the problem goes a lot further than that. It goes into the families and the opportunities for employment and opportunities for training and on and on and on. I know it is not going to be solved overnight, but if we could just take small steps at a time and, hopefully, some day we will not have to worry about those kinds of problems. The more we do, I guess, the more we can do and the more we hopefully accomplish for the people, because that is what this life is supposed to be all about, then I think the better world we will have to leave to our children.

I do not want to take up too much more time. I just wanted to put a few things on record. I hope the government will look at proclaiming Bill 91, because that will be one of the steps to achieving those goals for the people of Manitoba. With that, Mr. Acting Speaker, I thank you.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Acting Speaker, I would first of all say that I am pleased to rise today to be able to add my comments to those that have already been offered on the throne speech. Let me begin by congratulating and welcoming back Mr. Speaker to his Chair and, indeed, wishing him well during this session.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to welcome two new members to our Legislature. First of all, from the Portage la Prairie constituency, I would like to welcome Mr. Brian Pallister as my colleague in the

Legislature. I know Mr. Pallister from some of the work that he has done in his community as a member of the Chamber of Commerce and, indeed, my involvement with him in my former portfolio and in Rural Development have certainly gained me a great respect of Mr. Pallister.

I know that he is going to be a very contributing member to this Legislature and he is going to represent Portage la Prairie in a most honourable fashion. I would like to also say that I am looking forward to working with the member for Portage la Prairie as a legislative assistant to my department. I know that we are going to have some very interesting work ahead of us in the days to come.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I would also like to welcome to the Legislature the new member for Crescentwood, Ms. Avis Gray. Indeed, as she comes back to the Legislature, I know that she is going to contribute very positively to the debate that goes on in this House. Indeed, she will represent Crescentwood in a very respectable way, and I wish her well in terms of her tenure as the representative for Crescentwood.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to also say that things have changed somewhat since we were here last spring. Indeed, we have seen three members of this Legislature who have decided to do other things with their lives.

First of all, I offer my best wishes to someone who came into the Legislature at the same time I did, and that is the former member for Portage la Prairie. I got to know Mr. Connery and his wife very well because we were both newcomers to the Legislature at the same time and indeed spent many hours together talking about rural Manitoba, talking about the direction government was going at the time and how we were going to contribute to the process. I wish Mr. Connery and his family well as he pursues other endeavours in his life.

In addition, Mr. Acting Speaker, someone whom I have had many lively debates with in this House, the Leader of the second opposition party (Mrs. Carstairs), I have to tell her that indeed I enjoyed the debates we had and some of the exchanges we had in Question Period but, again, from time to time this House degenerates a little bit and we get into the politics of personalities. I would like to say to her that I was very interested in her closing remarks at the last session when she stood in her place and talked about decorum in this House and the fact that

this House needed to look towards dealing with issues rather than personalities.

I have to say to her that I really welcome her comments this session and, indeed, she has dealt with the issues and she has not dealt with personalities. She, as Leader of her party, has indeed brought her party a long way in this province and has contributed admirably to the political process in our province. I wish her well as she chooses other endeavours in her life, but I know during this session we will have some lively exchanges, and I look forward to those as well.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the member for Rupertsland, who has chosen to do other things as well, leaves this Legislature, but he does leave his mark on the political process in our province and in the history of this province. I wish him well as he chooses a new way of life, perhaps looking to other political aspirations down the road.

I would like to welcome the new interns whom we have with us this session. I would like to welcome our new Pages, and I am very impressed with the work that they are doing here in our House. I am sure that this will be a learning experience to them as well. I would like to welcome them to the Legislature at this time, and I would also like to welcome Judy White to the table of the Clerk.

* (1500)

Members of this House have returned for another session and indeed are looking forward to some debate and how they can contribute to the political process in our province. When we ended the last session, I come back again to comments that were made by the Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer) and the Leader of the Second Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) and indeed the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of this House with regard to what we are all about and why we are here. We are here to represent the people who have elected us. We are here to deal with issues.

Although we view things from different perspectives, it is important that we keep in mind that we are here to bring forward those ideas of the people whom we represent.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I cannot emphasize strongly enough that from time to time we should look at ourselves and ask ourselves whether or not we are truly dealing with issues, or whether we sometimes or too often get into this whole rhetoric of dealing with personalities and our view of another individual.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I think it is important that we introduce guests into this Legislature as we do the students from various schools in this province. I have travelled to many schools in this province and have talked to students who have been in our Legislature. From time to time, you will get comments from students who are in Grade 8, and they will ask you the question, is this how you people really conduct your affairs in the House, because it is not the way we are allowed to act in school, and if we acted like this in school, they would probably call our parents in.

Maybe we should learn a lesson from some of these students. Perhaps we need to take some of those comments to heart and indeed conduct ourselves in a more respectable fashion from time to time. I know that the call came from the Leaders at the end of the last session, and I am hoping that this session will indeed take on a different flavour.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to spend a moment or two talking about the constituency I represent. It is a constituency that is a long way from this Legislature, at the west side of the province and somewhat north of here as well, and we have probably had one of the most difficult years that I can remember and that many of my constituents can remember as well. As a matter of fact, my father says that in his lifetime he can only remember one year which probably was as hard on the rural economy as this year was, and it was 59 years ago when he was just a newly married farmer in that area.

This year our constituency was hit by probably the most devastating frosts that we have seen in a long time. I remember we were at the ministerial conference in Clear Lake on the 13th of August, when I got up at about 5:30 in the morning, and I could not believe my eyes because the ground was white, and it was the first frost of the year, so to speak, that was going to do some great damage to our crops and, indeed, that did hurt the crops. Then there were frosts two weeks later that literally destroyed what potentially would have been one of the best crops that we had ever grown.

Mr. Acting Speaker, a lot of the crop is still out in swath in the fields and probably will not see the bin, and much of it will be destroyed in the spring. This puts a very bleak picture on the people who live in my constituency. Many are wondering whether or not they have a future in agriculture or whether they will be able to make it through this year. Many are

thanking governments, both federal and provincial, for the GRIP program. Indeed, I was at a meeting not that long ago where a farmer stood up and said, thank the government for the GRIP program because if it were not for GRIP, we would not be in the agriculture business today.

My constituency is a very resilient one and one which is inhabited by people who always believe that there is a better tomorrow. With that spirit, they are looking forward to next year as being a better year, and indeed one where they can perhaps get back on their feet and start making some dollars again and seeing their lives put back together again.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the statistics came out on my area, and I think it is the highest unemployed area that we have in this province at the present time. I think the unemployment rate in my area is about 24.5 percent at this time.

There are many factors that contribute to the fact that it is a high unemployed area, and therefore we need to pay some special attention to an area which has an unemployment rate of that nature, but it is not government that is going to fix it for the people there. It is going to have to come from the people themselves and indeed from the businesses that operate in that area.

To that extent, Mr. Acting Speaker, I have to say that I was very motivated on Friday when I attended a graduation at The Russell Inn. It was the first graduation of the Assiniboine Community College Parkland Southwest Campus. At that graduation, there were 11 women who were graduating with a program in data processing and a business program. It was interesting, because none of the 11 people who were graduating had employment in the last two years. As a result of their taking the program, six of them had already gained employment before the night of their graduation.

I guess all this does is point to the importance of training and retraining in some of our rural areas. The little campus that was established in that community has served not only that community well, because there were graduates there from areas that were 30 and 40 miles away, so indeed it is a benefit to that side of the province.

It is my hope that that program will only increase in terms of the number of participants in it and there will be a wider range of programs offered in the future.

When we talk about opportunities and training and retraining, I guess when you see a statistic like that, where out of 11 people who have not worked for at least two years, six have gained employment because of their ability to become retrained, we see how important it is for us to put emphasis on training and retraining opportunities.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we live in a very tough economic time, not only in this province but indeed in this country and all around the world. We are coming out of a recession, or we hope we are coming out of a recession. We have seen people lose their jobs all around the country, and there are not any simple solutions or cures. Some people think that there are some simple answers but, indeed, there are not. Restructuring is taking place all around the world, not just in our province but indeed throughout our country and all around the world. As I say, the solutions are going to be ones that are not simple and are going to take some time to implement.

When I listened to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) in his address to the throne speech, he highlighted such things as layoffs, job shortages, the suffering of people who do not have jobs. He said that his party listens. He accused our side of not listening to the people of our province. Well, let me tell my honourable friend that indeed our party and our government listen very carefully to the people of this province, and we involve the people of the province in decision making.

I ask the Leader of the Opposition where he was the day that the Economic Innovation and Technology Council held its forum here in Winnipeg. Mr. Acting Speaker, I heard him call for an all-party task force on the economy, a forum where perhaps members from all parties could join and talk about where our economy was going. Well, there is no better opportunity than one where we had members from labour, members from business, members from education, members from all walks of life gather at a forum where we could talk about what it is that this province needs.

* (1510)

Although the members opposite may ridicule the process, there were many at that forum who thought that this was the right process that we should be embarking on. Oh, yes, we could criticize any one of the speakers or any one of the functions of that forum. We could always find criticism. But let us

look at the bigger picture, and let us understand that the solutions do not come from the top. Indeed, we have to reach out to the people to find solutions, and that was the idea behind the forum, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Indeed, through the participation within the groups and listening to the speakers, there were ideas that came out that I think need to be acted on down the road. These are ones that are going to help lead our province perhaps out of the situation that we find ourselves in today.

Mr. Acting Speaker, it is very evident that we cannot think about solutions in old ways. Our thinking must reflect the changing economy. Our actions must be creative. We must also understand that there is going to be some risk taken when we act on things in a new way because, indeed, the old solutions are not ones that are acceptable.

Mr. Acting Speaker, when I listened to Dan Will that morning at the forum, it was evident that in his comments he was quite clear in indicating that this process of restructuring our economy and our society today is one that needs a partnership approach. That partnership must include labour, it must include business and it must include government. We must call on all sectors of our society to become involved as partners in a changing world. We know that those who resist change will be left behind, and those who pick up the challenge are going to eventually emerge as winners.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I could ask the question, well, how does Manitoba sit in relation to our neighbours with regard to the challenges and the changes that are taking place? I could go to The Globe and Mail, and I know this article may have already been used by someone, but I think it is such a good one that it should be used over and over again by all of us. It is an article that was in the November 10th Globe and Mail and its headline says: Burst of activity linked to provincial strategy boosting the sector. It talks about the biomedical industry setting up shop in Winnipeg.

Mr. Acting Speaker, this is a good news story, because it talks about the whole biomedical industry and how it is in fact using Winnipeg as its centre. It says: For years, sceptics sneered at the efforts of western Canadians to build high tech enterprises in the middle of the wheat belt. Many thought the prairie provinces were simply pouring money down the gopher holes. It may come as a bit of a shock

then for the naysayers to watch the bustling biomedical industry emerge in Winnipeg.

Mr. Acting Speaker, there are several of these initiatives, like the initiative of Apotex Incorporated that will look at a \$19-million biotechnology investment in this province, or we could look at the Trimel Corporation from Toronto which will be opening a \$30-million state of the art pharmaceutical factory in Steinbach. We could look at Health and Welfare Canada's construction beginning with a \$143-million virology lab, or we could look at the Medix Corporation or at the National Research Council investing \$21 million in this province.

Mr. Acting Speaker, this does not happen by accident. It happens because there are people in this province who want to make it happen. These people are the government of this province. Dr. Sherman says that Manitoba has been aggressive in pursuing these industries. We have not just sat back and waited for them to choose a location. We have gone to them and we have offered them a location. We have offered them the Manitoba advantage, if you like. He says in the article: On the other hand, Manitoba officials respond quickly. He goes on to say that it is our Premier who is not afraid to go and make the closing deal if that is important. That is why Manitoba is leading the way in this regard. There are many more initiatives of this nature that are underway right at the present time.

These are industries that are going to provide long-term employment for our province. It is high-tech, it is professional, it is an industry that is going to bring with it spin-off industries, related industries. It brings with it research. It brings with it the academic sector as well. So anytime that we can go out and attract businesses, we can attract services which are of this calibre, I think that all of us should join together and ensure that we do that for the benefit of our province.

Mr. Acting Speaker, as I said, there were certain things that had to be in place before some of this could happen. Some of this that I speak about has been happening over the last four and a half years, and it is this government controlling government spending, keeping the taxes down—over five budget taxes have not increased—actively pursuing industries into our province, industries that are high-tech that will add jobs so badly needed in this province.

All of this also creates a need for us to look carefully at our training and retraining programs. Over the last number of years, we have looked at training and retraining as important components of our society. The Southport announcement was one where we purposely targeted an industry where we needed to do some retraining and some training, because there were jobs that were available in the aerospace industry, where we had no skilled work force for.

It was for that reason that Red River Community College put in programs which would teach our youth, train residents of our province to become skilled in the types of industries that would lead them to full-time and permanent employment. It is for that reason that we put Workforce 2000 together, so that those who perhaps were underskilled or needed training could get that training, not in a formal classroom, but also could get that training while they were working in a job situation.

Mr. Acting Speaker, much more needs to be done. Our education system must become part of the changing world so that it can better respond to the demands and the needs of our society. Our graduates must be as good as their counterparts, not just in Canada, but around the globe. The opposition's solution has always been to throw more money at the system and everything will be fine. Well, history even within our own province has shown that this is shortsighted and indeed without results.

We could point to a couple of examples that have shown that it is shortsighted or without result. I refer specifically to such an endeavour as the Jobs Fund. I want to know, and I wonder if there is still a single job around that was initiated under the Jobs Fund. The only thing that has remained is the humongous debt that was created as a result of the Jobs Fund. I do not believe that there is a single job in this province still around that was created as a result of the ill-fated Jobs Fund. So, Mr. Acting Speaker, although that Jobs Fund consumed enormous amounts of money, the results were short-lived, if there were any at all.

