



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

DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

(Hansard)

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
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
DOWNNEY, 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
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Liberal
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	NDP
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCORMICK, Norma	Osborne	Liberal
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	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
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupert's Island	NDP
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	NDP
SHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	NDP
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	PC
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 14, 1994

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Curran Contract Cancellation and Pharmacare and Home Care Reinstatement

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Sam Voisey, Sheila Beyko, Charles Zimmerman and others requesting the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba to urge the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to personally step in and order the cancellation of the Connie Curran contract and consider cancelling the recent cuts to the Pharmacare and Home Care programs.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Curran Contract Cancellation and Pharmacare and Home Care Reinstatement

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Ms. Cerilli). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): The petition of the undersigned citizens of the Province of Manitoba, humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the Manitoba government has repeatedly broken promises to support the Pharmacare program and has in fact cut benefits and increased deductibles far above the inflation rate; and

WHEREAS the Pharmacare program was brought in by the NDP as a preventative program which keeps people out of costly hospital beds and institutions; and

WHEREAS rather than cutting benefits and increasing deductibles the provincial government

should be demanding the federal government cancel recent cuts to generic drugs that occurred under the Drug Patent Act; and

WHEREAS at the same time Manitoba government has also cut home care and implemented user fees; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba government is giving an American health care consultant over \$4 million to implement further cuts in health care.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly urge the Premier to personally step in and order the cancellation of the Connie Curran contract; and consider cancelling the recent cuts to the Pharmacare and Home Care programs.

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

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the Province of Manitoba, humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the Manitoba government has repeatedly broken promises to support the Pharmacare program and has in fact cut benefits and increased deductibles far above the inflation rate; and

WHEREAS the Pharmacare program was brought in by the NDP as a preventative program which keeps people out of costly hospital beds and institutions; and

WHEREAS rather than cutting benefits and increasing deductibles the provincial government should be demanding the federal government cancel recent cuts to generic drugs that occurred under the Drug Patent Act; and

WHEREAS at the same time Manitoba government has also cut home care and implemented user fees; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba government is giving an American health care consultant over \$4 million to implement further cuts in health care.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly urge the Premier to personally step in and order the cancellation of the Connie Curran contract; and consider cancelling the recent cuts to the Pharmacare and Home Care programs.

APM Incorporated Remuneration and Pharmacare and Home Care Reinstatement

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

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the Province of Manitoba, humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the Manitoba government has repeatedly broken promises to support the Pharmacare program and has in fact cut benefits and increased deductibles far above the inflation rate; and

WHEREAS the Pharmacare program was brought in by the NDP as a preventative program which keeps people out of costly hospital beds and institutions; and

WHEREAS rather than cutting benefits and increasing deductibles the provincial government should be demanding the federal government cancel recent cuts to generic drugs that occurred under the Drug Patent Act; and

WHEREAS at the same time Manitoba government has also cut home care and implemented user fees; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba government paid an American health care consultant over \$4 million to implement further cuts in health care.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly urge the Premier to personally step in and order the repayment of the \$4 million paid to Connie Curran and her firm APM Inc. and consider cancelling the recent cuts to the Pharmacare and Home Care programs.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the Annual Report of the Department of Finance for 1992-93.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the Residential Tenancies Commission Annual Report, 1992.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery where we have with us this afternoon from Churchill High School, twenty-five Grade 9 students under the direction of Ms. Terri Gartner. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Osborne (Ms. McCormick).

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

* (1335)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Grain Exports U.S. Cap

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

At a recent agricultural ministers' meeting the provincial governments were unanimous in their recommendation to the federal government to hold firm against the unilateral threats of the United States to limit access of wheat producer exports to the United States.

Over the last 36 hours we have heard various reports of a potential agreement by Canada to cap the exports to the United States. Of course, producers in Manitoba and farm organizations are very concerned that on the one hand we allegedly

have access to the United States under trade agreements, and on the other hand we have a capping put in place and agreed to by the Canadian government.

I would like to ask the Premier: Is there a cap that has been agreed to by the federal government, contrary to the advice from provinces, and what will that cap be in terms of its impact on producers in western Canada and in Manitoba?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I am subject to the same news reports as the Leader of the Opposition has received. All of my colleagues, particularly the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) and I, are equally concerned.

We, through the Minister of Agriculture, have urged very strongly the federal minister Mr. Goodale not to give in on the kinds of proposals that the Americans are making, to absolutely hold firm and to be as tough as possible. In fact, the Minister of Agriculture, this morning, after hearing those same reports, wrote a very strongly worded letter to the federal Minister of Agriculture of which I believe the final statement is: No deal is better than a bad deal, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I would agree with the Premier that no deal is better than a bad deal. I think—[interjection] When the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) is finished. He may not care about—there may not be many farmers in Inkster, but many members in this Chamber represent producers all across this province. Mr. Speaker—[interjection]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Leader of the official opposition.

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The provincial ministers of all political stripes have recommended that we not agree to any deal with the United States, and we not agree to the unilateral threats, and have suggested that if we cannot reach any kind of agreement on the existing trade agreements, we look at our own strong stand against the Americans in terms of their imports into our jurisdictions.

Given that the Minister of Agriculture seems to have not taken the advice of the provinces, would

the Premier undertake to take this issue to the Prime Minister? If we cannot succeed with the federal agricultural minister, would the Premier look at going directly to the Prime Minister and look at working with his other western Canadian colleagues?

As the Premier has indicated, we agree, a bad deal is not worth it, Mr. Speaker, and I would urge the Premier to move this up to the Prime Minister's level before it is too late.

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, as I say, the letter was fired off this morning by our Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns). We will judge by the response or lack of response that we may get from the federal government whether or not the matter needs to be taken a step higher, but make no mistake that we will not hesitate to raise this issue to the Prime Minister directly, as we did even earlier this year when the Deputy Premier wrote directly to the Prime Minister about the issue of the grain blockage, work stoppages on the West Coast that were blocking the movement of grain.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Premier: Has he been in touch with the other western Canadian Premiers dealing with this issue? Can we have, as we had in 1991, I believe, a co-ordinated effort from all three prairie provinces to try to get support for the third line of defence when it was totally deficient in terms of the hardships on western Canadian producers? Do we have a co-ordinated strategy with the Premiers at the Premiers level to add some strength to the issue of access and fairness?

A cap on an allegedly Free Trade Agreement is absolutely contrary to what everybody believed would be the rights of Canadians under that agreement, Mr. Speaker, and I would ask the Premier, have we utilized the offices of the other Premiers in this regard?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, as the minister—not the minister—

An Honourable Member: Hey, give me 35 days.

Mr. Filmon: Not on your life.

Mr. Speaker, as the member for Concordia has pointed out, this is an issue that the provincial

Ministers of Agriculture have taken a very strong stand on, and the prairie provinces were indeed united in their views expressed on this. Our Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) will work with his colleagues to try and impress upon the federal government the importance of this issue, the importance not to give in to a bad deal.

I will not hesitate to enlist the support and the participation of my colleague Premiers should this matter not be resolved to our satisfaction among the Ministers of Agriculture, Mr. Speaker.

* (1340)

Post-Secondary Education Funding

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

Over the past couple of days the public has learned that the government, and through the Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Manness), has shared what the universities will be allocated in the coming budget. Traditionally, that information has been made public in January or February of the year so that not only the university presidents but the students, the staff, the public and the Legislature will be aware of what allocation and what priority the government places on post-secondary education.

Can the First Minister now tell this House what he has been telling the university presidents? How many millions of dollars are going to be cut from university budgets? How many hundreds of jobs are going to be lost at the universities, or can he give us some more information on it?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I have not been telling the university presidents anything. That is a matter for the member to discuss with the Minister of Education and he will make the information known, as it has been in the past, in conjunction with the budget.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, this raises a matter of privilege. This is not secret budget information or the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) would have been obliged to keep it secret, as is most budget information. This is public information and the university staff and the students who are going

to be affected by this and the public and this Legislature have a right to know.

Will the First Minister, now, instruct the Minister of Education and Training to tell this House and tell the public what budget is being allocated to universities? How many millions are being cut? How many hundreds of jobs are going to be cut again at our universities?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, the kind of fearmongering that the member puts forth is really inappropriate, and to talk about hundreds of jobs, layoffs, cutbacks and all those kinds of things is a typical New Democratic smarmy, sleazy trick.

Mr. Storie: Well, those smarmists, Mr. Speaker, also include the vice-president of administration at the University of Manitoba, who said today in an interview that the layoffs might number 100 or more in various kinds of positions, perhaps as many as 300 or 400. That is at one university.

Mr. Speaker, if that is being smarmy, asking for public information, information for which there is no excuse for secrecy, which has been made public on every other occasion, my question is what is the First Minister hiding? What is he hiding from the public? What is he hiding from the students at the university? Why will he not come clean? Will he instruct his minister to do so?

* (1345)

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, universities like all groups in society have to live within their means. Universities have decisions to make. They have management and administration, and they have people working for them. Universities have their goals and objectives that they want to achieve and they do so knowing exactly the constraints that are on them, constraints that are on every government in Canada. This is not a society in which people can make all sorts of demands and just simply say, pay the cheque, raise the taxes, pay the cheque.

Those matters are matters that we take seriously. We do not take them as just simply an opportunity for political cheap tricks in Question Period. We take our responsibilities seriously.

The Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Manness), in conjunction with his responsibilities

as minister, will continue to work with the universities for the best opportunity that they have to work towards the betterment of the universities.

Winnipeg Arena Burns Committee Report

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, on December 15 of last year, the mayor of Winnipeg and this Premier appointed the Burns committee to look into what private investors were willing to come forward to invest in a new arena.

That committee had a mandate to report by the end of March. We are two weeks past the end of that mandate.

My question today to the Premier is: Can the Premier indicate what the problem is, if he knows, and if there is no problem, or what the current timetable for that report coming down and being made public in this Legislature is currently?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I can inform the Leader of the Liberal Party that I have only been told by a representative of the Burns committee that they will be somewhat delayed in providing us with the information that we have requested and that it will be brought to us as soon as it is possible to do so.

Funding Options

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, back on September 15, some months ago, I and our senior federal minister now in Manitoba suggested a community bond issue as a way to raise private funds to fund a new arena as an alternative to taxpayers' dollars.

Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge to date, the Premier has not made a comment on that idea.

I wonder if in an effort to perhaps help the Burns committee, they seem to be having some difficulty given that they have not met their original timetable.

Is the Premier today prepared to indicate whether or not he would look positively on a suggestion of a community bond issue, spreading the ownership of the team and raising money other

than through taxation initiatives, to recruit private investment from as large a number of Manitobans as possible?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we have given the mandate to the Burns committee to examine any and all alternatives, and I know that the Burns committee will have seen the comments of the Leader of the Liberal Party and the federal minister Mr. Axworthy on that particular issue.

I am sure that they will take that into consideration as they review all of the possible alternatives to come up with the best proposal that they believe is available to finance the Jets and an arena facility.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I must add that I think a positive indication from the Premier that that would be an issue he would be receptive to would be helpful to that committee.

National Hockey League Salary Cap

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): I conclude by asking the Premier: Finally, based on the statement in the Mauro report at page 33, that all of this discussion about an arena may be moot if there is no salary cap in the NHL, and that is in his report, and given that the Premier has recently met with the chief commissioner, Mr. Bettman, of the NHL, can he indicate to this House whether or not there is any hope of a salary cap and perhaps put to rest this whole issue of whether or not we should be even looking at ways to finance an arena if in fact there is no salary cap?

Does he agree with Mr. Mauro that in fact that is the first step, and can he give us any assurance that is at all likely to occur?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I have agreed publicly with Mr. Mauro's assessment and analysis of the need for a salary cap and/or preferably as well a revenue-sharing agreement among the various franchises of the NHL.

Both of those matters I think are fundamental to the long-term viability, not only of a franchise in Winnipeg, but probably at least eight of the smaller market franchises in the NHL. That is information,

I might say, that is supported by Mr. Bettman and others who are vitally involved with the league.

In saying that, Mr. Bettman indicated some hope, but obviously he was not in a position to give any assurance at the present time.

* (1350)

Grain Exports U.S. Cap

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that it is apparent, according to the article in the Toronto Globe and Mail this morning, that the federal Minister of Agriculture is willing to sell out the interest of the western Canadian grain farmers and, it appears, in support of eastern farmers' positions, and it is apparent that the Americans are continuing, even though we have had discussions on GATT, NAFTA and other trade agreements, to subsidize exports of their wheat to the point of lowering their stocks internally and driving up prices to allow Canadians to ship into the United States at a better price—in light of all this and in ensuring that the cap that is being discussed now is going to be higher or lower than what is currently being exported, what is the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) doing beyond writing a letter to the Minister of Agriculture demanding that the agreements that are in place stay in place in support of the western Canadian farmers?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments of the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) in this regard and really that says it all.

I do want to just confirm the seriousness of what we are talking about. It is my understanding from grain officials that we have probably exported more than is currently being considered as the cap in this year already, which means that if this should proceed, the border would effectively be sealed off to the Manitoba farmers immediately.

I might just further add, by circumstance I had in my office at eleven o'clock the American consul general, regrettably now resident in Calgary. Some of you will recall he used to be resident in our fair city of Winnipeg and I was able to transmit

directly through the consul general the concerns that the Province of Manitoba has, indeed the western provinces have on this matter.

Might I, while on my feet, Mr. Speaker, table the letter that the first minister referred to that was sent to Mr. Goodale this morning.

Seven Oaks General Hospital Funding

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, we were told that health care reform was on hold, but the Connie Curran gravy train continued. We were told there was a pause, and home care cuts continued. We were told that hospital cuts were on hold, but there are cuts at St. Boniface and Health Sciences Centre.

Will the minister confirm that Seven Oaks Hospital has been told to cut \$6,298,200 from its budget, which in fact amounts to more than 10 percent?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, the honourable member raises a topic similar to the one raised yesterday by the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) when he raised questions about Brandon General Hospital. The executive director of Brandon General Hospital has very clearly repudiated what the honourable member for Brandon East has had to say, as I suspect those involved in the delivery of health services in our hospitals would do to the honourable member for Kildonan as well.

Mr. Speaker, the honourable member for Kildonan, his health policy is the status quo, or perhaps go back to those halcyon days of the '70s and '80s when government revenues were rising very quickly and very substantially and government spending on the part of his colleagues of that day was falling well behind. The honourable member for Brandon East acknowledged yesterday and made a confession with respect to the first permanent bed cuts in 1987 being the responsibility of himself and his colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, as we look forward to the future and providing quality health care for Manitobans, hospital administrators will indeed have a role to play as will the Department of Health.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I think that is called ducking the issue.