An Honourable Member: And what have you done?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Acting Speaker, as I indicated—[Interjection] The member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) says, what have you done? I remind him that he was in a different capacity at the time

that I was Minister of Education and Training, where for years he tried to get an agreement from the former government for a B.N. training program in The Pas. That was not achievable under the former administration. When we came to government, Mr. Acting Speaker, he became a lobbyist of our government. As a matter of fact, he almost made me believe that he was a Conservative at the time, but I knew better, and he was trying to convince the Liberals that he was a Liberal.

* (1520)

Mr. Acting Speaker, I can tell you that it was under this administration that we were able to achieve a good agreement, I believe, one which provided for a Bachelor of Nursing Program for native students in the community of The Pas. Now I have not followed the program as of recent months, but I can tell you that it provided an opportunity for students from northern Manitoba and especially aboriginal students to become trained and to become professionals in the area of nursing. I hope that is a program that will continue to be successful in the future as well.

Mr. Acting Speaker, again this simply shows that solutions do not come from the top, and indeed people together have to create the atmosphere for resolving problems. Together we have to form partnerships so that we can go ahead and together resolve problems in the best interests of the people that we represent. We have to remodel our education system. It is true. That does not mean we throw away the strength of the system. We have to build on the strength, because our system has many good things in it.

My children attend a public school. I can tell you that they get a fairly good education, but it does not mean that it cannot be improved and it cannot be added to. That is what we need to do to ensure that our children are going to learn so that they can then compete in a very competitive society and a very competitive world, Mr. Acting Speaker. So let us not sort of throw the baby out with the bath water. Let us ensure that we build on the strengths of our system and address the weaknesses, and indeed there are weaknesses in the system.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to turn my attention to rural Manitoba because that is my home. I live here for five days of the week, while the House is sitting especially, and I live in my constituency in rural Manitoba for at least two days out of the week.

Mr. Nell Gaudry (St. Boniface): But do you do your work while you are there? That is the other question.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Acting Speaker, my rural critic from the Liberal Party asked me whether I do any work when I am out there. I invite him to join me some day and follow me around for the two days that I am in my constituency.

Mr. Gaudry: You know I have been there.

Mr. Derkach: Oh, yes. My colleague says he has been there, and indeed he has. He has passed through my constituency several times, but he has found that there is no sense in hanging around because everything is in good order.

Point of Order

Mr. Gaudry: On a point of order, Mr. Acting Speaker, just to remind the honourable member for Russell that I have been there and I have done some work. He knows. We have sat in his office and we resolved a few problems.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Sveinson): Order, please. The member for St. Boniface does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Acting Speaker, as I said, rural Manitoba is my home. Much time is spent talking about the needs of our society, and it is true that two-thirds of our population is here in the city of Winnipeg, but there is a population outside of the major city of this province that is indeed an important contributor to much of the economy of our province.

Rural Manitoba needs some attention and our government has given it the attention that it requires. We need to revitalize our rural economy and our government has moved to do that. Over the last few years we have seen a slumping agricultural sector and we have seen the depopulation and the concern that has caused in many of our rural centres. Yes, our youth are moving away to the urban centres because it has been easier to find employment in the urban centres than it has in the rural areas. I have to remind all of us that a strong Manitoba means that we must have not only a strong urban centre, but we must also have a strong rural economy as well. There must be a balance and one cannot flourish at the expense of the other.

Our government is indeed committed to rebuilding and revitalizing our rural economy, but we cannot do it alone. We can be a partner, we can be

a catalyst in the process but much of that revitalization has to come from within the communities themselves. Communities must be encouraged to seek answers to the problems that they face and the challenges that they face. Mr. Acting Speaker, from my travels throughout the province Manitobans are prepared to take up that challenge and that has become evident in community after community. Again, they are not looking for handouts, but they are looking for solutions to complex problems that face them.

Mr. Acting Speaker, a couple of days ago I visited northern Manitoba and I visited the communities of Flin Flon, Lynn Lake, we went up to Thompson, we were in The Pas and while visiting those communities I first-hand saw the—I do not know what you would call it, but it was a very demoralizing kind of experience when I drove through the town of Lynn Lake and we saw the boarded-up homes, the vandalized homes, a community that was certainly looking for some answers and looking for some new industry that might emerge in that community. I met with the council there and it was evident that they did not want just to see more money thrown their way so that they could spend and then they would be back to government for more funding.

They wanted to see some assistance in terms of developing a long-term strategic plan. They did not want to see what the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) is suggesting, that we keep digging for ore even though there is not any ore left down there. They did not want any handouts either.

What they want is a way in which they can find solutions to the problems that face them, a strategic plan. Together we are prepared to work with the community of Lynn Lake and, indeed, their mayor and their council have indicated very clearly that they would welcome people from my department to work with them in putting together some form of plan where they can become a self-sustained community again, perhaps focusing on a different economy than they have seen in the past. It is difficult and they understand that very clearly.

Over the last number of years we have ventured into some new program areas for rural Manitoba and one of the more successful ones was the decentralization initiative. Mr. Acting Speaker, we met this summer with ministers from all across Canada, and we talked about decentralization. I thought that perhaps Saskatchewan and Manitoba would have been the two provinces that had taken

the leadership in decentralization, but I was surprised to find that our neighbours to the east, Ontario, have decentralized over 5,000 positions since the Rae government came into power. They are moving not only positions; they are moving entire branches of departments out of the city of Toronto. They are doing it because they understand the importance of the concept of decentralization.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we have moved over 600 positions out of the city of Winnipeg into rural areas. I can tell you that those communities that have received decentralization offices and decentralization positions are finding that they are not only welcome in their communities, but they are contributing very positively to the economic base of the community as well. [interjection] No, we have moved 600.

On Friday, a decentralization office in Carman was opened. Although I was not able to be there, my staff tell me that it was really an experience that one had to be there to witness in order to appreciate the kind of enthusiasm that there is in the community for welcoming this decentralization office.

* (1530)

Not that long ago, I shared a platform with the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) at a decentralization opening in Brandon. Although we have taken some criticism from members opposite about decentralization and about moving jobs out of Winnipeg, I was happy to see that a member of the opposition understood the importance of decentralization to his community. It is not often easy for somebody from the opposition to say, yes, decentralization is a good and important initiative. I have to give credit to the member for Brandon East who did stand in the public and say that this was a good initiative and he supported this initiative, and I give him a lot of credit for being able to stand up and say that.

I would like to touch on a few other programs that are offered through the Department of Rural Development which I think are helping rural communities find their way, if you like, in terms of revitalizing their economies. A program that was introduced a year or so ago, two years ago, is called the Community Choices program. This program, Mr. Acting Speaker, is one which allows the communities to bring together leading members from their community to a round table to look at the strength of the community, develop a vision

statement for that community and then embark on an action plan in order to create an economic base to attract business into that community, but again, very structured in the way that they do it because they look at what strength that community has, not unlike what is happening in Lynn Lake. The community of Lynn Lake has now decided that they want to take a look at what their strengths are so that they can build on their strength.

The Community Choices program has been an excellent one and has been a very successful one. We are now finding that communities around this province understand what their strengths are, and they are beginning to focus on those strengths. They are beginning to build on those strengths so that it is not a haphazard approach to economic development. Indeed, it is a very organized one and one which is going to lead to some very positive results.

To add to the Community Choices program, Mr. Acting Speaker, we introduced the Rural Economic Development Initiative, more commonly known as the REDI program. We indicated that this program was going to be designed to assist rural communities to access dollars which are generated from the video lottery terminals to build upon and indeed to help them develop their economic base. Indeed, it is Ayerst that was the first recipient of the REDI program when it received a million dollars from the Rural Development Initiatives program.

Mr. Acting Speaker, there are four different programs under REDI, and indeed communities all around the province are looking at ways in which they can access REDI funding. Indeed we have over 100 applications, 78 of which are being looked at very seriously at the present time.

Another program, Mr. Acting Speaker, which I think is very important to us is the Grow Bonds program. I do not need to go into this except to tell you that we have three very successful projects: one, being the Grow Bonds program in Teulon which sold \$800,000 of Grow Bonds; the other one being at Morden which sold about \$127,000; and now, most recently, one in Portage, the Sunnex proposal, which will be seeking to sell \$220,000 worth of Grow Bonds. These programs have been exceptional in terms of their success so far, and we look forward to them being instruments that communities can use to build upon and to enhance their state in this economy.

Mr. Acting Speaker, to conclude, I would just like to say the Department of Rural Development sees its role in our society as one which will assist rural communities to invest in themselves, will assist rural communities to become revitalized, and indeed will help our province to become a stronger province than we have been in the past, and one which we can look to the future with optimism and strength.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

With that, I see that my light is flashing and it looks like my time has expired, but I wish to thank you. [interjection] Oh, I have one more minute. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, you are very generous.

Our department is not addressing many of these challenges alone. We have taken a different approach to addressing many of our challenges in our province. We are working very aggressively with the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism, the Department of Environment, Education, Urban Affairs, Government Services, Consumer and Corporate Affairs, and Labour and many of the issues that have been identified in rural Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about Tourism, as an example, it is the Department of I, T and T that we work with very co-operatively. So it is not a one-department approach to helping rural Manitobans; indeed, it is a collective-government approach that we use in addressing many of the challenges that are before us in our province.

I think Manitoba has a very positive future. I look forward to working on behalf of the residents of rural Manitoba to serve them in the best way that I possibly can as Minister of Rural Development.

I think that our throne speech does point to a direction which indeed talks about the importance of revitalizing rural Manitoba, and indeed it is one that should be supported by all members of this House, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): I welcome the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, of joining the Throne Speech Debate again at an opening of another session.

I would like to commence by welcoming the Pages and all of those who have returned again to this Chamber and to wish the Pages well in terms of their jobs, and to welcome you back, Mr. Speaker, into your position as the Chair and arbitrator of events in this House. I look forward to your usual

very efficient manners of dealing with matters in this House.

I would also like to welcome the two newly elected members to the Chamber who already have indicated to me, at least from my vantage point of someone who has only been here two years myself, that they will contribute greatly to the discussion in this Chamber, and I sincerely believe that, Mr. Speaker. We often do not give credit to people who are elected, given events of the past few months, to elected office, and I welcome them to this Chamber and look forward to their contribution.

I would also like to comment on the loss to the Chamber of the member for Rupertsland, who, in the words eloquently spoken by the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes), made a contribution to aboriginal people that will probably never be eclipsed or erased, at least to this juncture in our country's history. Regardless of what happens from here on in, regardless of how history should turn, I will, I suspect—probably my children or grandchildren will say at some point, my grandfather or great-grandfather sat in the same House as Elijah Harper. I said that to Elijah as a credit to him and all that he has done to represent the aspirations of aboriginal people in this country.

I note that the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) has indicated over the past month or two that she will be stepping down. I actually am reserving comment, Mr. Speaker. Because of the ebb and flow of political process in this country, one never knows, and I have been around politics a long time to know that many times members have come up to me at midterm generally to say that they are stepping down, only to find when the bell rings again, off to another election, that they are there. Should she go through with her decision, I certainly wish her and her husband a pleasant period of relaxation and well-deserved respite from this Chamber and for the activities that she has distinguished herself well in this process and in this Chamber.

With respect to the throne speech, Mr. Speaker, I wish I could stand up in this House and perhaps logically or in a nonpolitical sense discuss this document rationally, but I have great difficulty, because the document itself is very short on new initiatives and very, very short on ideas. It basically offends my sense of politics by virtue of some of the statements in it. Many of the statements in the throne speech are rehashes and reworkings of

previous government initiatives which have been repackaged as they have been repackaged before and repackaged prior to that in the two and a half years that I have been in this Chamber to somehow present a new face.

It is like a Rubik's Cube. Every time the government at its weekly polling gets a new poll out and sees a new face that they have to put on, they kind of flip the Rubik's Cube and try to realign their face for the electorate, but frankly it is the same cube with only a realignment. It is greatly disappointing.

* (1540)

Nowhere greater do we see this disappointment and this hypocrisy than in the area of offloaded taxes. We looked upon it with great amusement when the throne speech came down and the government chastised the federal government for its offloading of taxes. I found it incredible that a provincial government, a provincial regime that has probably offloaded more taxes than any government in the history of this province, would have the gall and the nerve to stand up and lambaste the federal government for doing precisely what the provincial government has done.

Mr. Speaker, we put together a chart outlining what has been commonly referred to now around the province as the GFT, and we used government estimates that are very, very conservative, small "c," I might add, very small "c" conservative estimates of the offload on the property tax portion alone that the Conservative government has offloaded onto municipalities. It amounts to approximately \$70 million that has been offloaded onto local taxpayers; that is for the education portion alone. That does not account, for the property tax portion of the municipal assessment, strictly educational loan. This has been offloaded onto school divisions, while, at the same time, the government is saying, prioritize your programs, tighten your belts. At the same time, what they are forcing divisions to do is cut back programs, cut back services and raise taxes at the local level so that the Premier (Mr. Filmon), the member for Tuxedo, can proceed to indicate that he, like George Bush—read his lips—has not raised taxes.

The lips should really say, we have not raised taxes except local property taxes. We have not raised taxes except education taxes. We have not raised taxes except every single permit, licence, everything that moves that has been taxed. There was a time during the regime of Sterling Lyon, they

said that everything was taxed but the tips on crutches, Mr. Speaker. We are achieving those goals again as everything gets taxed in this province to allow the member for Tuxedo to say we have not raised taxes, but everyone in the province knows that it has been an offload.

I wish the government would have the intellectual honesty to at least admit that, at least to have the intellectual capacity to come to grips with the fact that they have offloaded a horrendous extent upon the taxpayers of this province. We have yet to hear a word from members of that side of the House acknowledging that this, in fact, has taken place.

We had an occasion, Mr. Speaker, for the Premier last week to finally, on behalf of the government, confront the Prime Minister about the damage that the Conservative policies had wreaked upon the province of Manitoba. I was heartened to hear that the Premier was able to tell the Prime Minister finally that he was furious and we are furious. It has been a long time coming. One hopes that that furious nature will extend until the next federal election, which cannot come too soon, so that we can once and for all rid ourselves of the Conservative government in Ottawa which has probably done more to destroy the fabric and nature of this country than any other federal government.

I sincerely believe that this particular federal government in power now has done more to wreak havoc on not only the Canadian economy, but the Canadian national psyche than any other previous regime. The sooner this government is taken out of office, the better it will be for all Canadians. If it could happen before Christmas, I would welcome it with open arms, because I sincerely believe that. I can tell you that certainly in my own constituency, it is reflected in the comments of everyone that I meet at the door.

I do want to diverge slightly on a point that I wish to make about events in my own constituency, and that is we all know that the lot of the politician has been lowered somewhat in the eyes of the general elector. We generally are not held as in great esteem as perhaps we would like to or perhaps many of us feel should be the case. Frankly, I believe that the Mulroney government has done more, the Prime Minister in particular, to lower the spectrum and the level of politics in this country than any other politician in a good deal of time, Mr. Speaker. Again, once the Prime Minister is removed from the scene, I think that all of us will

function much more effectively and perhaps some form of credibility can again return to the political process, something that has been lacking as a result of that particular regime in power.

Discussing my own constituency of Kildonan, I have had the pleasure to be able to continue my door-knocking and my contact with constituents. It certainly is the case that the economic downturn, finally admitted by members opposite to be a recession, has affected the people of Kildonan like all people of the province of Manitoba quite dramatically.

I am struck by the number of students, married and otherwise, who are at home with their parents. I am struck by the number of adults that I have talked to, who tell me in conversation that they are advising their children to leave the province when they graduate. I am struck by the number of occasions I have come to a home and both working adults in the home do not have jobs. It is a very tough economic plight out there and anything that we in this Chamber can do to improve the lot and to improve the economic situation, anything that we can do will be of benefit, because of the hardship that it has wreaked upon people across the province, and I see it on a daily basis.

Another very disturbing aspect that I see on a regular basis, although I do not see it in regular door-knocking, is the effect of changes to the Workers Compensation Board. I do not know how to hammer it home any more deeply, Mr. Speaker, than to say it is astounding how many occasions I have been in the homes of individuals who have been on workers compensation who have been deemed or cut off and they are left with no choice, there are no jobs available, there is no compensation available. The only thing available is, perhaps, social assistance. Many of these people never thought the day that they were injured that they would be forced in this situation to seek social assistance for something they believed in the past was a right, and that is a right to be remedied by society for injuries obtained at work, a right for which we have all given up our right to sue and many other rights, but that does not seem to cut much ice with some of the very regressive changes that have been introduced by this regime at the Workers Compensation Board. It never fails to amaze me what a significant hardship these individuals are encountering.

Health care is a huge concern of people in the constituency that I represent. The lack of home care, some of the conditions that are now occurring in the hospitals, the so-called reform and lack of community services that are in place, the lack of services to mental health patients and those with psychiatric illnesses come up over and over again. Virtually no one is untouched by those kinds of concerns.

We on this side of the House are going to take a proactive stance, Mr. Speaker, by sponsoring public meetings to try to bring to the government's attention some of the concerns that are occurring out there on a daily basis with respect to health care, by sponsoring a series of meetings, the first of which will be tomorrow in the constituency that I represent. The health care concern is uppermost in the minds of the constituents of the area that I represent.

* (1550)

There is also an underlying concern, Mr. Speaker, in the constituency with respect to security and safety. Break-ins, if not in actual fact, apparently appear to be up, and there is a good deal of concern, particularly amongst the elderly, about public safety. While I recognize that that cannot be dealt with overnight, I am convinced that we must double our efforts to try to deal with concerns of personal safety for our citizens in the community, because it is expressed to me over and over and over again. We must put more resources back into the communities, and we must assist our enforcement officers and others to try to deal with this concern as it exists in the community, because there are concerns.

I might add to that end, we in the New Democratic Party are again sponsoring in this Chamber a resolution dealing with violence on television, again as one of our efforts and one of our concerns that we are raising to try to bring to the attention of the public and to the members of this Chamber what negative effect it can have.

I note that the inspector dealing with the youth division of the City of Winnipeg Police Department again reiterated that fact today, this morning, on the front page of the Free Press when he indicated that there is no doubt in his mind that some of the increase in youth crime is as a result of the effect of the television transmission from Detroit, contrary to what had previously been the case when we had television transmission from Grand Forks and other more similar jurisdictions to our own.

I think there is some accuracy in that, which is why we are looking to all members of this House to support us when it comes to dealing with the issue of violence on television and which is why we have brought the resolution forward again this session and why we will be pushing for the adoption of this resolution, because I have said many, many times in this Chamber, when it comes to matters of justice or matters of personal safety, Mr. Speaker, it is sort of like the Fram Oil commercial: You pay me now or you will pay me a lot more later. Certainly anything that we could do to prevent even one youth or one person from entering that slippery slope of the criminal justice system is money well spent and is activity well spent.

I now turn, Mr. Speaker, to an area that I spend a fair bit of time in, and that is the area of education. There is a wealth of material. Unfortunately, most of the material is lacking on the government's part of nonactivity that one could deal with. I will try to get through as much as I can in the minutes allocated to me.

I guess in the first instance, Mr. Speaker, I listened very attentively to the comments of the present Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) outlining the government's program for education reform. I received just as much from those comments as I did from reading the throne speech, which amounts to nothing other than platitudes and verbiage and rehashes of previous statements that had been put forward by the government. [interjection]

I tried. The member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) indicates that I went too far, Mr. Speaker, but I desperately sat here and I tried to listen to what the minister was saying about education reform and there was no tangible plan. There was only, for lack of a better word, rhetoric. There was only commitments to standards, I heard, commitments to accountability, et cetera, but no plan, no action.

In fact, when I look at the Throne Speech Debate and have a look at the throne speech itself, I see that the very claims that are made inside the throne speech have already been announced by the government. For example, the government promised: "My government has listened to public demand," for example, "for accurate student achievement measures." I look to Strategy 62 of the government's own Answering the Challenge, this poorly implemented document, dated June 1990. That promise is already there—June 1990. Throne

speech, November 1992—the two, how do they connect? A re-promise of an old promise.

I look further on, Mr. Speaker, to the government's report: "My government will place greater emphasis on policies and programs leading towards producing sound reading, mathematics and learning skills." I again look to the government's documents. I look to Strategies 67 through to 69, and it is the same pledge, the same program. Why was it promised in June 1990, and now it is being announced in the throne speech, November 1992?

So I listened with great attentiveness, I will again repeat, great attentiveness, to the comments of the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey), saying, what is that program that they are going to announce? What is the accountability? What I heard was, again, the commitments to accountability and the commitments to these concepts that have already been previously announced and have previously been put in.

Mr. Speaker, what is lacking, the minister said finally, that what they are going to introduce is a new education act in the province, something we have been calling for for two years in this House. The minister put in place a process last year, where they structured meetings all across the province, and the minister was to be provided with a summary of those meetings in the spring of 1992.

I do not think the minister knew what she was going to do with the results of those discussions, except now they say they are going to have more public hearings which, frankly, are very hard to object to, Mr. Speaker. The fact is that education is a significant issue, and members of the public want to have some input into those discussions.

What has happened is, the government has said, we are going to have public hearings. They have produced a document with about 89 questions in it, held public hearings, received the results from those public hearings. They are eight months behind. Nonetheless, the minister has received that document. Now they are going to have more public hearings. It just shows the disjointed effort of this government. One tends to believe, and I think accurately, that it is mostly an exercise in public relations.

I will predict that this entire review of The Public Schools Act is being brought in, Mr. Speaker, as a public relations gesture, as something to hold out there to the education community to say, this is what

we are going to do in education, and they are going to produce a document that is probably going to be all things to all people and say, that is Conservative reform; we are listening to what you are doing. I dare suggest that this is in fact the case. [interjection] Well, I mean, that is the government's choice.

I asked the minister last week to publicly provide us with copies of the reports of these public hearings that the minister is now reviewing to have other public hearings on. She said, well, she just received it and she could not review it. I suspect they will do the same thing that they did with the reports of the minister's education committee on finance, and that is, they will not release it.

In fact, we were forced to release the leaked document because the public of Manitoba needed to know what was in those documents, what was in the hearings that had been held, so they could make some kind of judgment in terms of what the government ultimately implemented when it came to funding reform.

I suspect at some point the government will release some kind of sanitized version of those public hearings prior to the new public hearings that will be taking place to determine The Public Schools Act.

With respect to reform, Mr. Speaker, we see about a third or fourth phase of this Conservative government as it moves to its mandate, ever getting closer to the next deadline which is another election, and I dare say it is already too late to implement any of the meaningful reforms.

We are going to be—[interjection] I welcome that. I must be making—and we will be moving towards the election. I dare suggest the government is already too late to rehash and revitalize those reforms, Mr. Speaker, for a government that has failed miserably to set any kind of leadership whatsoever in the area of education, to take any kind of stance to properly put in place a funding policy that adequately reflects the needs of this government.

(Mr. Jack Penner, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

You know, when you look through the throne speech and you look through what the government promised in education, there is something sorely lacking, Mr. Acting Speaker. There is no talk of equity. There is no talk of access. One of the foremost difficulties facing education in this province

is the lack of access, lack of equity, but we hear nary a word on that side of the House about equity. We hear nothing about equity. The supposed champions of rural Manitoba, where programs are being cut, where teachers are being cut, where they are forced to have parents meetings in the member for Arthur's (Mr. Downey) constituency to try to demand some kind of redress from the government, we hear nary a word from this government.

I toured rural Manitoba last year, and the North. I know what the difficulties are in the education field, something the members should be paying attention to but are not, and that is one of the deficiencies of the throne speech, and that is one of the deficiencies of the policies of this government in terms of equity and access outside of the city of Winnipeg. Indeed, there is lack of equity and access inside the Perimeter Highway, but members opposite seem to be not aware of that.

* (1600)

Where is the co-ordinated approach, Mr. Acting Speaker? I am glad we are joined by the member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard). Where is the co-ordinated approach in terms of this government and its approach to education? There has been a report sitting on the desk of the minister; indeed, it sat on the desk of the previous minister, the member for Roblin-Russell (Mr. Derkach). It was given to him in December 1991. It asks for the government response and a government action plan on the co-ordination of services to children. It was given to the government in the spring of 1991, and have we heard a response or a peep from members on the opposite side about a co-ordinated approach? No, we have just had one ball fumbled after another, and there is no better example of fumbling balls than to look at the question of the hiring of the audiologist.

The Department of Health cut \$80,000 from a budget to Winnipeg School Division No. 1 that assisted in the hiring of an audiologist, Mr. Acting Speaker, and when they cut that program—and the members opposite still do not understand the implication, so I will again try to explain it to them. When they cut that program they jeopardized a prescreening program that was put in place by School Division No. 1 in order to catch hearing impairments of children in order to prevent difficulties from occurring in the school system. They cut the grant. The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) did not even tell the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey), who admitted that in this Chamber.

He did not even tell the Minister of Education that this grant was being cut, because she stood up and said, I will have discussions with the Minister of Health. The grant was cut and the program was cut and the school division, sensing the need for a program of that kind, had to go on its own resources in order to pay for the cost of that audiologist.

Now, the reason it is so significant, Mr. Acting Speaker, is again, by catching the hearing impaired, by catching children with difficulty at a very early stage, you are able to prevent these difficulties from occurring later on in the school system, but we have had no response from members on that side of the House to the program or the plan that was put forward by MAST, MASBO, MASS and other organizations calling for a co-ordinated approach to government activities. We are still waiting. As I understand, there is some kind of cabinet subcommittee that is trying to come to grips with that difficulty.

I listened with great care and attention to the comments of the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) at a public forum I attended about two weeks ago where the matter was discussed, but she said not a word about that issue, although it was specifically laid out on the agenda as a major concern to be addressed. There is nary a word mentioned in the throne speech nor by members opposite.

It continues when you look at the fiasco that occurred, the terrible situation that occurred, that was raised by the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) in respect to health care reform. If they cannot even get the reform act together in the Department of Health, I guess I should not expect them to put it together between Justice, Education, Health and various other government departments.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I was also interested to hear some of the concerns raised by the Liberal Party with respect to education reform. Now all of this must be taken with a grain of salt, because we also attended a public forum about two weeks ago where the Liberal critic was to address the issue of extending the school year. The whole question was extending of the school year, and supposedly it is part of the Liberal Party platform to extend the school year to allow more time for teaching so-called basics, although the Liberal critic, when she came and tested the wind, as often done by the Liberal Party, and discovered it was not a popular move out there said, oh no, that is not Liberal policy. It is not

Liberal. It was just a suggestion by our Leader, just a suggestion for discussion. Mind you, if the political wind had been blowing that way, it would not have been a suggestion, just as the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) indicated, the paying for slippers for hospital beds was just a suggestion, but of course he has now confirmed it. In fact, it is the Liberal Party position to charge for services in the hospital, and I think it is something that the Liberal Party is going to have to come to grips with.

I was very interested to see that the Liberal education reform came down squarely on the side of that of the government. In legal terms, they often call that tweedledee and tweedledum. I noticed that the Liberal Party has suggested corporate tax breaks to allow companies to train Manitobans. That is just what we need in Manitoba, more corporate tax breaks, after the government has thrown up its hands and literally put millions of dollars into the hands of companies to train and retrain in this province where we have one of the most miserable records of training and where we have had dramatic cutbacks to our public education system.

Training colleges and training groups are springing up like mushrooms around this province. Individuals are doing private training because they are getting the funds extended to them by this provincial government, and the Liberal Party says, more tax breaks; we need to give more tax credits to large companies to train. I sincerely hope that the members of the public will take that with a grain of salt.

I was also very interested to hear the comments of the Liberal Party, the Liberal program for time-out schools for students. I found it very, very surprising. I have certainly looked to the Liberal Party to try to explain itself on this issue, as to what reference they are making to time-out schools, in terms of its comments and how it relates to education in the province of Manitoba where we have the sorry spectacle of a student and his parents being forced to bring a civil suit in the area of education in order to resolve the issue, which brings me to the point of our very valid suggestion, our very significant suggestion, that the Office of the Ombudsman should have its powers extended to that of school boards. This would certainly allow parents and students to have an opportunity to remedy difficulties and remedy any concerns that are taking place at the school board level.