Bed Closures

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Will the minister confirm that Seven Oaks Hospital has been given permission from his department to permanently close 30 surgical beds?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, at this point, what we have been doing with the hospitals is examining multiyear projections and how we can live within budgets in the future. We are asking hospitals in Manitoba to provide us with their plans and proposals as to how they can address the issue of shorter lengths of stay, shorter average lengths of stay, and how to deal with the increased capacity in our hospitals and to make those hospitals proper centres of health care so that, combined with the services we are providing and will be providing in the community, we can deliver the best product possible to the people of Manitoba.

* (1355)

Funding

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm that these discussions about multiyear budgets is really the 10 percent cut to all hospital budgets across the province, that the minister said in the fall was on hold, and we see at St. Boniface and Health Sciences Centre, at Brandon and at Seven Oaks now is not on hold? Can the minister confirm that in fact those budget cuts are in effect? Is that not ironic considering the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation is advertising about all the good money going into our health care system on TV?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): What we need to put on hold, Mr. Speaker, is the useless rhetoric brought into this Chamber and elsewhere by people who are still living in a time and an era—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, Beauchesne's Citation 417 is very clear: "Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate."

I understand that our rules also say that ministers do not have to answer questions and certainly the minister is putting that rule into practice, but if he wants to debate and not answer questions we have the throne speech, we have the budget. I would prefer an answer instead.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member did not have a point of order. I believe the honourable minister was attempting to answer the question.

* * *

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, I did not mean to break any rules or to provoke any debate. This is a very serious matter the honourable member raises, but the honourable members are putting forward the proposition that the only way to proceed is to leave things as they are. Leaving things as they are will choke our health care system till we do not have one anymore.

What I am here to try to build and rebuild is a health care system that we can have for this generation and so that my kids and yours and the children of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) can have a health care system, too. It is not good enough to spend it all now and have nothing for the future.

Forestry Industry Independent Loggers

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, people from the Swan River area are hopeful that after six years of bungling by this government, we are finally seeing jobs in the logging and the forestry industry increase. However, people, such as the little loggers, are being shafted as they were in the Repap deal.

I want to ask the minister responsible why this government is not responding to the concerns of little loggers who have established markets and are having difficulty in getting a wood supply, due to the policies of this government who first killed the Pennco deal and then gave away the cutting rights under Repap.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I must express a little regret at the tone of the question here because over the last number of months I have had the occasion to personally speak with the member who is representing Swan River as well as the operators from that area, and I have to say that there has been an increase in the quota holders' allocations for the next two years. We have given the assurance and commitment to the permit holders that we will be looking after their requirements while we deal with the bigger picture.

So I have given that assurance to the member as well as to the operators out there. Just because the member went out yesterday together with her Leader and did a bit of an upcharge, I feel a little disappointed that the context of the question is coming forward this way.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, I recognize that the minister has responded, but he has not spoken to the loggers. They are wanting answers. Since, to the existing independent loggers who run about 18 sawmills and create about 80 jobs, this is very important, we want assurances that they will continue to operate, that they will have a wood supply and they will not be shafted like they will in the Repap deal.

When will we know that these people will be guaranteed a wood supply and will be continued to operate alongside the other operation?

* (1400)

Mr. Driedger: Well, Mr. Speaker, I gave that personal assurance to the member as well as to the operators when I met with them. As I said before, we have had an increase in the quota holders, and we have to make sure we know what we are talking about because we have the quota allocations which have been there all the time and have been

honoured and we have the permit holders which basically from time to time get a permit.

I also want to indicate that two years ago there was very little interest in the poplar and the ash, which basically were considered useless wood till two years ago. This is basically what the whole L.P., the Louisiana Pacific deal is about, dealing with the hardwoods which basically is your poplar wood. I have given the assurance to the operators that we will deal with them on our permit basis until the whole issue with Louisiana Pacific is resolved.

I want to assure the member here, as well as all members, that by the time this deal is completed, and if it is completed, the operators in Swan River will not know where to go they will be so busy trying to provide the sources of wood for the

Forestry Industry Treaty Land Entitlements

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): As long as they have the assurance that they can continue to operate their sawmills, that is what they are looking for.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister responsible for Native Affairs what steps he has taken to ensure that the bands in the Swan River area are treated more fairly than they were in the Repap deal. Why has this government not met with the bands in the area to deal with the treaty land entitlements and traditional lands that will be impacted by this deal?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister responsible for Native Affairs): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I say to the member we all appreciate the forest fires that she has had to put out in her own constituency in the last while, and she comes into this Chamber all of a sudden with a tremendous interest.

I have to tell her that she makes accusations about the deal regarding Repap that are not correct, and in terms of treaty land entitlements, those issues are all in the process of negotiation. I have to challenge her. Does the member opposite want to see jobs in her community or not?

Churchill Airport Emergency Response Services

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupert's Land): My question is for the honourable First Minister (Mr. Filmon), who is responsible for federal-provincial relations.

The Churchill airport is well known internationally as being a vital airport for planes that sometimes run into difficulty. Over the past few years several large planes have been forced to land at the airport in Churchill. Given the increase in business due to the reactivation of the rocket range and the pending initiatives in Churchill, and the recent federal government's plans to eliminate emergency response services at that airport, will he contact the federal government and ask them not to cut this very important program?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I will take that question as notice.

Northern Airports Funding

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupert's Land): I want to thank the honourable First Minister for the response.

As well, I would like to ask the honourable First Minister about a similar situation with northern airstrips and ask him to ask the minister to put holds on cuts to northern airports in this province.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I will take that question as notice as well.

Northern Airports Funding

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupert's Land): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question, and perhaps I will get an answer from the minister responsible for airports in northern Manitoba.

My question is: Could the minister table in the House the complete list of cuts of northern airports such as Berens River, Gods Lake, St. Theresa Point, the Island Lake area, and the reason for the cuts?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, in terms of maintaining the airports, our initiative is to ensure

that the airports are handled and operated in a safe fashion, and that is the bottom line in terms of addressing the staff issues with association with those airports.

We have a bigger issue in the North through the Hudson Bay line, and we work hard to keep that open to serve the residents of the North. We have represented the residents of the North in terms of VIA Rail in terms of what the federal government might do.

Mr. Speaker, I might tell the members opposite that I went to the Hudson Bay Route Association the other day and the M.P. for the area, one Mr. Elijah Harper, did not show up.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Education System Medical Services Report

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, with the restraints of resources we have felt in Education and the reining-in of some of the home care services, the needs of the medically fragile children in schools is of a concern to us, to teachers and, of course, to their parents.

We were told a year ago that a report with recommendations as to how to deal with these medically fragile children in the school system would be forthcoming from this government—a committee of Health, Family Services and Education.

I would ask the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae): Can he tell this House, a year later, is that report completed? Do we actually have an action plan as to what protocol should be in place so that the care of these children in schools is assured?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. We are well aware of the discussion and the dialogue leading up to the answer made several months ago.

There has been an internal working draft that we are trying to put the final touches to, and I would fully expect that some time by late May, early June

at the latest, we will provide a government's view as to how we co-ordinate those services and provide the level of care that some people would wish.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Speaker, with a supplementary to the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness). That draft, I understand, had gone to cabinet still a year ago, so it is a year later.

Can the minister tell us: In this draft, what does the government propose in terms of who will take the lead in ensuring that the medical services are provided to children in the schools? Because certainly the teachers do not feel qualified to provide some of these services.

Mr. Manness: If it is a draft and it is not public policy, Mr. Speaker, I do not think I have anything to announce. The reality is that we are continuing so we hope to be in a position in short order to more definitively answer the member's question.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Speaker, I have a final supplementary to the Minister of Education.

Can the minister tell us if groups such as Manitoba Teachers' Society, Manitoba Medical Association, Manitoba Association of School Trustees, who certainly wrote the initial report, are being consulted then in the final recommendations, and can we be assured that their needs, as outlined in their initial report, will be met?

Mr. Manness: The short answer to the question is no. I cannot be assured that the needs of everybody will be met. That is one of the dilemmas of being in government today: everybody's needs cannot be met. Once a white paper is put out or a draft policy is put out, certainly those people will have an opportunity to respond and to react. I am sure that if they are not satisfied, the first person they will let know is my honourable friend.

Workforce 2000 Canadian Computer Era

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education and it concerns the abuse of taxpayers' dollars.

On February 2 and February 21 of this year Canadian Computer Era was given two grants

under Workforce 2000 totalling nearly \$8,000. This company went into bankruptcy February 24, only three days after the second grant was approved. The bankruptcy sale was held on Saturday, March 26. The office is now vacant but the grant still runs until next Friday.

Could the minister tell this House what type of training is being paid for at this location? Given that it is an empty office, where is the training going on?

* (1410)

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I think he has got me. I honestly cannot answer the question in detail. I will certainly attempt to apprise myself of the detail around this particular case.

Given the fact that the program has reached out to 60,000 people over the course of three years, no doubt there are a couple of anomalies such as the member has mentioned. I will attempt to provide more information with respect to the details he brings before the House.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is to the same minister.

Since this business does not currently exist, what efforts is he going to put into recovering these tax dollars from the bankruptcy trustee?

Mr. Manness: Given that there is any validity whatsoever to the member's comments or detail he brings, Mr. Speaker, we will do whatever we can to recover funds if indeed they have been improperly appropriated.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Speaker, the minister is sitting around while this bankruptcy is being settled. People with claims are making their claims, and the minister should be doing something to protect the taxpayers' money.

Mr. Speaker: Question, please.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary to the same minister is: Will this minister release the name of the trainer in this case and also a copy of the contract?

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Speaker, this is obviously a serious issue, but I would think that the

member, armed with that information, would have given me a call so we could have saved whatever money that it was that he has been able to think has been wasted and, more so, so I could have given him some of the responses to the question he seeks.

Mr. Speaker, it is easy to showboat in this House, but it takes a lot of courage to phone a minister and give him the detail before the sitting of this House so that the questions could be answered. I know how the member plays his politics. If he had chosen to give me a phone call this morning, I am sure I could have answered his question today.

Railway Industry Hopper Car Shortage

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, the recent announcement that the railways are short at least a thousand grain hopper cars to meet producer-shipper demands creates unnecessary delays for the farmers of this province. The railways are now using Churchill grain boxcars and open-top hopper cars to move grain to export position at Thunder Bay. CN Transcona shops has the skilled employees, the workforce to build thousands of rail cars to supply the need.

My question is for the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

Has the minister met with his federal counterparts or communicated with his federal counterparts in an effort to bring much needed railway work to this province, to the Transcona shops, and at the same time help solve the hopper car shortage for producers?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, there is no question that the movement of grain east and west and south has been a problem, because the railroads have run into a lot of difficulty over the past number of months, going way back to the floods in the United States which caused the barges to stop running. Then they had to use rail cars. Therefore, when the railways went looking in the fall for leased cars, they were tied up in the United States. Also because of the flood, the loss of corn, a lot of feed grain was sold way down into

the southern states to feedlots, good markets for our farmers.

I have talked with both railroads and they confirm to me that they have leased every car that they could get their hands on. They have both added about three thousand, either now or coming, every car they get their hands on. They have put the CN buffalo cars, we might call them the Hudson Bay line cars, into service. They have used the open boxcars, which is trying to maximize the ability to move grain in a period of time that the movement is very tight.

They have also told me that if everything works well over the next three months, they will catch up in terms of the volume that has been sold and that they must ship to the East and West Coasts.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, to prevent this from happening again, I think that is why we should build the cars. Manitoba has the capability of doing that.

Will the Minister of Transportation meet with CN and insist that the company stop the pending layoffs that are due to happen this year, and the employee reductions, Mr. Speaker, and instead deploy these people in the construction of the required new cars and at the same time make sure that the Churchill boxcar fleet is available for use for Churchill this coming shipping season?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, very clearly, the railways are going through the same difficulties everybody is in society: trying to get their costs down so they can compete. The railways are making decisions, some of which will not be popular, but I can also tell him that the railways have been meeting with the industry trying to plan for the crop of 1994, be better positioned in the fall of '94 to meet the circumstances that might evolve.

I give them all credit for meeting, trying to have the right number of cars in place, look at what they need in terms of new cars to be built or how they can maximize their fleet to move the grain to the markets that will exist either east, west or south or north in 1994.

I will be meeting with CN. We will be proposing that the Churchill line be maximized in terms of its

use this year in terms of moving grain. The issue, to build cars or to lease them, is a decision that the railways will make.

Education System Northern Manitoba

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness). The impact of the government's cuts in education are having a very significant impact in northern Manitoba. Post-secondary programs such as New Careers have been cut, and the school district in Mystery Lake has been faced with major cuts that are going to close French immersion at Deerwood School and are going to lead to the elimination of many programs such as the talented and gifted program. At the same time this government is increasing funds to private schools by 8 percent.

I would like to ask the minister if he will consult with northerners who are extremely concerned about the impact of these cuts, and whether he will review his educational priorities, given the fact that those cuts are now leading to significant reductions in terms of the kind of quality of educational programs we are facing in northern Manitoba?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in response to several questions over the last few days with respect to funding, some of the divisions that feel they have been impacted negatively this year were the same divisions that did quite well, were above the average for the first two years of that formula and from whom we heard nothing.

I find it curious that those divisions that are below the average increase, or in this case below the average, tend to knock on my door and ask for more revision of the formula when they are below the average and, of course, say nothing when they are above the average. The average, by definition, is half the divisions below and half the divisions above.

I have met with most of the divisions across the province. I have tried to explain to them how it is that through reassessment there has been some

greater impact. Certainly the member knows full well that the reassessment impact in Mystery Lake School Division has caused a much greater share of the deemed wealth of the province to exist in that school division as compared to others. That is why that division has suffered this year. The wealth of the province is more now centralized in that school division than used to be the case.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE (Fifth Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: On the adjourned debate, the fifth day of debate, on the proposed motion of the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) for an address to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor 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, and the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the Second Opposition (Mr. Edwards) in a further amendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism who has 17 minutes remaining.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): I indicated yesterday that I plan to complete my remarks on more of a positive note, but before I do, Mr. Speaker, I think for some members who may not have been here last evening and probably more importantly is the fact that after having just visited Brandon over the last few hours last evening at a very successful rural development forum, and a very positive kickoff this morning by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the people of western and southwestern Manitoba. Many individuals came forward with a concern: the recent actions of the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) and the manner in which he has conducted himself as it relates to the affairs and the decisions and the actions that are being carried out at the McKenzie seed company.

* (1420)

Mr. Speaker, I would therefore just like to capsule my comments and again refer to the editorial, which I think was extremely accurate, on Tuesday, April 12, where it is indicated the member for Brandon East has in fact crossed the line as it relates to his comments.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): How about the one that said you should call an election?

Mr. Downey: The member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) is talking something about an election. The member, I am sure, when it comes, will be fully notified and the Premier has the responsibility of doing that. We all look forward to that time when the people of Manitoba will in fact pass judgment as to what we have done in the past but also what we have to do in the future.

I just want to recapitulate that I believe it is incumbent upon the member for Brandon East to apologize to the president and general manager of McKenzie Seeds for the inaccurate information which he has put on the record, for the fact that he did not carefully read the terms and conditions which have been laid out before anything would take place, and in the broader context, apologize to the greater community of Brandon for being so negative as a place to do business, that he has in fact badmouthed Brandon as a place to do business, not only for McKenzie Seeds—he is suggesting it should be moved to Toronto, to Ontario—he has badmouthed it as it relates to GWE and a place for call centres to be carried out. He has in fact badmouthed Brandon to the point at which the people out there are prepared for a public apology from him.

That is the comment that I am getting, Mr. Speaker. I would urge the member—[interjection] No, I am serious. This is not a few people. This is many people coming forward saying, is it any wonder we are having difficulty in some areas. He takes it lightly that the people of McKenzie Seeds in Brandon are not upset with him because of the comments that he has made, and as I said, again is reflected in the Brandon Sun editorial.

Mr. Speaker, again, I think it is incumbent upon the member for Brandon West to apologize—

[interjection] I am sorry, the member for Brandon East is getting so excited about this. He should apologize then for the money that McKenzie Seeds spent taking he and his wife on a Mexican safari several years ago, on a big Mexican trip. That is what he should apologize for. It is well documented that the McKenzie seed company entertained the member for Brandon East and his wife on a trip to Mexico.

Point of Order

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): My point of order, that the member for Arthur-Virden, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism has just stated a baldfaced lie, malicious, and an insult to my wife. I want him to withdraw those remarks.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, without the benefit of the green book of Beauchesne's, I believe the language used by the member for Brandon East is indeed unparliamentary. I would ask you to immediately request his withdrawal of that very offensive and unparliamentary language.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am dealing with this matter at this time.

On the honourable minister's point of order, indeed you did have a point of order because I was just going to deal with that at this point in time.

The honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), we will deal with your point of order, sir. You did not have a point of order when you rose. It was clearly a dispute over the facts. But in raising the point of order, you used unparliamentary language. I hate to use the words "the baldfaced lie." Indeed, those were the words of the honourable member for Brandon East, so I would ask the honourable member for Brandon East to withdraw said words.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, if I used unparliamentary language I would certainly withdraw it, but I would ask the member—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. We will stop there now. Let us get this right here. An unqualified withdrawal, right?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: It is an unqualified withdrawal. I appreciate that from the member for Brandon East. That has settled that.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Now I believe the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism still has some time allotted to him.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, I absolutely meant no offence to the spouse of the member for Brandon East. I meant no offence to the spouse of the member for Brandon East. What I referred to was a trip which the minister—[interjection] What the member for Brandon East participated in—[interjection] If it is inaccurate, I would ask the member to bring forward—[interjection] It is nothing personal as to which I referred to in this House as it relates to his spouse.

What I was referring to, Mr. Speaker—[interjection] I apologize, no offence to Mrs. Evans in any way, shape or form. What I was referring to was the fact that Mr. Evans, the member for Brandon East, had in fact done a trade trip with McKenzie Seeds to Mexico, of which I understand his wife was part of that mission, which is quite appropriate, and I just was putting that as a piece of information on the record. I certainly apologize. I apologize. No offence meant to the fact that Mrs. Evans was travelling. That is absolutely inappropriate for me to in any way do that. [interjection] I do not want to get into it. Go ahead. I have stated my case as it relates to McKenzie Seeds. I am merely stating a piece of history that has taken place.

Now back to my comments as it relates to the throne speech and the fact that—I still think it is appropriate, Mr. Speaker, I still think it is appropriate that the member for Brandon East apologized to Mr. Ray West, for Mr. Ray West and to the people of Brandon for the approach and for the attitude which he has taken towards Brandon,

not only as it relates to the McKenzie Seeds, six points of which they have indicated was absolutely essential before anything would happen there and not properly reflected as it relates to the situation as it is. I think it is incumbent upon the member for Brandon to apologize as it relates to that.

Mr. Speaker, let me talk a little bit about some of the positive things that have taken place over the past six years and what it has in fact done as it relates to the overall economy of the province of Manitoba. Let me—[interjection] I have apologized. The Leader of the opposition party, if any offence was taken I said it was just a matter of putting information on the record. It was in no way degrading or any way—it is information that was on the record in committee several years ago. It was. If members want to do their research, this is not the first time that was brought forward.

* (1430)

An Honourable Member: Are you suggesting we put more on the record?

Mr. Downey: No, I want to get on with the throne speech. This is not new—[interjection] No, Mr. Speaker, I did not attack anyone. Why would he want to talk back 25 years? The member for Flin Flon wants to remember that it was the member for Brandon East (Leonard Evans) that referred back, 1969, to Ray West being in his office trying to promote the sale of McKenzie Seeds, which was inaccurate. I am not going back 25 years at the start of this. It was the member for Brandon East.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just touch on some of the positive things that have happened over the past few weeks. This government, in its freezing of taxes on the people and the backs of Manitoba, this government in freezing of the taxes for the people of Manitoba have in fact caused some positive results to take place.

When one looks at the recent reports that have come out as it relates to the taxation statistics across Canada—this is regarding the Manitoba average family income after tax growth in 1992, and this is according to Statistics Canada—Manitoba had the highest growth at 7.4 percent of any province as it relates to the money that is left

after taxes. This I think augurs well for the kinds of policies that have been carried out by this government.

I will just elaborate a little bit more. Manitoba's average family income, after tax, in 1992 was \$41,168, up some 7.4 percent from an average of \$38,327 in 1991. This was the strongest increase of any province, more than four times the national increase of 1.8 percent for 1992.

That is the kind of thing that is happening in the province of Manitoba with the tax policies that the former Minister of Finance and the current Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) I hope and I encourage to do so on the 20th of April budget.

Mr. Speaker, those are the kinds of results that flow when you have the kinds of taxation policies that have been introduced and carried out by this administration.

Mr. Speaker, I know as well that the opposition parties, and I say this genuinely, of this province in the best of meaning are also wanting to encourage jobs and encourage economic activity. I would hope that we have full support—and I think it is important to point this out—from the opposition members as it relates to some of the infrastructure announcements that have been recently made. I am talking about the investment in some of the infrastructure.

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

I think it is important to acknowledge in this House the fact that the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) said that the rural gasification program was in fact visionary, compared it to the building of the aqueduct and the supply of water from Shoal Lake to Winnipeg. I think it is important to acknowledge when a member says that.

I hope the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) will stand, as well, in her place and acknowledge the support that this Premier and this government gave to the development of the gasification in rural Manitoba. [interjection] I said to the member for Flin Flon that it was seen as visionary.

I would hope the Liberal Leader (Mr. Edwards) and the Liberal Party would stand in their place and fully endorse and support the kinds of developments that have taken place with rural gasification and the infrastructure program, because what does that do, Madam Deputy Speaker? That gives those communities the tools to, yes, create immediate employment but to give them the opportunity for long-term jobs and job opportunities. That is what it is all about, and I am pleased to be a member of a government. I am pleased to sit with colleagues who have come forward with such a policy and supporting communities.

Again I would encourage the member for Swan River to speak in a positive way. [interjection] The member for Swan River I think would speak very positively of that situation.

Madam Deputy Speaker, those are the kinds of things that we would like to see further enhanced in the province.

Let me further say that we have several other initiatives that will be carried out. One of them is the regulatory review that is being chaired by the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister). We believe it is important to remove some of the regulations, the impediments to small business in doing business. Again we are doing a review of that activity.

I would like to also point out that we, with the private sector, are carrying out a capital review, how we can put a pool of capital in place. Again I would hope the Leader of the Liberal Party would support it. He said that was one of the conditions which he wanted to see brought forward. It is there. We are carrying it out. I look forward to further discussions and announcements as it relates to support for small business in the province of Manitoba, again crucial to the development of this province, again a major job creator.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to sit with a government that has introduced changes to the taxation policies that have removed the payroll tax off of 90 percent of the businesses in this province, a payroll tax which is again a direct deterrent, a

direct impediment to the employment of people, a commitment this government has made and in fact has moved on.

Madam Deputy Speaker, another key area that we have moved on and which you will see further growth in is the whole electronic highway community call centre business. Winnipeg and Manitoba, Brandon and many small communities are really enhancing their opportunities, and we are helping to enhance those opportunities with some of the things that have taken place.

What has happened? We have seen results. We have probably seen in the neighbourhood of 800 to 1,000 jobs as it relates to the call centre activity here in Winnipeg and in Brandon and a combination of both. This is an area where we believe Manitoba has a tremendous growth opportunity, and we will be working extremely hard to make sure that we accomplish some of the goals that have been set for us.

So we have seen not only in the call centre but in the aerospace industry—and I have to make a comment. I would hope, in view of the fact that the new federal government took the decision to cancel the EH-101 causing devastation to the aerospace industry in Manitoba, that they would try to recoup some of the activities in that field in the aerospace industry to build back some of the losses that were in fact encountered with the loss of those many jobs.

I would encourage the Liberal Party in this House to pick up the phone and to call their friends. I would as well encourage the Liberal Party not to allow the federal government, as was brought up in the Question Period, to stop the flow of grain in the United States.

* (1440)

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister's time has expired.

Mr. Downey: Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank you very much.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Does the honourable member for The Pas have leave to remain seated, due to having a cast on his foot, to deliver his response to the throne speech? [agreed]

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Once again, I am pleased to rise in this Chamber this afternoon. "Sitting down," I guess would be more appropriate. Madam Deputy Speaker, thank you for allowing me to sit down.

I am pleased once again to have the opportunity to offer some words as a reply to the throne speech. Before I do that, however, I wanted to do a couple of things. That is, I wanted to bring greetings from the people who comprise my riding, which is The Pas.

I bring greetings to this Assembly from the town of The Pas, the community of Wanless. I also bring greetings from those chiefs and councils and members of the First Nations at Opaskwayak Cree Nation.

Cree spoken.

[English]

I bring greetings from the mayors and councils and members of those communities of Moose Lake, Cross Lake, Norway House, Cormorant and Easterville, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I also want to bring greetings from those mayors and councillors and members of the LGDs in The Pas and Grand Rapids.

I also want to welcome all of the members back to the Legislature. It is nice to see the members again. I look forward to returning to the House myself after having been away for some seven to eight months.

I welcome the new members who were elected for the first time in the by-election in September: the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson), the member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg), the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh), the member for Osborne (Ms. McCormick), and the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), Madam Deputy Speaker.

I welcome those five new members to the Legislature. I wish them well and good health, and I hope that their experience in this Chamber will lead to their further growth and development. From being in the Legislature, I hope also that they will be able to represent their constituents to the

level that their constituents will want to be represented.

I offer my congratulations to those new members.

I also want to congratulate and welcome, at the same time, the young people who are going to be here with us, I understand until the end of the session, the Pages. I hope, as well, that your stay here will be pleasant and one that will contribute positively to your life in the future. I hope the experience that you have gained here will also add to your further growth and development, both in your personal life, in your studies, as well as in your working life. So congratulations and welcome to the Legislature.

I also want to welcome the interns who are going to be working with the three parties here in the Legislature for the coming months, Madam Deputy Speaker. I also hope that they, as well, will have a good experience while here in the Legislature.

Well, I have brought greetings and I have welcomed I think everyone back to the Legislature, and I wanted to welcome you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and also the Speaker to the Legislature.

During these past few days, I know, as the new members were getting up to ask their questions in the House for the first time, I could relate and perhaps knew what they were going through. I think no matter how much experience one might have in public speaking on the outside prior to coming to the Legislature, nevertheless, one has the nervousness, the butterflies when speaking for the first time in the Chamber. I know I went through that myself.

The place can be rather intimidating at first as it was to me when I first arrived here, but I also knew that the members were in good hands, Madam Deputy Speaker, with the Speaker as well as with yourself because I remember the kind manner by which I was treated when I came here for the first time not fully versed on the rules and regulations that govern the operation of the Chamber. I remember that quite vividly. Again,

congratulations to the new members for having done such a fine job as they were asking their questions for the first time in spite of the nervousness.

Madam Deputy Speaker, just leading to my presentation, the main message that I want to give to the Legislature here this afternoon is I want to quote from the Opasquia Times paper from The Pas, and it says here, northerners want nothing more than the same opportunities that other Manitobans already have. I want to repeat that, because that will be the theme that I am going to be using as I make my presentation. Northerners want nothing more than the same opportunities that other Manitobans already have.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) a while ago was asking the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) to apologize for comments that the Brandon East member allegedly made.

I believe it was yesterday, or it might have been earlier today, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Praznik) accused members from this side of being hypocrites. In both cases, when I look at the Minister of Northern Affairs and the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism being so self-righteous, the two ministers, from the comments they have made, one would get from that that they themselves never practise hypocrisy.

* (1450)

Madam Deputy Speaker, I beg to differ with that because sometime this week, yesterday or the day before, the Premier also was quoted in the paper for having admonished and blamed the northern MLAs for not having done their jobs allegedly when in reference to the infrastructure renewal program.

When I heard the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism this afternoon telling the member for Brandon East that he should apologize, the Premier and his cheerleader the Industry, Trade and Tourism minister perhaps I think more appropriately should be making the apologies to

people of northern Manitoba. They owe an apology at least to the northern MLAs. More importantly, the Premier and his cheerleader the Industry, Trade and Tourism minister I believe sincerely owe an apology to the mayor of the Town of The Pas and its council. I believe the First Minister and the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism also owe an apology to the reeve of the LGD of Consol in The Pas. They also should apologize to the mayor and council of Cormorant, the mayors and councils of the Northern Association of Community Councils. I really believe that is what the First Minister should do.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the First Minister and quite a few members from the government side really have no appreciation of the needs and aspirations of the people living in the North, because why on earth would they make such statements? After having received copies of those submissions for the infrastructure renewal program from the mayor of the Town of The Pas—he sent me a copy of his submission and told me that he had already submitted, in good time he thought, well ahead of time, in case other projects had gone in there ahead of his application. Actually they were quite proud of themselves for having submitted their proposal well ahead of time.

I also received a copy of a proposal from the mayor and council of Cormorant again telling me, here we are sending our proposal to the government just so that you are aware of what we are doing. That was fine. There was also a submission from the Local Government District of Consol in The Pas.

From those three submissions, I know for sure that the mayors and council, the leadership of northern Manitoba were in fact doing their jobs, contrary to what the Premier was quoted in the newspaper this week, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I also remember—and I think the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Praznik) has already verified this, clarified for the Legislature this week, yesterday or the day before—I also wrote to the Minister of Northern Affairs asking him how the NACC proposals were going to be dealt with.