What happens now, Mr. Acting Speaker, quite typically, is a concern arises at the school board level. It is attempted to be resolved. If it cannot be resolved, the letter goes to the minister. The minister writes back and says, I cannot do anything about it; it is the school board's jurisdiction. The school boards say, we cannot do anything about it, and the matter sits somewhere in limbo.

I know of at least half a dozen cases—at least half. There are many, many more where these things are in complete limbo. The lack of government initiative and the lack of government direction has resulted in these problems not being solved. It is unfortunate that students and parents must come to this state of having to sue the school division or the minister in order to obtain some kind of redress.

I reviewed briefly the Estimates process of approximately a year and a half ago when I asked about the appeals procedures put in place for special exceptional children, and the Minister of Education at the time told me the guidelines were working so well that no one had even accessed the appeal panel process in place, and I note, the present minister, when we initially made our suggestion concerning the extension of the Office of the Ombudsman said there are all kinds of procedures in place.

Well, the fact is that no one has used those procedures because many individuals are not aware that those procedures are in place, and I believe that all members should join us in attempting to extend this solution, which would be a very ready solution, and not—you know, bills of rights as suggested by the Liberal Party are fine, and all kinds of suggestions, but immediately, we could put in place a process and a procedure that would allow students and allow parents to have redress of wrongs that occurred at the school division level or attempt to come to grips with what is government policy and what is not government policy, and heaven knows, that is a difficult thing to ascertain these days from the government as they flip around and go back and forth with respect to their education policies, Mr. Acting Speaker.

It is a difficult area, but a very ready solution exists in terms of the Ombudsman issue which is one reason why we have put so much emphasis on it. [interjection] If the member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) had been paying attention, he would have heard me go through it the last five minutes, and he would have been able to see what ready resolve that

was to it, but he has chosen, as he has done on many other issues, not to pay attention to the obvious, Mr. Acting Speaker, and to continue with the tired old Tory rhetoric. Well, we are two years into the mandate, and the time is rapidly running out for this government to even begin to put into effect any of its initiatives, other than a rehashing of the old promises in a document that has already been cut to ribbons by members on this side of the House and by the public with respect to no new ideas and no new suggestions in this particular document.

It is a tragedy that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), the member for Pembina, is trying well into the mandate to try to salvage some kind of respect for the health care system and send a reform package at this point in time when it is well into his mandate, Mr. Acting Speaker, and it is so far gone that the government cannot turn it around. It is tragic because it is the people of Manitoba who have to pay for the government's lack of activity in this area for the past several years.

* (1610)

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, there is much to be said with respect to the area of education and a lack of activity on the part of this government. I have made numerous, numerous comments in this House on many occasions with respect to the funding and the inequities and the unfairness of the funding model that exists in this province. When the funding model was put in—I remember when we announced what difficulties they would have with the funding model, the minister came out rather shocked and surprised and said that we were all wrong, but we have been, of course, proven 100 percent accurate in terms of the difficulties that occurred with the funding model.

The first thing they had to do after putting in place the funding model was put in place supplementary funding to augment the implementation of the funding model, Mr. Acting Speaker, because it did not work, and then they had to have another press conference to augment those funds again because it still did not work.

Now the minister says they are having group meetings and continuing to meet to try to make the system work because it obviously does not work, and in that whole period of time when they have offloaded onto school divisions to the tune of, as I indicated earlier in my speech, at least \$70 million, using government figures of \$70 million, we have lost hundreds of teaching positions and other positions. Class sizes have grown larger; programs

have been lost, particularly in rural and northern Manitoba, Mr. Acting Speaker.

All of this has been occurring, precisely what we predicted would happen with the new funding model, and it will only get worse, I dare say, when the supplemental funding that was put in place to try to ease in this unwieldy structure runs out in another year. And only then will we see the serious effects.

We have already heard from the residents in the member for Arthur's (Mr. Downey) constituency as to the dramatic effects it is having on that particular constituency. If you look at the statistics and you look at the Conservative plan that they would fund 80 percent of education costs, and you look at how far below the 80 percent they have now sunk, it is—well, I will not even repeat it into the record, Mr. Acting Speaker, but I will provide the statistics to any member on that side of the House who may wish to review the statistics. I might add, they are all government numbers; they are not our numbers. They are the numbers that we have put together based on government documentation, and they are quite conservative projections at that.

We look for the government to implement some kind—for some time we have been waiting on this side of the House for some kind of movement on the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, and we have received no action, Mr. Acting Speaker. It is very unfortunate when one considers all during the process the minister kept assuring the House that, once the report was received, action would take place quickly. It has been very disappointing to those of us who believed that this report, which is a watershed, I would suggest, in judicial history, perhaps even Canadian history, has been so overlooked, and there have been no initiatives whatsoever taken by this government on many of the proposals in the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry. It is indeed unfortunate and a major disappointment to all Manitobans who are waiting for some action, even the most simple action that could easily be put in place, and it simply has not taken place.

I note the flashing red light; with those comments, that will conclude my comments on the throne speech. Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Mr. Acting Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to stand before the Assembly as a legislator, and as a representative of the fine people of St. Norbert.

Allow me to give thanks through you, Mr. Acting Speaker, to Mr. Speaker for upholding the dignity and honour of the Chair. His judgment, his fairness and humour do the House a great service.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I would also like to acknowledge the tireless efforts of the Hansard staff. They record the business of the House with expediency and accuracy, no simple task, I might add, given the verbosity of some of the esteemed members.

I would also like to acknowledge the Clerks of the House, and welcome Judy White, and I am sure she will enjoy her work here with the other clerks who have been of great assistance to myself and all other members of the House.

Finally, Mr. Acting Speaker, the youth and vigour brought to this House by the Pages of the Assembly cannot be understated. I feel fortunate to have the assistance of Karen Tymofichuk in the House this Session. Karen is a constituent of St. Norbert, so we can expect great things from her. I am sure that all of their experiences in the House will leave them with lasting impressions, hopefully, positive ones.

Mr. Acting Speaker, let me welcome the new members to the Legislature, first from Portage la Prairie, Mr. Pallister. As you are aware, when he rises, I am sure we will all see him in the House, but I promise that I would not make any tall jokes and he would not make bald jokes. So I will stay away from all the tall jokes today.

I would also like to welcome the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) in the House. I knew her before her political career started, and I have always enjoyed listening to some of her comments, even though I did not always agree with them.

Mr. Acting Speaker, some of past members who are no longer with us, I really considered friends—Mr. Connery from Portage la Prairie and I had many conversations in the Chamber just outside here as he would smoke on his big cigar. I do miss the smell of that cigar some days. I miss his positive attitude towards this Legislature.

The past member for Crescentwood, Mr. Carr, I always enjoyed his speeches. He was always positive and on positive notes, but I do hope Mr. Carr remembers that he owes me a few cigarettes.

Mr. Harper, I do owe him a large hand of applause for teaching me more about the aboriginal issues than I ever did know until he came onto the scene. I had some talks with Mr. Harper, the member for

Rupertsland, and he helped me to understand some of the concerns and the directions that had to be taken. I think that the Legislature will truly miss him.

I would like to take a moment to extend my best wishes to the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) as she has announced her intentions to step down. I wish her well in her future endeavours, and I am sure John is going to appreciate having her at home, Mr. Acting Speaker. I was looking for a word that would describe the member and things coming through were: teacher, politician, honest, and the one word that finally hit home with me was she was a friend. She was not only a friend to the members of the Liberal caucus but to all Manitobans, because a friend explains who she truly was as a politician and she represented everyone and fairly, so I do applaud her for that.

Mr. Speaker, there have been some great things happening in my constituency since the last session of the House. The people of St. Norbert have made valuable contributions to the community, and I would like to share some of them with you today. On Saturday, December 5, the St. Norbert Children's Centre celebrated the official opening. It was because of volunteerism from a board of directors from the children's centre that this project came to fruition. The volunteers had a dream, and that dream became a reality only on this Saturday with 92 new places under one roof. They were able to amalgamate the three units that they had in St. Norbert as one.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

The community and myself would also like to thank the government and particularly the Minister of Culture and Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Mitchelson). There will be some interesting activity around the centre because of the funding for this project. I am confident that the facility will provide years of service to the constituents of St. Norbert and will be a model for other communities to follow.

* (1620)

Thanks to the support of the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) and the City of Winnipeg, there will be a brand new interchange at Waverley Street and the Perimeter Highway. The proposed interchange is expected to be completed in 1995, when we make the traffic using the Brady landfill much safer. I know that the interchange will reduce the traffic problems of the many residents of St. Norbert. As you are aware, the landfill will be the

only landfill for the entire city as of 1993, so this interchange was very much a necessity.

I am pleased to recognize the ongoing efforts of the St. Norbert Foundation. The foundation continues to provide the vital services of a residential treatment centre for those who suffer from alcohol and chemical abuse. The foundation operates a 72-bed facility, including a 12-bed adolescent male treatment centre called Lemay House, and another 12-bed facility providing care for adolescent females called the Kirkess house. I found the philosophy of the St. Norbert Foundation deeply profound, and I would like to share it with you today, Mr. Speaker.

The philosophy is based on the belief that no person is an island and that self-help comes from helping others. The positive power that resides in everyone can overcome the negative aspects of life. If we are to learn and to teach, we must attach ourselves to an environment that is created and dedicated to the betterment of humanity. We cannot cross a desert until we have prepared ourselves, and we cannot travel the road of life blaming those about us, but rather we must accept responsibility for ourselves and each other and conquer each situation that we meet. Our paths have been written and cannot be erased.

Therefore we must work and concentrate for today with a vision of tomorrow. No one can fail if they are helping a failure, and no one can lose if they are winning.

The government of Manitoba continues to support the hard work of the St. Norbert Foundation through the Alcoholism Foundation and through the Manitoba Housing in partnership with the province. The St. Norbert Foundation has empowered the people to help themselves to a better tomorrow, and for this I commend them.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba is at a crossroad, at a critical juncture. We can either follow the path that governments before us have taken. It is easily enough recognized, littered with over-regulation, high taxes and poorly trained work forces. This, Mr. Speaker, is the path to competitive failure, or we can navigate a new path, one that leads to competitive success.

Along the way, there will be new opportunities for all Manitobans. Through economic development programs, business assistance programs, and through the education and retraining of our work

force, the days of tax and spend, Mr. Speaker, are thankfully behind us. I have seen time and time again how regulations distort economic incentives, raise costs to business and consumers.

The government realizes that competitive economies try to keep regulations at an essential minimum, and I could not agree more, Mr. Speaker. Lately I have heard many dire and pessimistic comments about the state of Manitoba's economy, and I am often reminded of a quote from Charles Handy's book, *The Age of Reason*, which strikes at the heart of what I would like the House to remember today.

Handy wrote: The future we predict today is not inevitable, but we influence it if we know what we want it to be. We can take charge of our own destinies in a time of change.

The path to a better tomorrow must however be decided upon today, and I applaud the government's direction.

True to this spirit, my colleagues and I were delighted to participate in the Manitoba Economic Innovation Forum held in October. And for the benefit of the Leaders of the opposition parties who were conspicuously absent from this forum, allow me to explain what you missed.

To take charge of our economic destinies, a commitment which this government has made for Manitobans, we must make investments in our capital, in our technology and in our infrastructure, in research and development and most importantly in the education and training of our most precious resources, and that is our people.

Mr. Speaker, the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) says, I should get a different speech writer, but at least I do not have Susan Hart-Kulbaba writing mine.

While our government has made advances in the development of new technologies, in R&D, for example, in the areas of pharmaceuticals, and continues to provide infrastructural support for it, it must also be noted that we have made inroads into the fields of education and training. In 1874, Prime Minister Disraeli said of Britain that upon the education of people of this country, the fate of this country depends. So too with Manitoba, I say. It is not surprising that a commitment to educational reform is front and centre on the government's agenda. We are committed to producing sound

reading, mathematics and learning skills in our schools.

Mr. Speaker, we have established the University Review Commission, which will make recommendations on bettering post-secondary education in this province.

Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to excellence in education, and it shows, not like the past government. Ours is a knowledge-dependent economy. This means that economic value and the potential for greater productivity depends on the generation of ideas, on the manipulation of ideas and on the ability of workers to continue and upgrade their skills. Accordingly, I commend the government for its Workforce 2000 program, now in its second year of operation.

Mr. Speaker, most of us grew up during an age when a strong back counted most. Today, virtually every industry or business you can name is knowledge intensive. So while most of us grew up in a more industrial age and, as a consequence, cannot set the clocks on our VCRs, our children must operate in a highly competitive and rapidly changing marketplace. The government has realized this and created Project Real World.

Project Real World, Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of those in opposition who probably have not read any of the brochures on it, is an initiative which provides young people with the practical experience, skills and knowledge their economic futures demand. I categorically support this initiative, and I think we owe it to our children.

Preparing our children to compete in a competitive marketplace is but one component of the government's prosperity plan. Just as the future of the province must adapt to technical innovation, so too we must adapt to the demands of a global economy. Global economy is no longer just a buzzword. This province is doubly blessed. Nature's generous bounty makes us rich in natural resources and material wealth and, of course, the industrious resolve of Manitoba's people is also a source of lasting wealth, but in order to ensure the continued prosperity of our people, we must sell our province to the world.

The Mineral Exploration Incentive Program offers taxable grants equal to 25 percent of their investment upon completion of a project. The Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Downey) knows that this incentive will help tap Manitoba's mineral

wealth and foster increased economic development by stimulating international investment. This is why he has worked so very hard to put the program together.

Nowhere is the government's commitment to open Manitoba to the world better exemplified than with Agri-Tec. Agri-Tec is an exporting marketing organization that pursues export contracts on behalf of western Canadian grain handling, storage and processing companies, through government assistance. Thanks to Agri-Tec, Winnipeg-based Central Canadian Structures Limited now has a \$6.6 million contract to build a storage facility in Mansura, Egypt, and that is just the beginning. Agri-Tec is also penetrating markets in India, Peru, Yemen, Uganda and Kenya, as well as the Middle East and the Commonwealth of Independent States. We have a competitive advantage in the agricultural industry, and Agri-Tec is letting the world know about it. The government is proud and commends the efforts in this area.

* (1630)

As we move toward the 21st Century, Mr. Speaker, so too must our industries. I have already commented on our mining and agricultural industries and the government's strategy for global competitiveness, but what about our human resources industry?

Take, for example, the health care industry. Manitoba has committed itself to the care of people of this province. I have said that people are a source of lasting wealth, but this wealth requires care and stewardship, Mr. Speaker. Accordingly, the province continues to invest prudently in such projects as the Laboratory Centre for Disease Control and the Animal Virology Laboratory in Winnipeg, not to mention all of the private sector investments made by Ayerst, Medix, and Trimel, to name a few.

This government is targeting areas of the health care market in order to ensure the most rational delivery system in Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, I have attempted to stay very nonpartisan, and I will stick to the issue.

The new fiscal realities of this federal government pulling out of funding vital programs means that service deliveries must be targeted. It means that we must spend proportionately more on patient care and less on administration. It means that we cannot simply throw money at the system in hopes that it

will solve the problem, Mr. Speaker. There will have to be some tough decisions made on service delivery and on targeting, but we must face these decisions. I know that the judgment of the government will, as always, be tempered with caring and compassion. Unlike with governments before, this one can ill afford to spend its way out of contemporary problems. Quite simply, it is not an option, and while this is admittedly not always the politically popular course of action, the government of Manitoba would do the people of this province a disservice if they were to tax and spend as those before us have done.

Mr. Speaker, allow me to remind the House that democracy is a word about compromise, and this government has come to a compromise—balancing the physical imperatives with social economic development needs. Guided by this throne speech, we are now on the path to competitive success while keeping in step with those who are slow to follow.

Monsieur le Président, nous sommes fiers d'avoir ici au Manitoba un quartier français. Nous allons avoir la chance de célébrer encore une fois avec les Voyageurs au Festival du Voyageur. Nous dans la communauté francophone avons appris—ça fait longtemps—que c'est la joie de vivre ici au Canada et au Manitoba qui nous aide. C'est pas seulement les NDP qui comprennent ce que c'est, la joie de vivre. C'est nous, c'est nous qui comprenons. C'est nous qui allons aider les Manitobains à se rendre. Ils ont rien à dire maintenant. Ils n'écoutent pas. Ils n'écoutent pas du tout.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, we are proud to have here in Manitoba a French-speaking neighbourhood. We are going to have the opportunity to celebrate again with the Voyageurs during the Festival du Voyageur. We in the Franco-Manitoban community have learned—a long time ago—that it is the joie de vivre here in Canada and Manitoba that assists us. It is not only the NDP who understand what joie de vivre is. It is we, we who understand it. It is we who are going to assist Manitobans to make it. They have nothing to say now; they are not listening, they are not listening at all.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, I know it is easy to sit in your seat and heckle and become very sinister almost about where the economy is going, but I think it is time that we all have a positive outlook on life. I think it is time

that we stop looking at all the negative issues that are put forth. I think it is time that the NDP start saying what is positive about this province and what is positive about our communities. Stop being so negative. Start looking at the positive issues. What do you have in your constituency that you are proud of? Is there something? I have not heard those positive issues coming forward from that side, so stop the negativism. It is your problem that the negativism is out there, and when you start being positive you will see the turnaround. Those who are negative do not create positive acts. So, please, for your constituents and for this province, change your attitudes. Look at the bright side. There is a future for everyone, and the sooner you look at the bright future for all of us and start seeing the real factor out there. [interjection]

The honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) has something to say, but she had to get coached by the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). I think I would like to hear it. [interjection] No, they have not got to the bright side, because none of what they just said made any sense, but that is all right, we have gotten used to it. [interjection] No, I am going to allow you, the member for Thompson, to read the speech and maybe from this speech he will be able to get something. I will see that you get a copy of it.

Mr. Speaker, it has been an interesting year for me. I would like to thank all the members for their assistance over the summer and all the people of my constituency who have stood behind me. We, in my community, are looking at the positive aspects of life. We, in our community, are looking into the future for our children and our grandchildren. We realize that you cannot spend your way out.

We do believe in the programs but somewhere there has to be reality. It is easy to put forward a lot of ideas. It is easy to make promises, but I want each and every member over there to realize the reality, the reality that there is no more money. It all comes from one pocket. You have to realize that through—[interjection] There they go again, spend, spend, spend. They never come forward with a positive approach and that is adding where they would find those dollars within.

Mr. Speaker, it is easy to sit there and criticize, but at least some of the members from the Liberal Party have come forward with some justifiable alternatives. I give credit to those members from

the Liberal Party who came forward with those statements, but I have not found any of that.

We have to become very responsible in today's future, not for ourselves, but for all Manitobans. I think that is what Manitobans are looking for. I think they would like to be able to respect those of us who are representing them here in the province, all 57 of us. So let us set aside our partisan politics and work together. [interjection] Fifty-six, as of now, but let us set aside our partisan politics and work together for the future of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I am encouraged and enthused by the direction the government is taking. I can see a bright future on the horizon. I would like to congratulate all the members of cabinet and our Premier (Mr. Filmon) for leading us into the future. With the guidance that this government has, we will go a long way into the next millennium. Thank you.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, before I begin my remarks on this debate and discussion on the throne speech, I would like to add my welcome to you as other members of the House have welcomed you back.

As Speaker of the House, you have been a very fair, honourable, just Speaker and have had to deal with some very difficult issues. We all appreciate your abilities, your sense of humour and your justice.

I also would like to welcome the Pages who have been selected to work with us this session. They will put in long hours and will be required to do many jobs on behalf of the members of the Legislature. We welcome them as partners in our deliberations this term.

Again, I would also like to add my welcome to the two new faces this session: the member for Portage (Mr. Pallister), who has joined us this session as a new MLA and has certainly learned several lessons as an MLA very quickly, having delivered a very interesting Speech from the Throne address and having learned some of the other rules and challenges of the House and some of the occupations that members of the House occupy themselves with; and also, the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray). It is a re-welcoming to the member for Crescentwood after a couple of years outside the political process.

Mr. Speaker, what I would like to talk about today is the Speech from the Throne, what is and what is not in the Speech from the Throne. I believe this is

the sixth throne speech that the government has delivered since it was first elected in 1988. I wish I could say that this was a new Speech from the Throne, that it had some energy, some life, some vitality, some verve, some vigour, any one of those positive, forward-looking action words, but I am afraid that I am unable to do so.

* (1640)

It is not because I look only on the negative side. It is that I read what is in the Speech from the Throne. I have read what is not in the Speech from the Throne. I listen to the people of Manitoba and what they are asking for, what they are crying out for and what the government is not listening to from the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, this is a tired old government. You can be old at a very young age, and I would suggest that this government has shown absolutely no energy or youth in any of its deliberations over the past four and a half years, five budgets and six throne speeches.

It has lost touch with the people of Manitoba; it has lost the trust of the people of Manitoba. It clearly, like its federal counterparts, the Progressive Conservatives in Ottawa, does not care about the people of Manitoba, has absolutely no vision for the future of the people of Manitoba, no plan of action, nothing. It is putting in its time; it is waiting it out.

I fully intend to participate in the process in the next provincial election to make sure that the old, tired Progressive Conservative government in this province gets its due and just rewards, a long and healthy retirement.

Mr. Speaker, the Progressive Conservative government in Manitoba along with its federal Progressive Conservative cousins in Ottawa are the tail end of the neoconservatism that has helped perpetuate the global, federal and provincial economic, social and political devastation that has been visited upon us.

(Mr. Bob Rose, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

In Britain while the Conservatives were re-elected last spring, the government of Prime Minister Major has proven to be what we knew was going to be a disaster. If an election were held today, Mr. Acting Speaker, the Conservative government in Britain would be turfed out with probably three seats left in the whole country.

In the United States, 12 years of Bush-Reagan trickle-down neo-Conservative economics was given its just reward just last month. The people of the United States spoke very clearly for change. They said it is time that we had a government that worked with us and for us, all of us, not just for the corporate agenda, not just for the transnationals, not just for big business but for all of us.

In Canada, we are finding the same thing to be the case. The Progressive Conservative government has never been shown to be more tired, more out of touch with Canadians and more ready to be put out to pasture which we fully intend the people of Canada will do very soon. This Conservative government in Manitoba does not seem to have heard what is happening. It has paid no attention to what is going on in the rest of the world.

I would like to speak very briefly, Mr. Acting Speaker, about issues and the reality that face the people of Manitoba and the people of Canada, things that the members of the government do not want to talk about, things that are not happy, things that are not bright.

I think it is important that we not just "look on the bright side of life" as the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) said in his remarks, but it is important that we look at the reality of what is going on in our world. I find it very interesting that that phrase "look on the bright side of life" first saw the light of day during the depression of the 1930s when there were many musicals put out in America that tried to take people's minds off the current financial, social and economic troubles that were facing them.

One of the most popular songs from that era had as its theme, "look on the bright side of life." These Conservatives today are doing exactly the same things that Herbert Hoover did in the early 1930s, exactly the same thing that John Major is attempting to do in Britain today, exactly the same thing that George Bush and Ronald Reagan in the U.S. attempted to do, which is not pay attention to the needs and the aspirations of the majority of their citizenry but to speak only for and listen only to the large corporate agenda.

Mr. Acting Speaker, nationally what is happening to us is that we are going through the worst economic conditions since the 1930s recession. We had a recession in 1981-82 which technically was a deeper and sharper recession than the one

that we are currently involved in. Technically, according to some economic indicators, we were supposedly out of this recession in April of 1991.

However, unlike the recession of 1981-82, we really are not out of the recession in any way. We have not come out of this recession nearly as well as we did before. In 1983, after the '81-82 recession, the economy in Canada had a growth rate of 3.2 percent, and in 1984, 6.2 percent, due in no small part to the activist government such as those in Manitoba that were committed to job creation as the basis of the economic recovery. However, in this current economic session between the second quarter of 1991, i.e., July of 1991, just a year and a half ago, and July of 1992, our output grew by six-tenths of 1 percent. Now this is supposedly while we are out of a recession. In other words, the economy, as a result of the end of the 1981-82 recession, grew five times faster than it did in the first year that we were technically out of this recession.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we believe that a large part of the difference in that performance can be attributed to the federal and provincial political and trade policies that were in place in 1991 versus 10 years earlier. The federal government and the Progressive Conservative government in Manitoba have a leave-it-up-to-the-marketplace economic policy that, along with the introduction of the Free Trade Agreement, and now, potentially, the North American Free Trade Agreement, have exacted a terrible toll on the people of Canada and Manitoba.

Our unemployment statistics we all know are dreadful these days. The unemployment rate is well over 11 percent nationally, and in October there were 55,000 unemployed Manitobans—55,000. Fifty-five thousand families in Manitoba have no job. Not a job in the service sector, not a part-time job. No job.

The unemployment rate continues to be high, Mr. Acting Speaker, because the total number of jobs in the economy continues to shrink. In August this year, the number of full-time jobs fell to a new low after a staggering fall of 129,000 jobs in Canada in July. Since the recession began Canada has lost a total of 635,000 full-time jobs. There are well over 1.5 million Canadians unemployed to go along with the 55,000 Manitobans unemployed.

In addition, there are almost one million Canadians who are employed in part-time jobs who want full-time jobs. Mr. Acting Speaker, speaking

as a woman, I am really appalled at the toll that these economic figures have taken on the women of Manitoba and Canada. More than two out of every three of these almost one million involuntary part-time workers are women. These are women who have entered the labour force at the lowest end as women almost always do, last hired, first fired. They are in positions that are mostly nonunionized, so that they have no protection from the vagaries of the market economy and the whims of their employers, and they are the ones who are feeling the brunt of these economic policies of the federal and provincial governments.

* (1650)

Mr. Acting Speaker, in 1991 for the first time since the 1950s, in 40 years, for the first time in 40 years the labour force participation of women declined. This is not because, as I am sure Conservatives would like to have us all go back to, it is not because women have chosen to remain in the home. It is because they have no job opportunities. The job creation programs are nonexistent; job training programs have been cut back; social assistance has been cut back for women who want to get back into the work force, to do job creation, to have up-grading. All of those programs that would have a very positive effect on the employment statistics in this province and on the ability of women in this province to find and maintain jobs have been cut back or eliminated by the provincial Progressive Conservative government and their federal counterparts in Ottawa.

Another statistic that I think bears repeating that the government refuses to pay any attention to are the welfare rolls and the food bank use in Manitoba. Thirty thousand people used 175 food banks in Winnipeg in the last year, a 300 percent increase over the previous year. Now, if this does not speak to total lack of economic strategy, total lack of planning, a total lack of government initiatives, I do not know what does.

In the city of Winnipeg the welfare rolls increased by 42 percent from June 1991 to June 1992, a 148 percent increase from 1983. In 1983 we were just coming out of the last recession. In 1992 we were supposedly coming out of this recession, yet our jobless rate has never been higher. Our food bank participation rate has never been higher, and, as has been stated over and over again, Manitoba has the highest provincial child poverty rate in Canada, largely due to this government and their federal

counterpart's inaction, due to the enormous offloading onto the provinces of the federal government and this provincial government's lack of any kind of speaking out on behalf of the poorest and the most vulnerable members of our society.

With the recent changes to unemployment insurance that the federal Minister of Finance brought down last week, the situation will only get more desperate, for women particularly, in Manitoba. It will be more difficult to get unemployment insurance. People who are being harassed at work or who are finding their jobs untenable will now think twice or three times before they make any move at all to leave that position, because they have to prove that they have been harassed or that their working conditions were unbearable. The onus is now on the worker not on the employer. You are guilty until proven innocent. We know, given the historical precedent set by our federal and provincial governments, that individuals will not be listened to nearly as much as the employers in this province.