As I was travelling around the North around January, I asked the mayors and councils of the community councils whether in fact they had prepared their proposals and submitted their proposals.

I came back to Winnipeg and upon my return here I wrote a letter to the minister again asking him, how are you going to deal with the communities that are Northern Affairs communities?

The minister wrote back and told me in his letter of March 8, 1994: Thank you for your letter of February 14, 1994, and the enclosed list of priorities from the community council—in this case he was referring to Cormorant community council. The department did make application for projects on behalf of the communities that met the following criteria within their funding capabilities: short- and long-term job creation, infrastructure modernization, enhancing long-term skills in workforce, enhancing environmental quality and sustainability, sound financing plans, distribution and program benefits.

The minister went on to say in his letter of March 8: The department submitted projects that the communities had identified through the budget process as a first intake.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the other understanding that I was given by the Minister of Northern Affairs was—I know how the process works because oftentimes when I visit with the mayors and councils of community councils it inevitably will lead to their relating to me their frustrations of the process. The way it works is the community councils are summoned sometimes to Thompson and sometimes to Winnipeg with the idea that their budgets are going to be looked at, including their capital projects.

So the mayors and councils come to these meetings every year with a list of their capital priorities and needs. Each year, the Minister of Northern Affairs or the Department of Northern Affairs sits down with these people and they go through the so-called prioritization of those project submissions. Also, Eric Kennedy the candidate in

the last by-election in Rupertsland, indicated to people that their total capital budget is something like \$3 million. So naturally, these community councils were looking forward to getting additional new money into their communities so that they could be dealing with the very kinds of projects that the program was calling for, that of infrastructure renewal.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I do not know if you are aware yourself but there are a lot of communities in the North that are without the basic necessities of life, for example, sewer and water. There is no running water. In most communities in northern Manitoba, there are no roads and highways to a lot of communities up north. So that is why the people from those communities were looking forward to getting additional help, assistance from the government in order that they could address those very serious issues.

Unfortunately, the Minister of Northern Affairs—according to what I have been able to assess myself this past week, it was he who failed to do his job. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) said that the northern MLAs did not do their job, that the mayors and councils did not do their job, it was up to them to do the developmental work, the submission and the lobbying.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, I wrote the Minister of Northern Affairs. I wrote to the federal government supporting what was being submitted for funding under that program. So I think if we were to put things into perspective here, the Premier, the Minister of Trade and Tourism and the Minister of Northern Affairs are the ones who owe an apology to those people living in northern Manitoba for the shabby treatment that they received from the government.

The Minister of Northern Affairs in his reply to questions yesterday said: "This department has always had a capital budget, a limited capital budget. The resources of the province are not overwhelming, as the member knows. We sort through with NACC, with our regional staff and we prioritize projects."

Then he says, Madam Deputy Speaker, that after the prioritization had taken place, the project was submitted, two applications were submitted from the department—two applications.

The minister knows well enough. He travelled the North not all that long ago, according to his words, to familiarize himself with the North and also to meet with people and finally to begin to get an idea of what issues northerners are facing.

* (1500)

So of course I was encouraged by the minister's visit, just like the people from northern Manitoba, hoping that from that visit the minister would get an appreciation of the needs and aspirations of northern people, and he would come back to Winnipeg thereafter and do his work. Unfortunately, Madam Deputy Speaker, that did not happen.

Unfortunately, it seems to me and to a lot of people from northern Manitoba that this government, including the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Praznik), does not really care what happens in the North. I am not afraid of saying that because I can substantiate it with data, facts, information. I need not go into a lot of examples. I will just give maybe one or two of them.

There was a swimming pool that was approved under the infrastructure renewal program here in southern Manitoba. Just to give perspective to what I am talking about and to substantiate the statement I make when I say that this government does not care for the people of northern Manitoba, that project alone, one project, the funding approval of it was more than the two projects—Leaf Rapids and The Pas were the only two northern communities who received funding under the infrastructure renewal program. The saddest part of it, Madam Deputy Speaker, is the swimming pool project funding was more than the total funding that was approved for the two northern projects.

I can say that anytime in this Chamber and outside. I can say that without fearing that somebody will come back and refute my statements otherwise or argue otherwise. I am not

afraid to say that because that is a sad fact of life for many northern Manitobans.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I also wanted to spend a little bit of time talking about this government's, the Filmon government's record as far as its dealings with northern Manitoba. This government believes in studies. Somehow they believe that the answer to a lot of these problems being experienced by the people in northern Manitoba is more studies, more commissions, more assessment, more reviews.

I was a chief for, well, nearly six years. I do not know how many studies and commissions and reviews I had to go through during my six years as chief. Like the aboriginal people, the people from northern Manitoba are tired of being studied. We do not have to be studied anymore. We know what needs to be done.

For example, the Minister of Northern Affairs knows well enough that the unemployment rate in The Pas is currently sitting at around 25-27 percent. Now, that is the town of The Pas itself. But as we go further into places like Moose Lake, Norway House and Cross Lake, the minister knows well enough, the First Minister and the government indeed know that the unemployment rate in those communities can go as high as 80-90 percent.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this government's approach, this government's response to those kinds of statistics is to do more studies. Well, there is nothing wrong with studies. There is nothing wrong in trying to find out what the problem is because, if we find out what the problem is, then we would have a good idea as to what to do in order to alleviate or correct the problem.

But the problem that we have in the North is, once the studies and commissions have been completed, the government takes no action. The government refuses to listen to the people of northern Manitoba when it comes to implementing recommendations that are contained in the many reports and studies that have been done so far.

The Northern Economic Development Commission—how long ago was that Northern

Economic Development Commission study finished? Well, I know how long ago it was. The report was released last August. Prior to that, in Estimates and in Question Period and in numerous correspondence with the Minister of Northern Affairs, I used to ask him, where is the Northern Economic Development Commission at?

He would get up in the House and very proudly say, you know, we are doing some good work. When I used to listen to him, one would think that the unemployment rate was around 4 percent, the way that he used to talk about the Northern Economic Development Commission and whatever he was doing as Minister of Northern Affairs.

But the sad fact of the matter is that report has been finished. Not surprisingly, the recommendations contained therein, there is nothing new. The recommendations are ideas that people in the North have been telling governments over and over and over again. The establishment of a northern university setting is nothing new. The establishment of training programs is nothing new.

The point I am trying to make here is, when is this government going to take action? We have a serious situation in the North.

You know, when people talk about the city of Winnipeg and how the welfare rolls are continually going up, I am not trying to belittle or demean or lessen the effects of what welfare is doing to people in the city of Winnipeg but, when you put things into context, those problems, as serious as they are, are nothing compared to the problems that are being experienced by the people in northern Manitoba. Take, for example, in the area of—so before I leave that, I would once again ask the Minister of Northern Affairs as to when we might expect action on the Northern Economic Development Commission?

That commission has been on the go for a long, long time. The Minister of Northern Affairs at the time, and during the campaign, spoke about it every day in the campaign: We are going to do this for the North. We are going to do that for the North. We are going to hold a commission. We are

going to find out exactly what the problems are, and then we are going to take action.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, that commission was not started until about a year ago, I guess now, a little over a year ago, almost towards the end of the term, knowing full well that the minister had roughly 18 months to finish the report, and then by that time, it would be time to have another election.

What saddens me about the North is that people are starting to lose hope. You know people are starting to get resigned to the fact that there is not a hell of a lot that can be expected from this government, and that is a very sad commentary. When I go visit the communities—I know the current Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) once told me, you know, he said, the member for The Pas is so depressing; no wonder his people are depressed. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is the government that is depressing people, and that is a fact.

* (1510)

The cuts that are being done right now in the area of health and in education, you know, you do not have to be a trained social worker or you do not have to have all of the education, you do not have to be a rocket scientist to be able to figure out that that lack of programs and services that have not been there for a while now are coming back to haunt this government and also the rest of the people of Manitoba because we are now experiencing the social costs of the lack of government policy.

In the area of health care, I have always been interested in finding out from this government as to how the so-called health care reform is impacting aboriginal communities. Every time that I ask questions from this government, I am told that Indians are a federal responsibility, so they have to go to the federal government with their problems.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there are some very serious impacts that this government's health reform is having on aboriginal communities right now as we are sitting here. The Swampy Cree

Tribal Council, for example, have been trying to work with this government for a long time now. On February 4, the Swampy Cree Tribal Council wrote a letter to the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) asking him to come back to the negotiations in order that the 1964 federal-provincial agreement might be worked on. Essentially the '64 agreement is an agreement between the federal and provincial government whereby, in the Metis and Indian reserves, health services are being provided by the provincial government, such as in the communities of Moose Lake, Grand Rapids, Shoal River and others.

The tribal council has, as I said, been working with this government to try and get out of that agreement so that health transfer can take place. The federal government is willing to transfer the program to aboriginal communities, but unfortunately, again, this government has refused to do anything, so the process is being held up. There is no transfer taking place because the Filmon government is not prepared to do anything in the area of transferring more responsibility and authority to the aboriginal communities, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The other thing that I wanted to mention briefly, Madam Deputy Speaker, is we all have heard that the federal Minister of Indian Affairs has announced that there was going to be a dismantling of the Department of Indian Affairs here in Winnipeg. I think this government here is going to have to get on board somehow, sometimes, because there are things happening all around this provincial government in the area of aboriginal self-government.

A lot of development is happening right now in the Indian community, and so far this government has refused to do anything, even in spite of the announcement that was made by the federal Minister of Indian Affairs a month or two months ago. It will develop to a situation where this government will find itself being an island amongst all this activity that is going on in the aboriginal community because of their refusal to participate in the evolution of aboriginal

self-government that is going on as we are sitting here today.

I would encourage the government, again, to get on board. You cannot continue to sit on the sidelines, because things are happening in the area of aboriginal self-government. I also wondered, before I leave health care, Madam Deputy Speaker, I travelled to Moose Lake not all that long ago, and again, while I was there, people were telling me about the condition of the road that goes from Atikameg Lake to Moose Lake. I think we all remember here, I believe it was last summer, when there were vehicle accidents happening on the Moose Lake road, and it became so serious that the RCMP in The Pas were advising people not to travel on the road because of the number of accidents that were occurring on the road at that time. So on the one hand, we are looking at a Highways and Transportation issue, but at the same time, we are looking at a health issue.

I was talking to women there on my last visit, and they were telling me stories of people becoming injured or people becoming ill, women who were pregnant and having to travel to The Pas to see the doctor, of the problems they were having travelling along that road. So it is not only a transportation issue, it has become a health issue, it has become a safety issue.

The Premier chooses to say that we are not doing our jobs as northern MLAs, and I know, Madam Deputy Speaker, that quite frequently, I get up in this House to ask the government to see what they could do for the people of Moose Lake. Unfortunately, no action has ever been taken by the government in that respect.

Madam Deputy Speaker, one community I visited, and this is what I mean when I say that this health reform also, whether this government likes it or not, does impact on aboriginal communities. They can say for as long as they want that it is a federal responsibility, but it is not. We are citizens of Manitoba. We are citizens of this country, and more importantly, we are people. We are human beings, just like the members of the government side are.

One experience I had in Pukatawagan, I would go into a nursing station, and I witnessed a maintenance worker, a maintenance person, the janitor, the guy who cleans the place up, fixes things as they need repairing, actually performing the X-ray duties of that nursing station. So I was curious, you know. I did not think that a janitor should be doing X-rays on people who come to the nursing station, so I started to ask questions. The answer that was given to me was they do not have anybody else, they do not have anything else. That is the only thing that they could do. The person was sent out for a two- or three-day training session outside, came back, and now he is the X-ray technician for the nursing station in Pukatawagan, Madam Deputy Speaker. That is not acceptable. It is totally unacceptable, as I said earlier, and I would hope that the Minister of Northern Affairs and the Premier and the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism take this to heart.

* (1520)

All we are saying, Madam Deputy Speaker, is we want to have hope. We want to be partners in this province. We want to be a part of this province, but more importantly, northerners want nothing more than the same opportunities that other Manitobans already have. Thank you very much for the time that you have given me.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): It is indeed a pleasure for me to rise and to respond to the throne speech that was introduced last week by our government, and first of all to commend you, Madam Deputy Speaker and Mr. Speaker for your return. I know with the close numbers on both sides of the House that the job and the challenge in the Chair is going to be one that whoever is sitting in that place will have to take very seriously and be alert and on top of things every minute of some of the long and hectic days that are spent in this Chamber. So I wish you well as we go through this session.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I also would like to say congratulations to the six young people that were chosen as Pages to look after our every need as we sit through the session. You know, in the eight years that I have sat in this Legislature it never

ceases to amaze me that every year as the new Pages are introduced they seem to look younger and younger. I can recall back to my very first session, and it is some eight years ago when my oldest child was only twelve years old, and now I look to my daughter who is in second year university taking education and she is indeed older today than the young people that are here. I know it is an exciting time for them, and they will be educated in some very different ways throughout the next several months as they serve us. So I wish them well.

I also would like to congratulate our five new members in the Legislature. The member for Osborne (Ms. McCormick) who is my critic from the Liberal Party, I look forward to positive dialogue with her and very positive recommendations as we go through discussions on the Department of Family Services. I know she has the background and a real sensitivity to the issues in the Department of Family Services, and I look forward to constructive dialogue and creative thinking around some of the new opportunity we have for change.

I would like to also welcome the new member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh), Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson), and my neighbour, the member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg). I also would like to comment that I hope to serve him well as his representative in the Legislature. I know that the member for Rossmere does live in my constituency, and I hope he enjoys the information and the facts that are sent out from time to time about the positive record of our government and the good things that are happening in the province of Manitoba as a result of six years of this Conservative administration.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I welcome all members back to the Chamber and say to all of those that have new responsibilities, I wish them well in their endeavours. Especially, I would like to single out the new Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mr. Gilleshammer) and indicate that I understand and knew that he was on the hot seat many times as the former Minister of Family

Services in this House. I was very pleased to see that he may be continuing that tradition, because he was one of the people to get one of the very first questions in this Legislature.

I was somewhat dismayed to think that the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship would take priority over the Department of Family Services with opposition members in this House, but anyway, as I said, I wish all well who will be serving the people of Manitoba throughout the next number of months and up until the next election in the province of Manitoba.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as Minister of Family Services, I feel that my department and the current initiatives that are ongoing within my department hold a very special extra significance this year as we celebrate the United Nations International Year of the Family. Throughout this year, Manitobans, Canadians and people right around the world are celebrating the family as the very basic building block of our society.

I also commend you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for the work that you have been doing as an ambassador for family year in the province of Manitoba and sharing with all members of this Legislature the very positive things that our Manitoba community is doing, the thousands and thousands of people that have become extremely excited about the volunteer commitment and the community commitment that they have to make International Year of the Family a very significant year for them in their lives and in their communities.

I know that as the year goes by, we are going to see communities, families coming together around the issue of holding the family up as the cornerstone of our communities and our society, so I thank you too for the work that you have been doing and sharing with all members of the Legislature the activities that are ongoing and giving them as much assistance as you possibly can to ensure that we as elected representatives are all responsive to the needs of our constituents and our communities.

Madam Deputy Speaker, because my department does provide social services for families, I am well aware of the fragility of the family unit and the extent to which warmth, caring and comfort are currently beyond the reach of some of the clients that my department serves. For their sake and for the sake of all of those who have come from a nurturing family life and family background, I encourage every Manitoban to continue the efforts to bring the International Year of the Family very much to life in this year, 1994.

At the same time, in the upcoming months of the new fiscal year my staff in the department and I will continue our efforts to provide responsive and caring social services throughout the province of Manitoba and to Manitobans.

My department is the third largest in the Manitoba government with a budget this past year of \$657 million and a staff of about 1,600. The programs and the services and the staff that we have extend and commit themselves to providing service throughout the entire province. If I can just explain, especially for those that are new in the Legislature, the kinds of programming that my department provides are in the areas of social assistance, child welfare, care and services and programming for those that are living with a mental disability, family conciliation, family dispute services and child care.

These services that are provided affect the lives of tens of thousands of Manitobans, and we estimate that during a year about 185,000 people receive financial help or social services from the department. These numbers continue to rise, unfortunately. In fact, the demand for services has grown tremendously over recent years, and it has caused our total budget in the department to grow by 47 percent in the past five years.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we have made a commitment to social services in this province, and we have year upon year spent more money to provide for the basic needs, the vital needs of those that are most in need in our province.

As you can appreciate, as all members of the House can appreciate, there are close links

between the current economic conditions in Canada and Manitoba on the one hand and the needs and numbers of our clients on the other.

With this in mind, our government remains committed to following our policies of fiscal responsibility and deficit reduction. As we strive to achieve our goal for a balanced budget, despite cuts to federal transfer payments and the negative impacts of a prolonged recession, the Department of Family Services will continue to meet the needs of Manitobans as our No. 1 priority.

* (1530)

I want to ask you to consider two things: (1) our government is working very hard to hold the line on spending while providing key services; and (2) keep in mind that two-thirds of our entire provincial budget goes to three departments: Health, Education and Training and Family Services.

It then becomes clearer, because when you take into account that two-thirds of the budget and another 10 percent or 11 percent to service the debt, we indeed only have about 24 percent of the entire budget to serve the other 15 departments within government.

We have seen over the last number of budgets that we have had to reduce services and streamline services in those other departments and tried at that time to maintain and enhance the spending in Health and Education and Family Services. Unless we try to find innovative new ways of delivering services and a less costly nature in those three departments of government, we are not going to have the services that we treasure so much on the social side of government there for our future and future generations.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is very important that we look at the services that we do provide and try to provide those services in the most efficient and effective way to meet the needs of the Manitobans who require the services that we provide.

We have to ensure that Manitobans are our No. 1 priority, and the challenge for us is going to be no

different from the challenge that is in any other province throughout the country.

It does not matter what political stripe, what party governs any province across the country. Every province and every government is facing the same dilemma and every government is going to have to make the difficult decisions and try to balance between how we provide the services that are needed with the fiscal reality. So there is no one answer, no easy solution, and I think all governments are struggling with the same problems. If we read the headlines in the newspapers from right across the country, we will know that NDP governments do not escape the criticism from those who most need the services, that reductions are being made and services are being cut.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the tough decisions have to be made today to ensure that we have programs available to Manitobans, to Canadians, into the future. I do not want to leave a legacy of poverty to future generations. There is a good side or a positive side that always comes along with negative, and that is that we have in Manitoba held the line on spending, and we have increased funding to the vital services and the three larger departments within government and maintained services, in many instances enhanced. We have had to redirect at times the money and change the focus of the way we are spending that money, but we have indeed set the climate here in Manitoba for future job creation and for future economic activity so that those who are most in need will have the opportunity to work and to contribute and pay taxes and ensure that the programs are here into the future.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I do not think government can take ownership over the issues. No problem within our Canadian society is government's problem alone. There needs to be partnership, co-operation. Manitobans need to be working together to ensure that we come to positive solutions with a concerted effort throughout the community, whether it be government in partnership with the private sector, in partnership with those who deliver the service or

in partnership with the volunteer community out there that has so much to offer and so many good suggestions.

I want to say to you, Madam Deputy Speaker, I have met with many, many people in the last six months, since I have become the Minister of Family Services, not only with the organizations, the agencies that we fund as a department, but with members of our Manitoba community, people within the community who have said: How can we help to be a part of the solution; we know there is no more money but, we also do know there are many services that need to be provided; tell us where the pressure points are, and we will attempt to assist you in trying to resolve the problems.

For me, that has been very heartwarming. I know there are people out there who are concerned for their fellow Manitobans who are more in need, and they want to help to make a difference. I hope we can develop those partnerships over the next short period of time so we actually can look at new and innovative and creative ways of doing things.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as the throne speech did indicate, we recognize that the social safety net, which the federal and provincial governments have developed over the years, is one of the most important and distinguishing features of our Canadian identity. We are determined to take steps to improve that safety net. I have stated many times that my No. 1 priority is to ensure that the men, women and children who need our services have access to them.

Now I am adding another message to that. It is our responsibility to ensure the services we provide are benefiting those who receive them. Despite radical social and demographic changes over the past few decades, we have not seen changes to our social programs. We are living in the '90s today. Many of the programs that we have put in place as governments over the last few decades have never been evaluated, have never been looked at to see whether programs that were identified and implemented in the 1970s still meet the needs of Manitoba's society today.

Madam Deputy Speaker, if we are going to look at trying to meet the needs into the future, we are going to have to evaluate those programs, ask ourselves, have they been successful? Are they meeting the needs today? Can we measure outcomes? If we cannot, we are going to have to get rid of those programs and refocus and redirect the resources that we were providing to those programs into new innovative ways of doing business in Manitoba. Doing business means serving the clients that we, as government, are here to serve.

Madam Deputy Speaker, many of the changes that have been made throughout the '70s and the '80s have been on an ad hoc basis, as there was more revenue to spend, and governments back in the '70s and the '80s were receiving increased revenue from increased taxes when the economy was booming. New programs were created, and then were just added on to the old programs. We are at a point in time where we know that the well is dry. There is no more money. It does not matter whether you are in NDP Ontario or NDP British Columbia, Liberal Quebec, Liberal New Brunswick, the well is dry. There are no more revenues coming in. If we want to try to serve the people that we have served in the past to the best of our ability, we are going to have to find new ways, more efficient and more effective ways, to deliver those services. I am committed to looking at that in the Department of Family Services as we go through the next year and into the future.

* (1540)

If I look at our social safety net today, I am not so sure that we have not put in place a system, and I have said this publicly before, that almost promotes welfare as a career option. I do not think that is an option that we want to promote for our children today and for our future generations. Along with having a job, contributing something back to the community, comes a greater sense of self-esteem and a greater quality of life, something that all Manitobans do have a right to.

We talked about pilot projects in the throne speech that would take us into the future and look at new ways of doing things. I have made my

personal commitment, and I know it is our government's commitment, to the process of renewal of our social safety net, renewal of our welfare system.

One of the first projects that we talked about will focus on single mothers. Single moms are a growing sector of our population who need our attention, our caring and our support. If we go back to the 1970s, 90 percent of our single, adolescent mothers gave their children up for adoption. Today 90 percent of single moms keep their babies. We have a very definite shift. We have had a shift over the last two decades in our society, and yet we have not adapted our programs to meet the new and emerging needs today.

There are about 12,000 single moms, Madam Deputy Speaker, in Manitoba who are currently on welfare. Almost all single moms between the ages of 18 and 20 are on welfare, and 63 percent of them do not have a high school education. Their chances of finding a job are highly unlikely, and welfare seems to be their only option. I think we need to give them more options and we can do this by providing enhanced education, training and work experience opportunities, and child care will be a factor.

I have indicated in this House, and I will continue to indicate that we have nothing to be ashamed of on our record for child care in the province of Manitoba. We have seen increased financial resources of \$20 million in the child care line since we came to office in 1988. We have some of the highest standards in North America for our child care workers. We have more licensed spaces, some 3,000 more licensed spaces in our province since 1988, from 16,000 up to over 19,000 spaces today. The total number of subsidized spaces in our child care system in 1988 was 4,200, and today we are up to 9,600. That has been a major increase, over doubling of the number of subsidized spaces than a—[interjection]

Well, I hear the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) saying we have decreased. Tell me how an increase from 4,200 spaces to 9,600 spaces in our child care system is a decrease. Somehow it escapes me, Madam Deputy Speaker, her

rationale, her understanding of talking about 4,200 to 9,600—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): I wonder if the minister could tell us how many cases there were before the reduction to 9,600—

Madam Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Burrows does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Deputy Speaker, I would almost fear having members opposite sit around a table determining a budget when they somehow calculate 9,600 over 4,200 a decrease. I have difficulty understanding, and I really do fear for Manitobans should people opposite be sitting around a government table and developing a budget when their mathematics certainly leaves something to be desired.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there was a reference in the throne speech to a forum on Partnership to Independence that would be looking at bringing partners around the table to try to determine how we might deal with the issue of getting people off social assistance and into the workforce.

I am looking forward to that process where we will be bringing the private sector in and asking them where they feel the job opportunities will be into the future, what are the stumbling blocks, what are the disincentives within the system now that do not really allow the private sector to hire welfare recipients into their workforce and how can we partner together to see whether we cannot accomplish changing things.

The private sector is not the only group of people in Manitoba that we are going to consult with. We are presently in the process of consulting with clients that use the system, young single moms, asking them what they feel the problems are, where have they experienced the roadblocks, and how can we try to provide a better opportunity for them to train and to fit into the workforce. We are also going to be talking to those who are on the

front lines delivering the service to the clients within my department and asking them what their experiences have been, what is working out there in the system, what is not working and how can we try to change what is not working so that there is an easier move from welfare to jobs and independence.

Madam Deputy Speaker, a very important component of the whole consultation process is going to be dealing with the community at large out there and the volunteer community. I have had meetings with church groups and organizations that want to be a part of the solution. I have talked to service clubs who have said that there are some really good things happening out there right now. In a very small way, and sometimes in a very isolated way, they are doing really good things.

So I am saying, what are the things that you are doing? Are they working? Can we expand on something that is already there, and do you want to make a volunteer commitment to try to help make a difference? Many of them have said to me we want to be there. We want to be a part of the solution. I am no longer going to leave them isolated out there just doing their things, but let us get an inventory of what is happening out there, what is going on. How can we enhance or build upon the things that are working really well, and how can we change the things that are not working?

Madam Deputy Speaker, I have every expectation that we are going to be able to make a difference, and we are going to be able to move in a meaningful way putting supports in place around those who most need those supports so that we can move people from a welfare system which I do not think is a choice for anyone. If they had an option or a choice to be a part of the workforce, to be a part of the community and to give something to the community, I do not think anyone in our Manitoba society would choose anything different. We are wanting to give those opportunities to all Manitobans.

I look forward and I am extremely excited that I will have the opportunity as the Minister of Family Services to have a positive impact on some of

those within our society that most need the help and that are most wanting to get on with life and onto feeling better about themselves because they do have more opportunity. Single moms are just one group of young people who are in need of intervention today to guide their way towards success in the future.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am really disturbed by the increasing numbers of children that are being taken into care in our province, and we are currently examining a variety of options that might be available to us to promote early intervention and improve response to families in our communities. We know that the first six years of a child's life are the most formative years, and we also do know too that children at that age need stimulation, they need development, they need opportunity. We have to focus some of our energies and some of our resources into early intervention, into early child development, because we all do know what happens once children get into the child welfare system. They go on into the justice system, and we are seeing instances of youth violence and crime at younger and younger ages. We have to reverse that cycle.

* (1550)

I think one of the ways to do that is to work within families, within communities and with children at a younger age so we can do some of the up-front preventative work so that we are not having to protect and try to put in place programs at the end when at times it seems like there will never be a positive solution to some of the problems that exist today. So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I am really looking forward to opportunity to change the way we deliver services, to put money in at the front end so we do not need it at the far end and, if at all possible, we want to try to keep people and children in their homes. But before we can say that we have accomplished something we have to ensure that their mental and physical and emotional needs are being protected. So there are two sides to this.

If we can keep families together, I think that is the preferable option, but we have to at the same time ensure that those children that are being

maintained and supported within families are protected. So there can be some extremely exciting things that can happen on the child welfare side of things, and I am looking forward to opportunities to implement new ideas, new ways of delivering service and new up-front intervention.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is important in delivering programs in my department that we try to keep all Manitobans in their homes, and we have worked in the past and will continue to work with the community to develop projects that encourage community living.

One example of that is the pilot project that has been implemented already, In The Company of Friends. It is a project that links Manitobans who are living with a mental disability to volunteers who provide support that enables people to become part of their community. These support networks are integral to success of community living initiatives, and I am firmly committed to ensuring that all Manitobans have every opportunity to enjoy a high quality of life as contributing members of their community. As I have said before, it takes the whole community—complete community effort. It takes volunteers and local organizations, church groups and service providers to ensure that that network of support and friends around individuals allows them to achieve their goals of independent living.

We will continue, Madam Deputy Speaker, to explore community living opportunities for Manitobans who are living with a mental disability. I look forward to working with Manitobans in their communities to develop and expand initiatives in this area. I have met with many people who have people that are aging and have stayed at home and provided support for a mentally disabled child for many, many years, and those children have become adults. They are getting older, and those parents are becoming quite elderly and having difficulty maintaining those grown children now in their own homes.

My heart goes out to those people, because I believe they have made a major commitment to our society and to their family. We have to find ways that we can deal with the issue of at least

providing some temporary support. I know it is an extreme worry for those that are aging about where the supports will be for that child turned adult once they are gone or not able to look after them. I have placed a high priority within my department on the area of dealing with persons with mental disabilities and providing support to their families.

Madam Deputy Speaker, many of the programs that we have in place in the Department of Family Services rely on the input and the suggestions of representatives from across the province, from all of the agencies that work with us and from community organizations, as I have said before, churches, volunteer groups, service clubs and individuals. Because of the commitment that we have from the Manitoba community and from Manitobans, I really believe that ours is a province of which I feel very proud in which to live and to raise my family.

I would choose nowhere else in this country, in this world to live. I believe that we have much to offer, and much of the strength within our province is our people and our families, our community, our community commitment.