What is happening is that the transnational companies are taking over the business and the politics of our country. We are fast losing any semblance of independence in Canada. Over the last eight years, virtually every action that the federal government has undertaken, with virtually no outcry from this provincial government, has had the effect of limiting and decreasing the rights of individuals, the rights of workers, the rights of poor people, the rights of families, the rights of children, and increasing the power and the influence and the authority of the transnational corporations, whose only interest is in the bottom line. They have no compassion, no interest in their workers' well-being. They have no ties to any nation state. They have only ties to themselves and their stockholders. We are seeing that happen throughout the world. They will move wherever capital can be invested.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to speak very briefly about some of the things that the government has done. The government has not been totally inactive in the last four years. No, no, the government has been quite active. They have been active in doing a number of things. I would just like to take a brief moment to list some of the things that this government has done, how it has spoken up on behalf of and for all Manitobans. Let the people of Manitoba determine if, as the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of the province stated at his annual convention two

weekends ago, things have never been better for all Manitobans as they are now.

I would just like to do a bit of a reality check for the Premier and suggest that he might want to look a little further than his own political back yard to find out exactly what this government has done and the impact it has had on real Manitobans, ordinary Manitobans, middle-class working Manitobans, small business, employers, employees, families and children.

In the health care system, Mr. Acting Speaker, this wonderful action plan for reform has done nothing except close hospital beds. We have seen not one single concomitant community-based program to replace the services that were provided by those hospital beds. We have example after example of closings, of decline of service, with no increase in community-based support, as the Action Plan for Health Care Reform said there would be. We have had bed closures, licensed practical nurses—a vital, important, effective, cost-efficient part of the health care team—cut back, slashed; Street LINKS, a very viable preventive program that was doing a wonderful job, slashed by the provincial government. Home care has been decimated. People have been told, you pay for it; you find the funds because we are no longer going to support you.

Now the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) has done an enormous amount of delisting of drugs and other cut services that were covered previously, including now, Mr. Acting Speaker, the change that we anticipate having come through in January in the ability of people to be covered under medicare for an annual eye examination. That will now be changed for every single group in this province, high-risk children, high-risk groups such as those who have hypertension, high-risk groups such as seniors. Every single individual in Manitoba will be unable to have annual optometric exams. They will only be covered for biannual ones. This is the only province in the country that has delisted this service universally.

They have in their Pharmacare guidelines come down on—harder than even the income tax system does—people who do not file on time. There is absolutely no leverage, no leeway for any person, whether they have been in the hospital or have been otherwise unable to file on time, to get their Pharmacare support.

They have cut help to the Unemployed Help Centre, this in times of massive unemployment. They cut out completely the income assistance program, a \$55,000-a-year expense for the Minister of Finance, which provided assistance for almost 14,000 low-income Manitobans who now have to pay out of their own pocket for help in preparing their income tax. They have cut support for the victims assistance programs, this at the same time that the minister talked about zero tolerance of violence. They have cut the rural regional staffperson for the Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women so that women outside the perimeter will not be able to have access to the programs and services they had before.

* (1700)

We all know what they have done in the realm of the Autopac increases, the political shenanigans and influence that took place under there.

In my own area of Child and Family Services, in the last year and a half they recentralized the Child and Family Services agencies, thereby leading to an enormous decrease in the role of the volunteers, inability of staff to provide the kinds of locally based services that they were able to do before. In the daycare field, they made some enormously expensive, to the middle-income families of Manitoba, changes to the daycare funding. They have implemented Bill 70, which will mean an enormous offloading of costs in social assistance to the City of Winnipeg or a major cutback to services and social assistance rates to those in the city.

Federally, Mr. Acting Speaker, they have not spoken out to the federal government on the negative impacts of the North American Free Trade Agreement. They have not said a word about the North American Free Trade Agreement. As a matter of fact, they did not even participate in the hearings that were held, one of five across the country, this last week. Only the New Democrats appeared before the all-party federal public hearing process.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

The Premier (Mr. Filmon) refuses to say what his government's position is on this vital issue that will have enormous impacts on Manitoba, and on Bill C-91, the drug patent legislation. Finally, at the 11th hour, the Premier makes a public relations grandstand appearance with the Prime Minister of Canada; the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) gets

up and makes a statement in the House deriding and decrying the impact of drug patent legislation on the generic drug system in Manitoba and the costs that this government will have to bear.

Where, I would like to ask, was the provincial government in this issue for the last three years, when New Democrats in this House and across the country have been speaking out against the negative impacts that the change to the drug patent legislation will have on the health care systems in every province in this country? Where were they? They were nowhere to be found. You know why? Because they are Conservative just like their cousins in Ottawa; because they believe, just like their cousins in Ottawa, that phone line that was supposed to be open from the Premier of Manitoba to the Prime Minister has clearly been deregulated to the point where it is out of service.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to end my remarks by saying yet again that this government has not shown by any of its actions that it has any positive ideas for the people of Manitoba. It has no agenda for change. It has no agenda for helping the people of Manitoba find good jobs in new economic initiatives. It has no ideas at all. It is tired. It has old ideas, ideas that have been proven to be ineffective, that are no longer in the public minds anywhere except in this province and this country.

Mr. Speaker, we are advocating an activist government. We are advocating investment in our economic and educational future. We are advocating an education system that does not just train people for jobs, but gives people the basis skills so that they can take advantage of the very changing and always being modified job market that we are faced with. We advocate a partnership between labour; business, both large and small; and government.

Mr. Speaker, we were the first province out of the 1981-82 recession because of the activist partnership government of the New Democrats. We are going to be the last province out of this recession because of the inaction, the tired old policies of this Conservative government.

Mr. Speaker, I wish I had more positive things to say. I am afraid I do not. I think, again, the people of Manitoba will decide if this government has spoken up for them, and I believe the answer will be a resounding no. Thank you.

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to join my colleagues and others in responding to the Speech from the Throne. Before I get into my remarks and reflect on some of the comments that have been made by the most recent speaker and others, I would like to of course welcome you back, Sir, to a very difficult task of refereeing the ongoing events in this Chamber. Having had some small experience in working with you in previous years, I realize how difficult it is and what a tremendous job you do in doing that job of letting government take place here in this Chamber. We are pleased to see you back and in good health.

We would also be remiss if we did not acknowledge the changes in the Clerk's staff. I had the opportunity to work with them in the past as well at Estimates committee and other committees and recognize how many decisions have to be made on the spur of the moment and how fortunate we are to have a well-trained staff, but I realize that changes do take place as they have this year and changes will take place in subsequent years as we see new faces filling this very difficult position.

A welcome to the Pages as well. It is gratifying to see a number of Pages from rural Manitoba who are a part of the team of six, I believe, who will be working in the Chamber this session. It is my hope that students from all over the province will get this opportunity. However, I realize the difficulties of distance in Manitoba and sometimes it is certainly more convenient if you live nearby. But welcome to those Pages and as you grow into your job I am sure that you will get to appreciate and enjoy your work here in the Chamber.

Also, I would like to welcome all of my colleagues back. It is good to see you. During the sessions, we see a lot of each other, but there are times between sessions when we are all busy in our constituency, and it is truly good to see members return to this Chamber.

A special welcome to the two new members, the new MLA for the great constituency of Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister) who already has made an impact with his throne speech and I am sure is going to be another excellent member of this Chamber on this side of the House. A welcome, as well, to the new member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) who has come back from the bureaucracy to again be an elected member of this Chamber. I know that her experience as a member before as the member for

Ellice and her sabbatical into the bureaucracy gives her special and valuable insight into how government is run in this province.

I am not going to dwell to any great extent on the great constituency of Minnedosa, but it has certainly been a pleasure to be able to spend more time in my constituency to meet with the school board, with the R.M. councils and town councils, to attend the many summer and fall events that take place all over rural Manitoba and to truly be in touch with the citizens that we represent.

During the last six months since the House adjourned, we have also had the opportunity to visit many other parts of Manitoba with our cabinet tour and other travels and in that time being able to visit some of the agencies that my department funds. We had a delightful visit in a daycare at Russell during our cabinet tour up there, and it was nice to talk to parents and daycare workers in rural Manitoba to hear about some of their special problems, to look at the facility and to get a better feel for the type of job that they do.

* (1710)

We also had an opportunity to visit at the Dawson Trail opportunity centre in the constituency of one of my colleagues and to attend the official opening of a government building in that community. At that time we were able to look at the program that Dawson Trail offers to the disabled members of that community, talk to them about some of their future plans and talk about some of the issues that they foresee as they proceed into the next number of years.

As well, in the interim we have opened another shelter in Dauphin. The members of our Family Dispute Division and others were able to attend at that official opening. That brings the total number of shelters in Manitoba to 11. In the last couple of years, we have opened new shelters in Portage, Brandon, as well as Dauphin. I am pleased that we have a very comprehensive network of programming in shelters throughout the province to deal with what is a horrendous problem that faces society.

Having said my welcomes, Mr. Speaker, I would like to turn my attention to the throne speech. As I have reread it and listened to some of my colleagues opposite talk about the throne speech, I am reminded of the old adage of the responsibility of being in government and the luxury of being in

opposition, that difficult decisions have to be made given the economic climate in Manitoba, in Canada, in the world.

This is a time of change. My honourable colleague who is the critic for the NDP indicated we have no agenda for change. Yet in her remarks and the remarks of other members of the official opposition, I hear them trying to preserve the ways and the institutions and the economic situation that has been in this country for decades. They are the ones who are resistant to change.

One of my colleagues spoke last week of the changes that take place in the transportation industry, and it would appear that members of the New Democratic Party want to continue to have half empty planes flying back and forth across this country, to have passenger trains continue where there is no passenger service required. I can tell you that change is inevitable, change is something as a government that we are prepared to face, and I hear those comments from across the way from people who really are afraid of that change.

In the throne speech, the beginning lines recognize the winds of change that are blowing in Manitoba, in Canada and across the world. We have to adapt here at the provincial level to the tremendous changes that are happening in our society, particularly in our economy. We have heard time and time again what a wonderful place Canada is to live. That has been recognized by the United Nations. Certainly many people who return to Manitoba indicate how pleased they are to be back in a province where we have relative safety, where we have tremendous assets and are just proud of our province. We are seeing every night on the national news the conditions in other parts of the world, the tremendous instability on other continents, and I think we have a lot to be thankful for here, even though we in fact have our own set of problems that we have to deal with.

The economy is something that has to adapt to this changing world, and the old solutions put forth in the past simply will not work. We cannot drive up the deficit and the debt and spend our way out of this recession. We have to find new ways of addressing it, and to that end an economic summit was held recently. I have heard members opposite consistently call for an economic summit where they could have their input, where business and labour and government could get together.

I am appalled that the Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer) chose not to attend. We have been listening carefully for the strategy that might come forward from members opposite, who served in government in the 1980s and 1970s. The only strategy we hear is to create the type of jobs that they created during the 1980s through the Jobs Fund. The counting of flowers, the painting of fences, where no tangible realistic construction was done. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition, who was leader of the MGEA at that time, was very critical of the manner in which the NDP government of the day chose to create those jobs.

We have had the opportunity during the recess to talk to many small business people throughout Manitoba. Certainly, the No. 1 priority that all of them bring to government is to keep taxes down to make this province competitive. I am pleased that when we took government, we were not as competitive as we are now. Instead of being tenth out of 10, we are now in the middle of the pack and people are again looking at Manitoba as a place where they would come to set up their corporations and companies and create businesses.

In the recent municipal election, the public of Manitoba spoke very clearly and very eloquently on the idea of raising taxes. I think that message was clear and that members opposite certainly should hear that as well.

In the rural area, of course, we have special problems. We have a unique province with 60 percent of our people living within the Perimeter Highway or nearby. We have to make special efforts to get the rural economy going. Through the Grow Bonds program and some of the initial steps we have taken there in Morden and Teulon and some interest in other communities, I suspect Portage la Prairie being one of them, that you are going to see additional jobs and additional industry created in rural Manitoba.

I had the privilege of attending the Ayerst opening in Brandon. It was a privilege to hear business people from across this nation and from other parts of the world talk about the infrastructure that they are going to create in Brandon in the spin-off jobs in many areas of rural Manitoba. Our contribution to that has been through the REDI program, and I can tell you that it was well received. I am heartened that in the throne speech we are at the verge of proceeding with the rural gasification of rural Manitoba.

In the field of agriculture, we have the most comprehensive safety-net program this country and this province has ever seen before with the GRIP program, the crop insurance and NISA. While members opposite choose to find areas that they are critical of, I can tell you that the producers out there are very pleased, particularly the producers this year who live north of the Yellowhead Highway, that a safety-net program is in place.

In the area of health reform, I have just listened to the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) criticize the attempts and the movement toward health reform in the province of Manitoba, and I am reminded again of the responsibility of government and the luxury of being in opposition. All the provinces across this country are involved in health reform. It is a needed reform. It is something that we have to do to preserve the medicare we have today. Rather than be appreciative of the efforts that are being made, members of the official opposition are finding individual cases and being critical of the efforts that are being made there.

I am pleased that the second opposition party has the ability to analyze these changes, to be supportive of these changes, and most of all to recognize that these changes must take place. If we do not make the health care reforms now, the health care system as we know it will not be in place as we get towards the year 2000.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to turn my attention to the Department of Family Services, and again, critics frequently are making comment on some of the changes that have taken place within this department, very positive changes so that we can offer the best possible services to vulnerable Manitobans through the Department of Family Services. I would repeat something I mentioned in the House the other day, that we deal with some 180,000 Manitobans through the Department of Family Services, and all of our departments deal with very, very vulnerable people.

* (1720)

The members have brought up the increased use of social allowances. This is certainly a reality in Manitoba as it is a reality right across this country in provinces governed by Liberal governments, by New Democratic Party governments, as well as Conservative governments. It is a reality.