As we celebrate International Year of the Family, I would like to invite every member of this Legislature to thank all Manitobans for their great sense of community spirit, for their dedication to family and for their ability to take on challenges and be rewarded with successes. As I said just a minute ago, I am extremely proud to be a Manitoban, I am extremely proud to serve the constituents of River East, and I look forward to the session ahead.

I find the Department of Family Services to be a challenge. Along with a challenge, comes always an opportunity. I look forward to the opportunity to working with Manitobans right throughout this province, to attempting to make lives just a little bit easier for some of those Manitobans. I think, if we can accomplish in some small way turning the tide and changing the way things are done in Manitoba, I will feel like we have accomplished and moved forward in the right direction.

So thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I look forward to working with all members of the Legislature through the upcoming session.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Deputy Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to add my comments to the record on this throne speech, but before I begin, I too would also like to recognize some people who are new to the House. I hope that the new members, the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh), the member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg), the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson), the member for Osborne (McCormick) and the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) enjoy their experience here in the House, and I look forward to working along with them.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would also like to welcome the new Pages to the Legislature and hope that they enjoy their experience here, find it rewarding and take back good memories from this building. I would also like to recognize the interns who have been working with each of the caucuses. They have been working here since last fall, and I am sure that they were anxiously waiting for the session to be called so they could have the opportunity to work and have the experience of working through us when the House is in session. I talked to a few of them, and they did indicate that in fact it was quite different than when we are not in session. They are enjoying the experience very much.

Also to the Clerk and the staff of the Chamber, I hope that we may look for your guidance and support, and we thank you for your patience while we are deliberating here in the Chamber. To you, Madam Deputy Speaker and Mr. Speaker, I commend you on your work and look forward to your guidance and control sometimes when things get a little bit out of hand here.

* (1600)

To all members who have been away from the Chamber for some time, I look forward to discussing and debating the many important issues that are facing the people, particularly in my case, the people of the Swan River constituency. In this,

the Year of the Family, I would like to recognize all families, but in particular, I would like to recognize the families of the members here in the Chamber. I think many times the people in the public, our constituents, do not realize that the families of people who serve in this Chamber have to make sacrifices when government members are away doing their business and when we are attending to our business here in Winnipeg. So I would like to recognize those members—
[interjection]

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Orchard) is commenting on a letter that is in the editor—and as I get on in my speech, I can assure him that I will comment on that letter as well. As long as he would just be a little bit patient, because this is the throne speech, and I would like to address some of the concerns in the throne speech first if I could. If he would allow me, I will get into that letter a little bit later on.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we have been waiting a long time for the throne speech to be presented, and we were hoping that this government would put forward some new ideas, some new initiatives that would give hope to the people of Manitoba, particularly rural Manitoba, something that would give people faith in this government, but unfortunately that has not happened. This throne speech appears to be just a repeat of promises and ideas that the government has been trying to regurgitate for the last six years but is not coming up with anything new.

There are a few areas of the throne speech that I would like to address, Madam Deputy Speaker. One of them is the infrastructure program, and although there are many concerns there is a part of the rural infrastructure program that I am very pleased about, and that in particular is the attempt being made to bring natural gas to areas in rural Manitoba. That is something that I have wanted to see for many years now. I have always felt that there are areas in rural Manitoba where we could have economic development if we had an alternate energy source. It looks like that is going to happen, and I am very pleased that the Swan River area is

one of the areas that is going to have the opportunity.

I have not had the opportunity to speak to many of the municipalities yet, but they are supposed to be getting a letter from Centra Gas and the government indicating what their share will be, and that is something that the municipalities will then have to decide on how they are going to raise that money. The next step is to have a canvass of the communities and see at what percentage rate the people will sign up. I know that a couple of years ago when I did a survey trying to encourage the government to move in the direction of bringing natural gas to our community, close to 96 percent of the people in the area said that they wanted natural gas. So I hope that the \$300 sign-up fee will not be a deterrent and that we will have enough people that will sign up and that we will have natural gas coming into the area.

However, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is going to be some time before that is able to happen because there are still negotiations that have to take place on how that gas is going to come in from Saskatchewan, if that is where it comes from. I think that this is a good announcement, and I commend the government on their work. I wish that it was going to more communities. Just as electricity was brought to all of rural Manitoba, I wish that natural gas were being brought, and this is one step. This is one step in that direction, and I hope that we will see equality brought to all of Manitoba.

We have to have the opportunity to diversify our economy, and there are people in Swan River who have done a tremendous amount of work in that area. We look forward to the opportunity to having another energy source so we can also diversify. Just as the people in southern Manitoba have all these services and all these opportunities, it is fair that the Swan River area should have it. I hope some day that northern Manitoba, that has been very badly neglected, the North, the NACC communities, and a good portion of my community and the reserves in my community and in the North—I hope that this government will have the initiative to consider those areas and

expand these services and bring equality to all Manitobans, not only with an alternate energy source but in other areas of health care, education, job opportunities, that the province does not end at No. 1 Highway, that there are people north of that area that would want the opportunity to grow.

Mr. Lathlin: Maybe we should have a minister of southern Manitoba.

Ms. Wowchuk: Yes, the member for The Pas says we should have a minister of southern Manitoba. I think we have quite a few of those ministers who look after southern Manitoba much better than they do after northern Manitoba.

With regard to the infrastructure program, I want to raise one more point, and it was raised by my colleague from The Pas here, who talked about the neglect of the NACC communities in the North with these projects.

In speaking to representatives, members of the NACC communities from my constituency, they told me that they had a meeting with the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Praznik), in fact, in Swan River. He told them there that their projects would be put on the list, that they did not have to worry about it, this would be handled for them. So it was with great disappointment to learn that the minister had only put two of these projects onto the list of projects to be accepted. I am sure that people in the Northern Affairs communities who had particular projects that they wanted raised or put onto the list will be quite disappointed.

The other area that I would like to address is the area of agriculture. In the throne speech, we are told that the ministers are going to work very closely with farm leaders to combat renewed agriculture trade harassments from south of the border and design needs adjustments to safety nets. But we talk about these harassments from across the border and I wonder why this government, these members were so anxious to sign the Free Trade Agreement and say that everything was going to be so good with the Free Trade Agreement and not think about it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, would you please ask the Minister of—I forget now, what is he?—this

minister who used to be the Minister of Health is getting very anxious about one of his colleagues, so if he could be patient, or he can call directly to Mr. McKenzie or he probably drafted the letter for him, as I understand it.

Anyway, the issue of agriculture is very important to this province, and I think that I am disappointed in what is happening, both by the federal government, by the federal Liberals, who have let us down. First of all, they let us down at GATT and now, bending with the free trade and the amount of grain we are going to be able to ship into the United States, is a very great disappointment. I am disappointed at the stand this government has taken on the transportation payment and the losses. We are going to have a tremendous loss to the economy in Manitoba, but the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) is talking about diversifying, but there is going to be loss to our economy.

He has talked about how we are going to subsidize or compensate for these losses, and I look forward to the details of that proposal from the government, because to lose that much money from the economy of rural Manitoba is a tremendous loss, and it is the small communities that are going to suffer. We need to have that growth in our rural communities. We cannot take that kind of loss and the loss of services to rural Manitoba.

*(1610)

Madam Deputy Speaker, as I look at this throne speech, there are many issues in here that we could address, but there is one issue and the minister of—I cannot remember of what he is the minister of but he is not the Minister of Health—is very anxious to have me address an issue that is very important to my constituency.

The proposed Louisiana Pacific project has caused the Conservatives some problems. I want to say that since the announcement was made I told the people of Swan River and I told the government that I finally welcomed the opportunity after six years of bungling by this

government. There was a deal when we were in government, Madam Deputy Speaker, the—

An Honourable Member: Then you will not have any trouble supporting this.

Ms. Wowchuk: No, I have no trouble supporting it, for the minister's information. I have said very clearly I have no trouble supporting this project.

Point of Order

Mr. Orchard: Madam Deputy Speaker, I wonder then if my honourable friend the member for Swan River also supports the press conference of Marianne Cerilli—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Energy and Mines does not have a point of order.

* * *

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, when we were in government, when the honourable member for Dauphin was the Minister of Natural Resources, and in fact the previous member for Swan River, Mr. Leonard Harapiak, recognized that we had a supply of aspen in the Swan River area that was aging and could be harvested. In fact, our government did a tremendous amount of work researching on the quantities of aspen that was there, and we realized that if a project could be established and if it was done right, the local people could benefit, and that was the direction we were going in.

I want to tell you that when we were doing this project, the Pennco project—the minister of whatever, I cannot remember what he is minister of now—we went out, or I was not there, but the ministers involved at the time went out and met with local people. There were meetings in Minitonas and there were meetings in other areas, and they told the loggers what they were planning to do. They promised the loggers in the area that they would be involved. Their wood supply would be protected. They would have jobs.

Mr. Speaker, studies were done, and there was the Wellwood study and other studies indicating

that there was a wood supply available. We were prepared to bring that project to Swan River, but this government took over and they killed the Pennco project, and they signed the Repap deal which took away and hurt the people of Swan River more than they can admit. [interjection] That is right. Now, this government is in the process of negotiating another deal, and the local loggers are very concerned because they were shortchanged by the government when they killed the Pennco deal, and they were wined and dined by this government and Repap and told that they would be looked after. They would not have to be worried, there was a wood supply for them.

I talked to the chief of the Indian Birch Band who said he was promised a wood supply under Repap. Nothing. They did not get any wood. The Shoal River Band has a sawmill, and they were promised wood. Nothing. The sawmill is not running because this government, Mr. Speaker, tied up all the wood in the Swan River area with the Repap deal.

Since I have been elected, I have been asking this government to recognize their mistake and change that cut area so we could have economic development in the Swan River area. Now, these people are asking me if I support the Louisiana Pacific project. Of course, I do. We want jobs for the Swan River area, but we want it done right, and we want the local people to be treated fairly. The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger) said today that he has talked to the people, and I have arranged meetings with him for the little loggers, but they do not have an answer and they are afraid that they are going to be treated the same way as they were in the Repap deal. You people should understand that you shortchanged them once and they are afraid of you this time. It is the same thing with the Minister responsible for Native Affairs (Mr. Praznik). He has not arranged one meeting with the bands to ensure them that they are going to be protected. [interjection]

You are the minister. You have the responsibility to take the initiative. Do you not have any responsibility to them? No. The Minister of Native Affairs says that the native people have

not taken any initiative. Well, Mr. Speaker, there is a letter, and I will bring it here tomorrow, from the Pine Creek Band to the government on this particular project. There is a letter from them, and the minister should show some leadership that he is going to show responsibility of protecting the people of the band.

So, Mr. Speaker, the minister is saying that there is no leadership. I will tell the minister that I was elected by the people of Swan River, and I will stand with the people of Swan River and make sure that their concerns are addressed, because this government is not addressing them. This government is not addressing the concerns. I have met with the people of Swan River and I have assured them—[interjection] We will see who represents them, because I do not think this government is representing the people of Swan River when they are not prepared to deal with the issues.

So there are concerns with this proposal. I have stated to the people of Swan River very clearly that I do support this project and I welcome the jobs to Swan River, but I want it done right. If this government was so sure of this project and that everything was okay with it and all of these issues would be addressed, they would meet with the people and they would address them. They would deal with the concerns of the local loggers, and they have not done it. There are people who have been trying to get a wood supply ever since the Repap deal was signed and this government is not addressing them.

We have people in the department that tell us that the wood is being saved for a big company. What about the people who are there? Those people built the valley and they have a right to continue to work. There are up to 18 small sawmills that employ up to 80 people. I welcome the Louisiana Pacific jobs to Swan River, but I do not want to see the jobs that are in the bush right now, some 80 jobs, put out of business.

The government tells us that there are millions of cubic metres of wood. There should be enough to ensure that the loggers continue to run their sawmills and that Louisiana Pacific can operate

their mill, if there is all this wood. That is all we want to know. We want guarantees from the government that we will not have people who are employed in the bush right now put out of business. You cannot do an exchange to put 80 people out of work in the forest now and get 100 jobs in the mill. It is not a game. We have to be sure that the other jobs are protected. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) says I am alone on this one. I can assure you that my party is standing with me on this one.

Mr. Speaker, this is a major project for the Swan River area and, for it to be done, it has to be done right, and we have to look at all the implications of this project. I have listed the local loggers and the local loggers concern has to be addressed. The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger) says he will address it. I hope that he will very soon because, as he knows, they have to know by the 1st of May so their forest management plans can be worked into the other plans of the area. I hope he will take that into consideration.

The concerns of aboriginal people also have to be addressed. In the throne speech, we have here a discussion of—I realize they have not said very much about aboriginal people, but they did say they were going to work on treaty land entitlement and traditional lands. This is an opportunity to show that they stand behind what they are saying. If you are going to do it, get out there and meet with these people and set aside the concerns they have so we can get on with this project. This government is not doing a very good job on this.

* (1620)

Mr. Speaker, there is another area of concern. The amount of wood that will be required for this mill is somewhere around 80 million cubic metres, and anybody that is familiar with the Swan River area knows that a good portion of this aspen is on the slope of the Duck and the Porcupine Mountains. If you will remember, we had a serious flood last year, and we want assurances that this wood is going to be harvested in a sustainable way. We do not want to see the wood cut so quickly that there is going to be flooding. Let us have the review. Let us have the review of the forest.

Let us have the forest management review so that we can have assurances that this wood is not going to be cut too quickly. Let us deal with that. The government, if they are so sure of their figures, would just come forward, do the review, deal with it and assure the people that there is a long-term wood supply there, that it will be harvested sustainably, and we will have jobs from this plant for the next 100 years, because, Mr. Speaker, that is what I hope will happen. I hope that all of these concerns can be addressed, and people have to have these questions answered and the government should not be afraid.

This government continues to talk about sustainable development in forestry, a co-operative federal-provincial management plan providing a comprehensive 20-year strategy in support of sustainable development in Manitoba forest resources. If you are going to put a sustainable plan together, do the assessment on the forest. That is what we are asking. Do an assessment of the plant and do an assessment of the forest. Do it together to assure the people that everything is going to be okay.

The other concern is: Are there going to be emissions from the plant that are going to pollute the air? I have talked to many people and done a lot of work on this, and I am quite confident that there is the equipment available that can control any pollution from the plant. Again, the environmental assessment on that plant has to be done, and this government has to put in regulations to ensure that the air supply is safe.

The Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) indicated that this company has promised us a state-of-the-art plant. He will put in regulations that will give us strong regulations, and the company can either live with those regulations or go. I agree with the minister on that. He has to put in the regulations that will control the pollution in the air to keep the environment safe for people who live in the area. That is the responsibility of the government, and I hope that they will put in very strong regulations.

I have a concern, and I have expressed this to the Minister of Environment, that he has decided to

split the review and review the plant separately and the forest later. I indicated clearly to him that we think that is a mistake. The greatest impacts are going to be on the forest, and he should review that to see that it is going to be harvested in a sustainable way and not impact on the livelihood of the people that live there. We would prefer that they would do a joint review. The government has decided otherwise. So be it. That is what it will be. I hope that there are not complications along the way because of it, because there have been other cases when there have been split reviews that there have been problems that have resulted, and it has gotten tied up in court.

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

We would prefer that the government do everything up front. The government for some reason seems to have gotten itself into a bind on this one with this June 15 deadline, and I am not sure how firm that deadline is or how the government ever allowed itself to get into a squeeze by the company, where the company is putting pressure on the government to push forward the environmental review to allow them to proceed so quickly. So I hope that the government has been firm in their negotiations and will negotiate and give the best deal for the people of Swan River. As I said, Mr. Acting Speaker, we have long been awaiting jobs for your area.

I sincerely regret that the government made such a mistake six years ago, when they killed the Pennco deal, because we could have been harvesting that wood for six years now, and we hear foresters saying that our wood supply, that aspen, is decaying faster than it is growing. Can you imagine the revenue we could have had for the area already, the growth we could have had in six years? The government made a very, very serious mistake in what they did by signing over that cut area to Repap and delaying development in the Swan River area.

So they made one mistake. They also made a mistake on Repap, because they promised Swan River people jobs, and those jobs never did materialize. So we hope that this time they will do

it right. We hope that they will ensure that we have good jobs, that the forest will be harvested sustainably and that these jobs will be long term, because, as I said, it is a new project, and people have lots of concerns.

The other thing that I feel very strongly about is, we have to have the environmental hearings in the Swan River area. It is the people in the Swan River area that are going to be impacted—

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Absolutely. You ask for it, it will happen. Take my word for that.

Ms. Wowchuk: Thank you very much, sir. I really appreciate it. The Minister of Agriculture has given me his word that he will talk to the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) and ensure that the hearings are held in the Swan River area, and I will take that message back to my community. Thank you very much for your support.

The other area that has to be addressed for this plant to proceed, Mr. Acting Speaker, is the whole railway, the Cowan subline. The Cowan subline was partly washed out during the flood last summer, which I had mentioned earlier, and the CN decided not to repair that line. Even though the line is protected till the year 2000, we could not convince CN to repair the line, and it has resulted in a change in service for people in the area as far as those people who ship pulp and to the people that ship grain. So we are hoping that with the help of this government, we can convince the federal government and CN that this line is important to the area because of the plant being built and that they will reinstate that line and have it repaired. It will be beneficial to everyone, and I hope that we will see that happen.

There is going to be a tremendous amount of product shipped out of this plant, I believe. They say as high as 15 cars of OSB will be produced a day. That should warrant enough traffic on the line to reopen it, then that would be providing service into the other areas which no longer have the service.

I think that in that we have to take into consideration that to ship on the Cowan subline

versus through the line in Saskatchewan is a lot cheaper for the farmers in the area. I hope the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) will take that into consideration and lobby to have that line reinstated as well.

I am sorry that the Minister of—I cannot remember, he used to be Minister of Health—Energy and Mines has left, because he raised an issue that has to be addressed. I am really, really disappointed in the Premier of our province. I have to say that I cannot believe that he would get involved in such petty politics as he did in a press release he put out when he said, the NDP opposes a job in Swan River.

I am really disappointed that the Premier would do such a thing because the Premier is saying that the NDP is opposed to the construction of the OSB plant. Nobody in the NDP caucus has ever said, we are opposed to this plant. In fact, we have lobbied very hard to get jobs to Swan River, and we welcome the project, we welcome it.

* (1630)

I have to tell you about a meeting I had in Swan River yesterday, and I want to go back a little bit farther. When the plant was being negotiated and the town council told me what was going on I said, is there anything that I can do to help with this? They said, no, we would prefer to keep the politics out of it and let us do it on our own. And I agreed to that. I did not get involved with the project at all, and I commended the people of Swan River for the work that they did on the project.

Then the Premier decided to take a slice off one of my colleagues, the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), because she booked a room in here for a group of people who had some concerns. The people in Swan River yesterday said, we do not want to make this political. Do not make this political. Well, who has made it the most political of all? It is the Premier.

Mr. Glen MacKenzie, who you are referring to in this letter, has agreed that he will ask the Premier to back off, because it is the Premier who is bringing more attention to this project than it needs. This is silliness on the part of the Premier.

He should never be putting such falsehoods into the record, because no one in the NDP said that they were against this project.

We said, we welcome the project. We recognize that this government is doing a terrible job at creating jobs, and we have to take what we can get, and these are jobs that we want for the Swan River area.

The other area that the Premier talks about is the PMU industry. Nobody in the NDP caucus has said that we are against the PMU. The Premier brought out these comments about the PMU industry again and implies that the NDP is against the PMU industry—again, a pile of garbage. That is what this Premier is putting on the record, garbage, because no one in the NDP has said we are against the PMU industry.

Issues have been raised on the environmental side of it whether there would be emissions from the plant in—and Ayerst. [interjection] No, we are not like Liberals, that is for sure.

So I think that this government should check their record and realize that we in the NDP are not against it—

An Honourable Member: What is your position on the PMU operations?

Ms. Wowchuk: The member for Osborne (Ms. McCormick) asked for my position. The PMU industry is very important to Manitoba. It will create a tremendous amount of jobs, and the NDP have said that those are good jobs.

An Honourable Member: You support this?

Ms. Wowchuk: Yes, we support the industry. Why would we not support the PMU industry? I can tell you that we have met with people in the PMU industry, and we have stated our position very clearly that we are not connected to the animal rights movement that is the group that is against the PMU industry.

I wish some of these people would put more accurate information on the record. They have tried to say that we are against the jobs in Swan River—false. We welcome the jobs to Swan River.

I hope the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger) will come through with his commitment and assure us that those loggers who are concerned right now about this project, concerned that they are going to be put out of business, concerned that their sawmills are going to be shut down—I hope very soon that he will be able to address that.

I hope you will encourage the Minister responsible for Native Affairs (Mr. Praznik) to meet with the bands, because the bands also have some serious concerns and want to know where they fit in with this deal. As you are dealing with the loggers since there is a wood supply concern here—the Minister of Natural Resources I am speaking to right now—I hope you will encourage the Minister responsible for Native Affairs to also address the concerns of Native people. These jobs can be good jobs, but they have to be done sustainably.

There is one other area that has been raised as a concern, Mr. Acting Speaker. There are areas in the Duck Mountain and the Porcupine mountain that are very fragile, very unique areas. I think about the Bell River Canyon, the Armit River and a few other areas—[interjection]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Order, please. Could I ask the honourable members wanting to carry on a conversation to do it in the loge or out in the halls.

Ms. Wowchuk: As I was saying, there are some very unique areas in the Duck Mountain and the Porcupine mountain, the Bell River and the Roaring River Canyon and those areas. Those areas have been brought to the attention of the Minister of Natural Resources before. We would hope, with the increased amount of logging that is going to go on in the area, that these areas can be designated as special areas. I have put in a private member's resolution and I hope that the minister and the government will support that resolution because those are very unique areas and they have to be protected.

In closing, Mr. Acting Speaker, I again want to reiterate that to set the record straight for those Conservative candidates who are getting so

excited because their nomination is set for June 15 and they are worried about my position, I want to assure them that I welcome the plant to Swan River. I hope that this government will do it right, that the concerns of local people and of the loggers and the aboriginal people are addressed. I wish the government was doing a full environmental review instead of a split review. I hope that does not cause problems, but they are the government of the day. They have chosen the split review. That is the way we are going to go.

I hope we are not causing problems—so you can get on the phone and tell your friends that you are so worried about that—yes, I do support the project coming to Swan River and I will be standing with the Swan River people and ensuring that this government addresses the concerns that have been raised and I will continue to stand with the people of Swan River. Thank you very much, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking you for the opportunity to address this House in relation to the throne speech.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the newly elected colleagues here in the House. I am looking forward to working with them as we strive towards success in the upcoming fifth session of the Legislature. My honourable friends, Gary Kowalski from The Maples; Gord Mackintosh from St. Johns; Norma McCormick, Osborne; Eric Robinson from Rupertsland and Harry Schellenberg from Rossmere, welcome to the Manitoba Legislature. I am sure that you will find that representing your constituency is the most rewarding and fulfilling experience that any Manitoban could wish for.

Mr. Acting Speaker, every year we spend endless hours here passing bills and debating legislation. I cannot imagine what it would be like if we did not have the services of our legislative Pages and I want to wish them a warm welcome also. To Anthony Augustine, to Karla Hinojosa, Joanne Jacyk, Jean LaFrance, Shannon Summerfield and Norman Young, I look forward to working with all of you in the present session. I

am sure that you will all find this to be a great learning experience, one that you will look back on for many years to come.

Mr. Acting Speaker, as I travel to the Legislature each day, I drive through my constituency and cannot help but feel proud of the accomplishments of our government. Over the past four years the western world has been hard hit through the pressures of the global downturn in the economy. Our government has managed to create a stable economic environment and in turn has left Manitoba in a position to go on to long-term job growth and wealth creation as we strive toward social economic prosperity.

Economic stability, fiscal responsibility, enhanced infrastructure, these are all key factors in luring private sector investment while enabling Manitobans to be able to be more competitive in an ever-expanding global market. Our government remains committed and will continue to stand behind small businesses in this province. So through successful initiatives, such as the Grow Bonds, the REDI program, the REA program, Vision Capital, we have all seen examples of successful ventures and the fulfillment of many dreams.

* (1640)

Having a government that rewards and recognizes successes is the greatest asset of any province.

An Honourable Member: How are the Grow Bonds coming?

Mr. Helwer: Grow Bonds are very good actually. I am glad you asked that question, because we have many Grow Bonds. We had a couple or three I guess in our constituency. They have all worked very well, and they are going very well. It is a very good program.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the Gimli constituency is a region of diverse industry and culture. My constituents do not measure a man or a woman by the size of his or her wallet. The Gimli constituents believe in the values of hard work and determination. My constituents do not ask for total equality through an enhanced welfare state. All

they ask for is the equality of opportunity, while letting their individual efforts and talents make the determination between success and failure.

None is more evident than in the life of our Manitoba farmers. Great improvements have been made to ensure that we do not erode the foundation of success on our Manitoba farms. The Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation has made some recent changes and advancements to expand the eligibility. Therefore, the MACC has shown a commitment to recognize successful farmers and ensure that the family farm will remain the cornerstone of rural Manitoba.

This government has taken the initiative to help and train and educate Manitoba farmers in order to increase their productivity and to enhance crop yields. So by offering programs such as the pesticide dealer program, the custom applicator programs, we are working to ensure that we continue to have the most advanced and efficient agribusinesses in Canada.

Mr. Acting Speaker, our government has always and always will listen to the Manitoba farmers. The extension of the GRIP program to help support the heart of rural Manitoba is a sterling example.

Remember recently the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) announced an interim payment of \$55 million that will be going out to farmers for the 1993-94 crop. This will also give our farmers the assurance that this government will continue to stand behind the farmers 100 percent.

Mr. Acting Speaker, our government has undertaken the initiative to reform the health care system in Manitoba to ensure that Manitobans continue to receive the best care in the world. In my constituency, we have noticed considerable advancement in medical services. For example, in Stonewall, just last year, the minister approved the funding of a \$9-million hospital. With the expanding population base in this community due to the urban sprawl, we can guarantee the residents of that community that they will have immediate access to some of the best medical services that technology has to offer. This new hospital will

provide jobs while taking the welfare of its residents into account.

Stonewall has also benefitted from an expansion of the Rosewood Lodge personal care home. Twenty additional beds will be constructed and will provide the residents of Stonewall the option of staying in their community with friends and family. Our rural senior population has also received support in my own community of Teulon, where 27 additional beds will be constructed at the Goodwin Lodge personal care home.

Mr. Acting Speaker, while our government has undertaken a complete review of the health care system to provide a more efficient department, we have expanded on the essential services deemed as being essential by the people of Manitoba. Senior citizens are the fastest growing population of the province, and it is imperative that seniors receive the continuing support of their elected government. I have worked hard to gain funding for some of the senior groups in our area, in Stonewall, Teulon, Stony Mountain, Gimli and Matlock.

Just recently, the community of Gimli, the New Horizon Club there had made a bid to host the 1996 MSOS games in Gimli. This would be a great event for the Interlake and for the community of Gimli to host, because it will attract some 1,500 seniors in the 55-plus games. These games are always very well attended by the seniors in Manitoba, and it would be great if we were given the opportunity to host the 1996 in Gimli. Senior citizens can rest assured that our government will help to make their golden years and their greatest years [interjection] No, I cannot join them yet. The member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) asked me if I could join them yet, but no, I am sorry, I do not fit in that category yet.

A glowing example of the community sport in my constituency and throughout the province is the Meals on Wheels program. Thanks to the concerted efforts of hundreds of volunteers, we are able to provide well-balanced meals to those who cannot provide for themselves, Mr. Acting Speaker. So I want to commend all Manitobans to

volunteer their time and their efforts to this very worthwhile project.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we are all aware that health care is the largest and, in many ways, the most important social program. Our government is committed to the need for a better organized system of community-based and institutional services. The overall health care system will be improved and improved in a way that will ensure services for our children and our grandchildren and a system that we can all afford in Manitoba.

Mr. Acting Speaker, in my view, education is the window of opportunity and the inherent right of every child in this province. Education is an investment in the future, and the future looks bright in my constituency.

Providing some funding through the Community Places Program, the South Interlake Library in Stonewall was able to build a new library. This will enhance our access to information that is essential in the learning process.

Recently a heritage grant was provided also for the restoration of the Gimli Elementary School, which was constructed in 1915. This is a great heritage building that we should preserve, and I am glad our government has seen fit to help this restoration program through the Minister of Culture and Heritage.

Interactive television was introduced in the Evergreen School Division last year. This is working very well and will enable our children to reach beyond the horizon to acquire the wealth of knowledge.

This is only the beginning, I am sure. Starting in April our Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) will begin holding a public forum to ask Manitobans what they want from their education system. He is consulting with the grassroots of the communities, the parents, the students, the teachers and the school boards. Our minister is consulting with all these groups to make the education standards better for the province and affordable. We govern with the belief that the public co-operation will enable us to make the best decisions when it comes to educating our children.

*(1650)

Mr. Acting Speaker, jobs and economic growth are this government's No. 1 priority. Long-term, secure and satisfying jobs are what we will provide. I stated earlier, economic stability, fiscal responsibility and enhanced infrastructure are essential factors in luring private sector investment while making Manitobans more competitive in the world market. This government has and will continue to do just that.