We in this province have maintained our rate by increasing it at the cost of living since we formed

government, something that is not happening in other jurisdictions. In fact, if that rate was appropriate in the mid-1980s, it must be appropriate now, because we have increased it on a year-by-year basis according to the cost of living. Last year, for instance, we increased the social allowances rate by some 3.6 percent. Only the Province of B.C. gave a larger increase than that and in fact a number of provinces gave a zero percent increase and are looking at ways of retracting some of the social allowance benefits that are in place.

On top of that annual increase we have also made a tremendous number of reforms in that program that members opposite often forget about and do not want to comment on. The most recent one was the extension of health care benefits to recipients of social allowances which will allow them to maintain their health benefits for a full year as they move from social allowances into the world of work in the disabled category and the sole-support parents.

When we made that announcement, not one comment was made by opposition members in recognition that this was a tremendous move to allow those people to move off of social allowances and into the world of work. I was disappointed that my critic from Wellington particularly did not applaud that move because it is one that advocacy groups have been calling upon for many, many years to allow recipients to move into the world of work.

We created a program last year called an income supplement for the disabled—again, a longstanding issue in this province—that recognizes that disabled people have special costs and should be recognized and compensated for those. This year, even with a very, very difficult budget facing us, we have again increased that amount to the disabled by 16 to 17 percent. Again, this is an increase to the total social allowance's budget line and it is not just volume driven as members are wont to say. We do have to take care of that volume, but we also have made these other enhancements. We also gave special assistance for school supplies, particularly for high school students. We have passed on the goods and services tax credit, the GST credit, without counting that as additional income, and we introduced a supplementary benefit whereby the cost of living and property tax credits are now flowed on a monthly basis rather than an annual lump sum.

I remember having the full support of the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) in doing that, and then,

of course, he later changed his mind and said no, because some recipients are against it, now I am against it. But this has allowed recipients to receive that sum on a monthly basis, to be able to access those funds on a monthly basis, and allow them not to be at the mercy of tax discounters who were taking a hefty proportion.

Ms. Barrett: Give them the choice.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) wants us to revert back to the old way of doing things and allow it to go with a lump sum payment. I will tell you, we had the unwavering support of her colleague the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) on this, and he is recorded in Hansard as saying this was a tremendous step forward. Then, of course, he changed his mind on that. We also made a small change to the children's trust accounts, the trust assets, and we have allowed an exemption there for \$25,000 when those trusts are in the name of a minor who is part of a family unit on social allowance.

We also made tremendous increases in the liquid asset exemption level, again, a long-standing issue that the previous government failed to address throughout the 1970s and 1980s. In the last two years we raised the liquid asset exemptions to \$2,000 for the disabled, \$1,000 for other recipients, and we put family maximums of \$4,000 for the disabled clients and \$3,000 for others, so that in fact recipients are able to accumulate some of their income, whether it is exempted income or the monthly allowance that they get, and are able to save for the large purchases that they sometimes wish to make.

The issue of the head of household is another issue that has been around for a long time, and, again, the previous government chose not to make any decision on that. In recent months we have indicated that the guidelines had been changed to eliminate the gender discrimination and that the family unit can indicate in fact their choice of who the head of the household should be.

Last session we passed, in this House, Bill 70 which is going to call for the standardization of rates and the standardization of access to social allowances. This was a commitment that we made in 1988, and through I think a really good process with members of UMM and MAUM and the City of Winnipeg. The SARC committee held hearings and had discussions with many of their councils and many citizens and brought back a recommendation

that these rates and the access to social allowances should be standardized. We have indicated that come April 1, 1993, we are going to proceed with that, and we have grandfathered municipal cases at the existing rate until the end of 1993. This is going to allow a greater fairness throughout the system, and a number of municipalities are now in the process of changing their by-laws and changing their regulations to come in line with those changes.

We have also made a policy change effective November 1 on the transportation issue for wheelchair recipients for social reasons. In the past we have allowed them 24 of these trips annually, two per month. We are allowing them, at their request, something we have worked with the poverty groups on and the disabled groups who have asked that more flexibility be given in that area, that they can use these trips at their discretion with the total number of trips remaining the same.

While my honourable friend from Wellington (Ms. Barrett) made the comment that we have cut back on social allowances, we have in fact had annual increases at the cost of living each and every year, something that this government is very proud of, plus we have done all of those other enhancements, and every one I mentioned has a cost to government. I am only sorry that the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) was not here from the beginning to hear all of those changes because I think it is a pretty impressive list.

My honourable friend from Wellington also made comment on the changes in the restructuring of the Winnipeg Child and Family Services agency, and I am pleased, even though she was late, that she was able to come to the annual meeting last week and get some firsthand insight into the operations of the agency.

She made mention of the fact that there were not as many volunteers; in fact, there are more volunteers working with the Winnipeg agency. There are some 750 volunteers that are now part and parcel of the Winnipeg agency. I believe that is more than the separate agencies had in the past. Volunteers, of course, are very, very welcome. They make a tremendous contribution to the delivery of service to the vulnerable children that the Winnipeg Child and Family Services agency provides for.

She also made a comment that the agency was giving poor service. I am sorry that she chooses to characterize the work of the agency as being of poor

service, because I think they do a tremendous job of providing services to the vulnerable children here in the city of Winnipeg.

* (1730)

There has been a tremendous amount of internal organization in terms of the rearrangement into four service areas throughout the city of Winnipeg. There have also been major changes in the accounting procedures and the legal procedures and the manner in which those services are delivered, and the savings in that area now go to service so that the agency can divert some of the savings in restructuring the internal accounting and restructuring the legal services. They can now use those savings for enhancement of service.

In the area of service issues, they have been able to deal with issues that the previous six agencies, I think, had difficulty with because of the need for co-operation between the six boards and the six executive directors. I would like to report that real progress has been made on the issue of night duty, and the ability of the agency to respond to children who are in need of service during the late-night hours and the early morning hours, and the agency now I believe has a better ability to respond to those issues. As well, there have been improvements in the adoption function that the agency takes forward as well as the recruitment of foster homes. There is no longer that competition for foster homes and, if a child is apprehended in one area of the city, they have the ability to use foster homes anywhere else in the city.

The final service issue that I would mention is the new service information system, and I do not think we have communicated well how important a tool this is going to be for all of our agencies, the aboriginal agencies and the department in coming years. This last Friday, I had an opportunity in Portage la Prairie to visit the central Manitoba agency in Portage and have an opportunity to see the SIS system demonstrated. By April, the system will be in use in some parts of Manitoba, and later in 1993 I believe it will be in use in most of Manitoba.

As well, the Winnipeg agency has had a tremendous success in involving the community and solving some long-standing problems to do with services to children and services to the community. I will just give you some examples. A year and a half ago, for instance, Pritchard Place was in danger of closing because their funding was not secure and the relationship with a number of their funders was

a little bit shaky. I think the work that the Winnipeg agency and the board and the staff at Pritchard Place have undertaken has really stabilized Pritchard Place and allowed for their continued presence in the community.

Recently, we signed a service and funding agreement with the Manitoba Metis Federation. At the same time, the Winnipeg agency also assigned a staff on a part-time basis to look into some of the child welfare problems and issues peculiar to the MMF. I can tell you that that is a real step forward. As well, the adolescent parent centre, the moms and babies program of Mount Carmel Clinic, all of which provide services to high-risk adolescents and young adult parents and their children, have also signed an agreement with the Winnipeg agency. So there are many, many examples where the Winnipeg agency has in fact improved service and has worked with these agencies to stabilize them.

Mr. Speaker, I suspect I am running towards the end of my time. I would like to just mention a couple of other areas of the department. The rehabilitation and community living, we have a number of initiatives there that I think are noteworthy. The Working Group on Community Living that met over the last couple of years to bring recommendations to government was established in June of 1990 and reported during 1991. I am pleased that we finalized a number of the initiatives and announced them on November 5.

The centerpiece of this project is to take 25 individuals who are currently in provincial institutions or in unstable community settings and to work with them to live more independently in the community. I think this has been a tremendous process whereby we have involved ACL Winnipeg, ACL Manitoba, the institutions that are part of my department as well as department staff and others on this working group to bring forward these recommendations and to proceed with this pilot program.

Also this session we will be bringing forward legislation on the vulnerable persons living with a mental disability. This will replace The Mental Health Act, Part II. Again we have had an excellent process of consultation with the wider community. We had hoped to bring this legislation in last session, but because of the volume of work that had to be done we were not able to complete that. We will be tabling that legislation when we get back from the Christmas recess, some time in March or April.

We think that this is landmark legislation that I have shared in a small part with my two critics. I would hope when we are ready to introduce it we can have another opportunity to discuss in some detail the details of that legislation. This legislation, I am sure, is legislation all members of the House will be able to support.

In the daycare area, certainly providing quality daycare services in rural Manitoba is possibly the area that we have been lobbied on most in recent times. We are now spending in excess of \$50 million in the daycare program, and that is roughly 100 percent increase from what it was in 1988. The restructuring of daycare has allowed many, many low-income families to place their children in daycare because of the subsidies that are offered, but we still have a long way to go in some rural areas, cognizant of the fact that we cannot create daycare centres in many rural areas because the numbers simply do not allow that.

We have seen a tremendous decline in our numbers of students in schools. Similarly, there is a decline in the number of young children in rural areas who need to access daycare. Probably the best avenue for those parents is to access family daycare, and we are pleased that we have been able to license more family daycare homes in many areas of Manitoba to accommodate them.

We have been involved with the Department of Agriculture and the Women's Institute, looking at innovative ways to provide service in some remote and rural areas of Manitoba. We are in the midst of an experiment with the Child Minder Program, whereby we are registering the friends, neighbours and relatives of parents with youngsters who may wish to access daycare. We have had a very good partnership both with Agriculture and the Women's Institute to enable us to bring forward this initiative, and I think it is going to serve many rural families well.

In the area of youth employment, in the last year we were able to maintain our program with the CareerStart Program this past summer. Many Manitobans were able to access summer jobs through that program. As well, we were part of the Partners with Youth program, which helped to create more summer jobs within the province. Similarly, the student job placement offices were again open throughout rural Manitoba. I think we had 34 sites this year. They registered in excess of

10,000 students and put them into part-time or full-time summer work.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would again urge the first opposition party to bring forward concrete examples of changes that we can bring about in government throughout the various departments, and would remind them of their greater responsibility as members of the Legislature, not simply to condemn and to criticize, but to be part of the change that has to take place over the next number of years and to bring forward ideas that are going to truly help with some of the major initiatives that we are in the process of undertaking at this time.

* (1740)

The member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) indicated that we have no agenda for change, yet it is that very change that is taking place that she is so critical of, the health care reforms, the restructuring in this department and the tremendous efforts that the Minister of I, T and T (Mr. Stefanson) and the economic portfolios in government have been looking at. I would urge them to be supportive of those changes and to understand that we are in a changing world and that these initiatives in keeping taxes down and bringing forward other ideas are going to have a positive influence on Manitoba in the coming years.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have appreciated having an opportunity to make my contribution, and would welcome the opportunity to hear some of the other ideas that might come forward from other members. Thank you.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I appreciate the opportunity to speak on yet another throne speech, Mr. Speaker.

I must say, before beginning my introductory comments, that if I was to give this throne speech marks—and I will get into details of this later—I would certainly give them A+ for creative rhetoric, somewhat fewer marks in terms of actual substance. In terms of recognizing the reality of what is happening in Manitoba, well, I do not think they have invented a mark yet that describes how poor the throne speech was, Mr. Speaker.

I want to begin with some preliminary comments because it is traditional in the House to comment, Mr. Speaker, a number of ways, certainly to welcome you back to the Chamber, and at the risk—I know you have various rulings to be making in the next few days, and I want to assure you that I am

not trying to beg any favour by saying that I trust in your judgment, win, lose or draw, as I have done on many rulings in the House as House leader. You have been extremely fair. I really think you have been exemplary, and I think you have truly upheld the kind of speakership that is in keeping with the parliamentary system. I know I speak for certainly all members in our caucus, and I will hope for all members of the House, to welcome you back.

The other thing I would like to do is recognize some of the significant passages that have taken place. I think it was Harold Wilson who once said that a week is a long time in politics, Mr. Speaker. Well, there have been a number of weeks since we last sat, and there have been a number of significant changes in this House. I would like to remark on those.

We, first of all, of course, have had two—well, I was going to say two new members elected to the House, Mr. Speaker. We have had one new, new member, and we have had a returning member elected.

I would like to, first of all, welcome the new member for Portage (Mr. Pallister) to the House. I want to commend him for what I thought was an excellent preliminary speech. I think it was very much in keeping with parliamentary tradition, gave a very vivid picture of his constituency, Mr. Speaker, and I think it set a tone in terms of his future career in this House. We look forward to further speeches. I am sure some of them in the future might be a little bit more political, and I would encourage him to be as political as he wants.

(Mr. Jack Penner, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

I think he established very well the sort of constituency focus in the first speech he gave, and certainly my experience has been that what counts is the constituency level, certainly to the people of Portage. In fact, I have been in his constituency. I was just there last Thursday. [interjection] Well, I cannot say that I agreed with his positions on issues, certainly in his support of the government. I certainly wished him well in terms of the people I spoke to in Portage. I would like to welcome him to the House, Mr. Acting Speaker.

I would like to also welcome back the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray). It is interesting, Mr. Acting Speaker, it is very rare actually, I think, for members to return to this House after having, shall we say—I use this with the member for Broadway

(Mr. Santos). I talk about his involuntary sabbatical between 1988 and 1990. I could say the same for the member for Crescentwood who was on an involuntary sabbatical. I certainly credit her, as I have with the member for Broadway, on being political phoenixes. I can think of only one other member, Al Mackling, the member of this House who went through a similar sort of sabbatical in recent memory.

I think it shows real commitment to the public process and the political process when anyone, after seeing what life after politics is like, decides that they want to return to politics. We need that kind of dedication at a time when it is not always that easy to be in public life. So I certainly welcome her back.

I wanted to comment, of course, on the retirement from provincial politics of Elijah Harper, Mr. Acting Speaker. I want to indicate that I will miss Elijah in this House. I was elected in 1981 at the same time, and the certain kinship that goes with being, shall we say, part of the same class, in this case, the class of 1981. I just had the opportunity of reflecting in private conversations on how many significant events have happened in that 11-year period. I remember the first time I met Elijah after the election, walking into a caucus meeting. I think, if anyone had even begun to outline the events of the next 11 years, certainly for all of us who were elected in 1981, and most particularly for the former member for Rupertsland, I think that any of us would have suggested that that individual was crazy.

Who would have thought that the member for Rupertsland would have become a key spokesperson for aboriginal people as he has?—not that he did not come in with a great deal of promise, a former chief from the Red Sucker Lake Band, full of ideas in 1981. I think it is interesting, Mr. Acting Speaker, and I think it is something we should all take pride in this House, to see the member for Rupertsland now being seen as a national spokesperson for aboriginal people. No matter what he does in the future, whether he continues in terms of politics federally—and I know he has certainly not ruled that possibility out—I know that he could be working nationally on aboriginal issues internationally. He has become world-renowned in terms of speaking for aboriginal people.

I think, even putting aside some of the partisan comments that we make over the years, all of us in this House would agree in wishing Elijah Harper all

the best in the future, Mr. Acting Speaker, and thank him for his 11 years of service, not only for the constituency that he has represented, but also for all aboriginal people. I want to say on a personal note just how much I have learned about the true view of aboriginal people from being a colleague and a friend of Elijah Harper.

There have been a number of other passings as well. The former member for Portage is no longer here, and I know, before there was reference to the fact, that some people will miss his cigars. I think we will all miss his outspokenness, perhaps with the exception of the Premier (Mr. Filmon), but we will certainly miss his unique approach in this House. He certainly livened things up when he was here and was a very outspoken representative of Portage. I think over the years he and I probably had more disagreements than anyone on a lot of issues, certainly when he was Minister of Labour and I was Labour critic, but we wish him well in the future as well.

Also, of course, the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) has announced that she is going to be stepping down as Liberal Leader. I think she probably has the rather unique opportunity now of not retiring immediately from provincial politics but to, shall we say, be hearing somewhat premature obituaries, memorials, Mr. Acting Speaker, but maybe this is probably something we should do more often in this House, and that is recognize the—

An Honourable Member: Resign.

Mr. Ashton: Resign. I notice some of the Conservative members saying resign. If they want to resign, we have no problem with that.

What I wanted to do was remark on the fact that I think she hit a very important tone in her speech as well, Mr. Acting Speaker, in talking about what has happened in this House over the last number of years. I find it interesting in reflecting on conversations with the people who have sat in this House longer than I have and former members how there has been a deterioration over the years. I will always believe that what is said in this House on issues is one thing, what is said in the hallways, what it is said on a personal basis is another.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

* (1750)

I think it is important, as the Leader of the Liberal Party pointed out in her speech, not to carry on some of the political debates into the hallways. I

recognize that all 57 of us are elected to represent our constituents—56 now. We may have differing views, and in fact even the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) and I agreed on something last session. I think that is an achievement. I know that when we were in Labour committee and I moved a number of amendments which her minister agreed with, she was somewhat suspicious because I was moving them and she felt that she had to vote against them, although we actually voted on the same side on that, Mr. Speaker. So long as we can agree on even one thing, there has to be some hope for all of us. I think as the Leader of the Liberal Party pointed out, that is very important.

I think that we should look back in recognizing that, also across the political lines and issues as well. I know we were just talking a few minutes ago about some of the important issues that have come over the years, looking back to The Human Rights Act of 1987, in which the Liberal Leader played a very important role from her side supporting some initiatives that were being brought in, particularly in terms of sexual orientation, which was a very controversial issue in this Chamber. I am not trying to revive the debate, but it is the kind of thing that often is not recognized in terms of political analyses when one is finished in terms of politics.

I think, Mr. Speaker, sometimes achievements of that nature mean more than how many seats one gains or loses, although certainly the position of the Liberal Leader will be very well taken in terms of history, of having gone from no seats to the Liberal Party being active again.

I want to say that and I know there will be times once the Liberal Leader is out of politics to say the same. I know there is always a fear in this House if we say something nice or positive or recognize something else that someone in another party has done that might be considered suspect or might be seen in the wrong way, but I have no hesitation in saying that on a number of important issues, politics aside, that she has had a very important influence on this province and she will certainly be missed in the House in future years. She has made a major contribution.

I just want to mention, for example, I remember when the Liberal Leader was first elected, my daughter was about four years old at the time and I remember having a tough time when I would ask her what she wanted to do, explaining to her that she

could be an MLA. I remember one time I asked her if she wanted to be an MLA. She said no, there were only boys, so I pointed out that there were a number of girls—women—in the Legislature, and I am saying that in a nonsexist way—when you are talking to a four-year-old about boys and girls, I am saying it in that sense—and I remember that she recognized the Leader of the Liberal Party at the point where I remember going on a bus trip to Brandon for the Royal Winter Fair—this was about a year later—and I considered it real progress when she recognized the Leader of the Liberal Party and was saying, that is Sharon Carstairs, that is Sharon Carstairs.

It is funny how you do not see, in a way, societal attitudes until you see it in your own kids. She had finally recognized that one's gender does not matter in terms of politics. It may sound like a minor point, but I think that is what is happening in society generally. I personally look forward to the day in this Chamber when we have gender parity, Mr. Speaker, because I think it will be a far better place and far more reflective of the reality of the changes in society. I have found from my own personal experience how important that is.

Now I want to just also spend a couple of minutes, and I will have the opportunity to talk a bit further tonight, talking about my constituency, Mr. Speaker, because, as I said just a few minutes ago, as far as I am concerned we start in this Chamber representing our constituents and our constituents first. That should be our top priority. I say that because I find in dealing with constituent problems and concerns, talking to my constituents as I do on as regular a basis as possible, that is the sense I get from people.

People are far more interested in public affairs than we give them credit. They have a much broader perspective than we give them credit. I know in my case, representing eight communities, I find that there is always something to be learned from going and talking to the people that I represent, and listening, the toughest thing for anybody in public life, in politics, is to listen.

We talk about listening but we are actually better at shall we say, talking than we are at listening. When one actually goes and listens, it is amazing the kind of wisdom that one hears, the kind of constructive suggestions and legitimate concerns and criticisms that one hears.

I know my own area today, it is pretty tough; there are tough times. Thompson, which had pretty well

been sheltered from the recession, is now being faced with the prospect of the loss of 125 jobs, hopefully through attrition and early retirement.

Many of the more remote communities in my constituency have been facing tough times for many years, and it is getting worse. I was recently in Nelson House again, for example, and the prospects for economic development are pretty remote despite the fact that the band is doing a considerable number of innovative things. It is the same thing in Split Lake, where the Northern Flood Agreement has been settled, and I want to commend all those involved in resolving that. There are very tough times, and I am hoping the Northern Flood Agreement will lead to some opportunities in terms of economic development.

Ilford, Thicket Portage and Pikwitonei, Mr. Speaker, are bayline communities. They are very concerned about the future of the bayline. They do not have road access. They are concerned about the very future of their communities, and I want to point to the difficult circumstances they face. They have been left behind. Metis and C-31 residents who do not have the reserve status are being left behind in terms of aboriginal self-government. We need to be looking at communities such as those and communities such as Wabowden as well in terms of the difficulties they face.

Wabowden, Mr. Speaker—I will be in Wabowden in a couple of days, as a matter of fact—is facing difficult times because of Repap and the elimination of jobs in that community. Generally, across the board there are tough times, very tough times in communities. And you know what? What I think is important that we do in this House is not only bring forward issues but the kind of experiences and the kind of reality that people are going through.

I want to just outline a number of examples of that. The day before we began our pre-session ceremonies in this House, I was in Thompson, at home. I decided to go and talk first-hand to a number of tenants on Cree Road who are living in situations—and you know that area of town very well in Thompson, I know—who are being faced with being forced out of their properties because the landlord in that particular case has not been putting forth the kind of repairs necessary. Mr. Speaker, slum conditions.

I went in and I talked to people I had known for many years, people who have lived in these apartments for 10 and 15 and 20 years, Mr.

Speaker. The bottom line is, it is scary that in 1992, we can have people living in those kinds of conditions. This is in Thompson which is generally a good standard of living, but that is one example.

I have been in Pikwitonei, in homes of individuals who invited me in to see gaping holes in the floors, cupboards falling in, Mr. Speaker. I have seen foundation problems. I have seen windows that have cracks to the point where it is impossible to keep heat in those buildings. I have gone to government departments and agencies to be told, well, that is not our jurisdiction and then have gone to another and been told that is not our jurisdiction either, while people continue to live in those conditions.

I have talked to people who have been unemployed for a year, for two years, for three years, who have all but given up hope. I have talked to people, Mr. Speaker, who live in remote communities and are lucky to work a month or two, people who rely on UIC which is, once again, being cut back, even just to make it through with any level of dignity working for two or three months. I have talked to trappers in my constituency who cannot make a living anymore off trapping. Yes, indeed, there are people who wish to continue to trap.

So this is reality out there, Mr. Speaker. It is a new reality, and that is the kind of thing this government should be recognizing in its throne speech, not the new buzzwords, but the new reality.

You can look at it in terms of statistics—the highest level of child poverty, one of the highest levels of poverty in the country, Mr. Speaker. We have one of the lowest levels of industrial wage. There are tremendous changes taking place in our economy and, unfortunately, what is happening is we are being stripped of our industrial capacity, particularly here in the city of Winnipeg.

We are seeing a shrinking in the mining industry that is unprecedented—Thompson losing 125 jobs, Flin Flon being downsized, Snow Lake being closed, Lynn Lake already having been closed, Sherridon already having been closed, Mr. Speaker. The days of the levels of employment we have seen in the past are no longer here. We are seeing changes in terms of what is happening with Hydro development, the possibility of at least a five-year delay in terms of Conawapa because of the delay in the Ontario Hydro sale.

The fact is, there is a new reality out there and it is tough. You know, Mr. Speaker, I know members opposite will say, well, you are just being critical. It would be easy to respond. I could read back many a phrase, and I will, in fact, in a few minutes, that members opposite put on the record when they were in opposition, but that is not the point of it. When I say times are tough, they are tough.

When I say that members of this House would do well to get outside of this building and talk to the unemployed and talk to the people living in slum conditions and talk to the young people who are seeing very little hope, that is not a question of negativity. That is a question of reality. That is what fundamentally concerns me about this government and this throne speech, because this government is completely and absolutely out of touch.

They brought in a throne speech that never once mentioned the word "recession," the "r" word. It is almost as if, Mr. Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) can stand here and the Premier can imagine that everything is fine in the province of Manitoba, that there is no recession—we have all these statistics that show how great things are. Well, the only way you can do that, like the Premier is doing it, is if you are completely and absolutely out of touch. The only way you can do that is if you see the province through the window of a jet airplane looking down on it.

If you talk to people up close, you know that we have a recession. It is a lingering recession. We are in some of the worst economic circumstances in this province since the 1930s, and the only way to come up with solutions to the problems that we have is to recognize that there is a problem in the first place.

Now, perhaps, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) does not recognize there is a problem. Perhaps the people

he represents, both constituency-wise and also in terms of the coalition that the Conservative Party represents, perhaps they are not going through the same tough times, but I even doubt if that is the case. I mean, if the Premier took the time to talk to some of the traditional supporters of the Conservative Party, they would tell him straight that there are tough times in this province, Mr. Speaker.

I want to suggest that this is more than just a failed throne speech. There have been six Conservative throne speeches, I believe. This is the sixth one. After awhile, one tends to lose count, Mr. Speaker. This is obviously, to my mind, the one that is most out of touch with reality. You know, I would say there is some significance in that, because I think we are at a watershed with this government. We are at a political watershed.

When they were elected in 1988, they were able to run, Mr. Speaker, against the NDP at the time. Does anybody recall some of the key issues at the time? Autopac was one of them—and I will be getting to that tonight—taxes, general view in terms of the government being out of touch. That was what they ran on in 1988. In 1990, they had the opportunity for a second term. A lot of what happened in 1990 was reflective of some of the constitutional discussions that had taken place and some of the ironic twists and turns of fate.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is 1992, and we are going through a watershed. Friday, the highest level of unemployment in quite some time—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) will have 18 minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., I am leaving the Chair with the understanding that the House will reconvene at 8 p.m.

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Monday, December 7, 1992

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Presenting Petitions		Emilio Garcia Chomiak; McCrae	272
Restriction of Stubble Burning Gray	266	Universities Alcock; Vodrey	272
Reading and Receiving Petitions		Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation L. Evans; Cummings	273
Restriction of Stubble Burning Lamoureux	266	Labour Force Development Friesen; Vodrey	274
Tabling of Reports		Crop Insurance Review Plohman; Findlay	274
Annual Report, Highways and Transportation Driedger	266	Ministerial Statement	
Introduction of Bills		1999 Pan American Games Stefanson	275
Bill 11, Regional Waste Management Authorities, Municipal Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act Derkach	266	Doer	276
Oral Questions		Cheema	277
Core Area Agreement Doer; Filmon; Ernst	267	Nonpolitical Statements	
Chris Davis Wasylycia-Leis; Orchard	268	Halifax Explosion, 75th Anniversary Carstairs	277
Portage Avenue Explosion Carstairs; Downey	269	Provincial Volleyball Championships Ducharme	278
The Pas, Manitoba Lathlin; McCrae	270	Derkach	278
Aboriginal Justice System Lathlin; McCrae	271	Chomiak	278
Aboriginal Justice Inquiry Lathlin; McCrae	271	ORDERS OF THE DAY	
		Throne Speech Debate (Seventh Day of Debate)	
		Hickes	279
		Derkach	281
		Chomiak	288
		Laurendeau	295
		Barrett	300
		Gilleshammer	304
		Ashton	310