I think we have weathered the worst of the recessionary storm better than most provinces. We have proven to be fiscally responsible. We have managed to maintain and even increase the support of our essential services while reducing our debt load without realizing an increase in taxes.

Just recently the Dominion Bond Rating Service has stated that we are one of the two most fiscally responsible provinces in the country.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the storm is over possibly, and we are prepared to make great strides in the industry, trade and manufacturing sectors. This is more evident all the time. This has been an excellent year for investment in the Gimli constituency. The opposition is probably wondering, I will run through some of the accomplishments that our government has made and some of the fine individuals who have made a significant contribution to our community with the new infrastructure program.

We have taken the necessary steps to bring natural gas to some 23 communities in Manitoba. Just recently here in the Stonewall Argus, right on the front page they talk about the benefits of what natural gas can do to assist the communities such as Teulon to attract some new industries into the community and also to enhance the industries that we already have there. The one industry alone could probably gain as much as about \$80,000 a year by installing natural gas in their industry. So there is significant improvement. The Stonewall Argus is a good paper and provides a lot of good news.

We have also provided some \$270,000 to the Rural Municipality of St. Andrews for the

construction of a liquid waste disposal treatment centre facility at Petersfield. This is an area where it has a lot of tourists and a lot of campers, and this area has been growing recently very fast. By providing a new lagoon or a liquid waste disposal treatment centre this will certainly enhance and help that area a great deal.

Just recently through the sustainable development area we provided a grant to the Stony Mountain Area Round Table to study the economic feasibility of the abandoned Stony Mountain quarry. This quarry has lain vacant for many years and this group will do a feasibility study on what can be done to enhance, to improve the area where the quarrying was being done many years ago.

Well, tourism, and also there probably are some benefits that could be maybe provided to the community. Maybe a golf course in the quarry area or something of that nature would certainly enhance that community, and since it is in close proximity to Winnipeg probably there are many things that can be done with that quarry, so I look forward to the results of that study.

Oak Hammock—I will get to that in a little while.

We have also provided some funding for the Rural Municipality of St. Andrews in the area of the St. Andrews Airport. The St. Andrews council have decided to subdivide some area there and to develop an industrial park in close proximity to the St. Andrews Airport. This is because we have a number of industries already located there and there is a demand for property in that area for industries and companies that want to do some business with the airport and provide some small manufacturing firms some property and services in that area. We already have six interested companies that have shown interest in some properties there and I think we will see some development there in the not too distant future.

So when we talk about infrastructure assistance this is a good example of what can be done by working together with the federal government, the provincial government and the municipalities to

provide services for an industrial park such as this so that they can grow and expand, businesses can grow and expand and provide employment for our young people.

We have also, under the infrastructure program, allotted some funds to the Rural Municipality of Rockwood for a drainage program. During last year's heavy rainstorms and flooding we had a lot of problems, a lot of good farmland, a lot of crops were flooded. Therefore, there is a lot of drainage that has to be done—

An Honourable Member: But the ducks like water.

Mr. Helwer: Well, ducks like water, but this is an area that is good farmland and has to be drained to get the water off the farmland so that farmers can survive also.

Also, the Rural Municipality of Rockwood is going to have a road building program. They have also been awarded some grant under the infrastructure program for some paving and some work in the south end of the municipality. This is in an area of the municipality that is growing fast. There have been a great number of building permits in the past, and it is really developing quite fast as a rural area for people wanting to build large homes on five acres and things of that nature because of its close proximity to Winnipeg. We have a good highway on No. 7 already, but some of the crossroads have to be improved, and I am glad to see the rural municipality is going to do this.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we have also provided some infrastructure money to the Village of Teulon for the extension of waste water sewer lines. This will help that community grow and expand and open up some new areas to development also. This is another great project that we are really pleased to see.

Also we will have a fairly aggressive highway project in our constituency. Because of last year's rain and wet weather and poor road building conditions, some of the work could not get done last year. We hope that the contractors this year will be able to complete their projects on Highway No. 8 and No. 9. This will certainly help the areas

of Gimli and Winnipeg Beach and areas north on Highway 8, to Hecla Island and that area. That highway, certainly we have been waiting a long time for work on that highway, and getting that one upgraded will certainly help the tourist areas in that area of the province.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the groundwork is set, and we are already realizing immediate feedback from small business in our area. When businesses speak, they speak in terms of investment and jobs, and as a result of our initiative, businesses are doing just that.

* (1700)

Mr. Acting Speaker, our government is committed to rural Manitoba and securing a strong future for our children. The Rural Economic Development Initiative, REDI, is another program that has proven to be very successful in my constituency, and the program has created a channel to portion lottery funds revenue into rural Manitoba to encourage and support economic development. These funds are available, of course, to local governments as well as regional economic organizations.

Also, through the Rural Entrepreneurial Assistance Program, REA, the provincial government can provide loan guarantees to small businesses for small and home-based businesses in rural Manitoba. The sale of Grow Bonds has proved to be an instrument to economic growth in rural Manitoba.

The former government tried to buy jobs whereas we are assisting the private sector in providing long-term, sustainable jobs, jobs that are not dependent on the contributions of Manitoba taxpayers. So far in Manitoba there have been 10 Grow Bonds projects that have been issued to date, totalling some \$3.4 million and generating some \$125 million in total investment, as well as creating more than 225 jobs in rural Manitoba. This only proves that Manitobans will support rural ideas.

As an example, in Stonewall, the Quantum Electro Dynamics has begun operations due in part

to a REDI grant there of \$9,286 of development support.

We have attracted a company that can provide sustainable jobs and have a positive impact on our local community. As the result of some \$196,000 investment, Black Cat Blades has opened up just north of Selkirk and is manufacturing construction blades and equipment. Black Cat Blades started with providing 25 jobs, and since that time, they have exceeded their expectations and will provide more jobs. This type of industry also fits in well with another industry that is doing very well in the Selkirk area, in the Rural Municipality of St. Andrews, the Manitoba Rolling Mills.

This type of industry, with the Black Cat Blades, falls in line with—they will be getting their steel from the Manitoba Rolling Mills to make a completed project of grader blades and blades for front-end loaders, for buckets and things of that nature. That not only provides direct jobs through the manufacturing process, but it also provides secondary jobs through the steel mills, at the Manitoba Rolling Mills. These are excellent industries and excellent companies to come in to provide jobs for Manitobans.

Sterling Press is another new company in Selkirk and is another excellent example of how Grow Bonds can be diverted to lure investment within a region. Through a total investment there of some \$430,000 on the part of Sterling Press, they will produce retail packaging boxes and provide some 18 new jobs in the area. They are also doing very well, and they will be looking at expanding in the near future also.

Mr. Acting Speaker, this is how you create jobs. You do not go out and buy them with public funds, like my friends in the opposition wanted to do. You create long-term sustainable jobs by working closely with small business to ensure that they have the economic base required to be successful. My constituency is living proof that this government and business can work together for the betterment of tomorrow and for the providing of jobs for our young people.

Mr. Acting Speaker, economic growth and change is evident in my constituency and in Stonewall and the surrounding area. They have realized some 154 new building permits being issued for construction of new homes. I must say that I did not take the government to spend millions of dollars to realize the benefits of this proportion. All that was required was for the government to provide a low crime rate, a low tax rate and the facilities required to carry on a productive life. This throne speech addresses all those factors that we look to for the same to happen throughout the province.

Last year the town of Stonewall was the fastest growing community in Manitoba. I am sure this year the town of Stonewall will achieve that again, but the area around Stonewall and the south end of Rockwood is an excellent area for expansion in rural residential areas and there are many new homes being built.

Also this afternoon, at lunchtime today I had the pleasure of officiating at the opening of a new and enhanced, expanded Gimli Credit Union. They had a building expansion program and also remodelled their facilities there in Gimli. This credit union is an example of what can be done. They have tripled their business in the last 10 years, and they continue to grow and expand their business and provide the community of Gimli with the financial services that are required there.

Mr. Acting Speaker, as we head toward the 21st Century, the environment is on the minds of all of us. This throne speech shows that our government cares about the environment and will continue to work toward its preservation. Our government is planning a 20-year strategy in support of the sustainable development of Manitoba's forest resources. We will ensure that environment will remain a priority of this government. In my constituency, we have noticed great enhancements in the restoration and preservation of our wetlands as well as increasing awareness of our environmental education of our children and the general public.

In my constituency alone we have three round tables, in Stonewall, Gimli and in Stony Mountain.

All these round tables have been working very hard and have provided a report for the community whereby they identify the things that are required, the facilities, the improvements that have to be made to the community to enhance the sustainable growth of the community. These round tables have been a great benefit to these three communities, and I would hope that more of the communities in my constituency would take advantage of the round tables and use them.

The Oak Hammock Marsh conservation area opened last year to the public, and my friend the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), the former Minister of Natural Resources, was there for the opening. This is a great facility, located just north of Winnipeg here. I cannot think of a better place to have our children educated as to the concerns of our marshlands. I am sure that the conservation centre will realize the success of our other centres, such as Fort Whyte Centre, as well as playing an educational role. Oak Hammock will conduct research in regard to the preservation of our marshlands.

An Honourable Member: There are millions.

Mr. Helwer: Yes, there are millions of ducks and geese in the area, even though the ice has not gone off all the marshlands yet. There is still ice there, but there are lots of geese and ducks. They are finding enough water and food. It is great to have them back.

In the Stonewall Argus this week, they talk about a new birdhouse that has been developed in the marsh there, and this is enhancing the ducks and the geese to the nesting grounds, one of the best areas, I think, in Canada really or North America for nesting of geese and ducks. It is a great asset to our community and to Manitoba.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we are not only in support of the construction of this facility, but we also continue to support the ongoing projects there. As an example, we have provided assistance for the Manitoba purple strife project. This project, and many others there, will provide the valuable information for the betterment of future generations.

While I am on the topic of Oak Hammock, last year, they celebrated their first waterfowl festival in May. This year they will be celebrating their second annual waterfowl festival. This attracts people from far and wide, and a lot of visitors come to visit the Oak Hammock area during this waterfowl festival and the Stonewall area and the Quarry Park area of Stonewall. These are great tourist attractions. People come from far and wide, from the U.S. and other provinces, to take part in the waterfowl festival. I want to wish them well, and I hope they have a successful second waterfowl festival in mid-May this year.

Mr. Acting Speaker, my constituency is no longer one that is solely dependent on the natural resources that we have to offer. In this, the year of the family, recreation facilities and entertaining events are important. Gimli and the surrounding area continues to grow as a recreation haven. International events, such as the World Boardsailing Championships, Sunfest, Sun Country, will bring a diverse range of people who enjoy the fine facilities that Gimli has to offer. Gimli has also proven to be a compliant community, as it hosted the regional winter games this past winter and is the annual host of the Icelandic Festival event every August long weekend.

As well as hosting these significant recreational events, Gimli will be hosting the Western Premiers' Conference in mid-May. These events will continue to give Gimli added exposure on a national perspective.

* (1710)

Through beach development, Winnipeg Beach is returning to be a favourite summer resort area for many Manitobans through grassroots community involvement and provincial guidance. Winnipeg Beach will once again prosper as it did in the early '40s. So the vitality and enthusiasm exuded in my community is always prevalent in the various festivals that we host.

Some of the festivals that we host are certainly deserving of mention. The Festival on the Red in Selkirk; the Winnipeg Beach Boardwalk Days; the

Rusalka annual Ukrainian festival; Teulon fair and rodeo; the Icelandic Festival also attracts a lot of visitors from many parts of Canada and the United States.

Also this year the Village of Teulon is celebrating their 75th anniversary of incorporation. They were incorporated in 1919, and I am really pleased to see that this community will be hosting a homecoming and many events in mid-July. I will be glad to take part in those events in the village of Teulon because, as the former mayor of that community, I am very proud to see that community grow and prosper, and I want to wish them well on their 75th anniversary.

So my constituency is second to none when it comes to community pride and spirit. Mr. Acting Speaker, unlike my friend the Leader of the Second Opposition there, we are not following the ideals of Adam Smith and his invisible hand theory. All he has to do is listen to any part of my speech and he will see that we are involved and we do care and are enacting constructive change.

I am very proud of the accomplishments of our Premier (Mr. Filmon) and our government. Since coming to office we have created a social climate that is in a great position to enhance economic growth into 1995 and into the year 2000. We have lowered the provincial debt load without increasing taxes, and this throne speech indicates that we are committed to helping Manitobans achieve their most important goals.

So thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker, for the opportunity to address the throne speech this afternoon.

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Acting Speaker, an historian in the 19th Century, James Robinson, once referred to the term "partisanship." He said that partisanship is our great curse. We too readily assume that everything has two sides and that it is our duty to be on one or the other.

I think there are some true words to that statement about partisanship and as we look over our democratic process and our political process over the last century, I think we are moving away from some of the partisanship. I hope that we are

actually. Although if the debate in this House earlier on today, after Question Period, is any indication of that, I do not think we have gone too far, and I would hope that. I was much pleased that at least the schools had left the Chamber while that debate resumed, but I do think we need to move away a bit from partisanship.

I was speaking to a group of seniors today in my constituency and I talked about how it was necessary, as an opposition party, to work towards the goal of ensuring that Manitobans have the best programs and services. I know that is the goal of the government, and I know that is the goal of the official opposition. We are all here for the same purpose, although we oftentimes go about it in different ways. So I was very pleased when the seniors mentioned to me that they were pleased that when I talked about the government's reform plan, the initial document, that I said we had supported that here in the Legislature.

I actually got some comments from the seniors saying, it is nice to see a common-sense approach, where in fact although you are opposition, to stand up and attack the government and continually criticize, what does that really accomplish in the end? Does that really make a service better for a Manitoban here in this province? I would suggest it does not. If we can work together, if we can work on ideas and come forth with sometimes compromises or better solutions, I think the people of Manitoba are much better served.

Now, Mr. Acting Speaker, there is no question that partisanship is part of politics. We have a three-party system in this province, and there is no question that as we stand in the Legislature and we debate our ideas, that there is a clash oftentimes of ideas. There is a clash of philosophies. There is oftentimes a clash of who the constituents are that we represent, but I still say that we are here to work towards the same goal and that is for the betterment of all Manitobans.

I also believe that the nature of working in this House over the last number of years, and certainly over the last 20 and 30 years, that in fact it has changed to some extent and that we are starting to see more co-operation and more working together.

I think as an elected member, and in my case of Crescentwood, if I have a constituent who comes to me with an issue, if I can go and talk to that minister and solve that problem as opposed to standing up in the House and attacking, that is what I am here to do, to help that constituent out.

The nature of democracy in this country lends itself so that each of us are here to represent our own constituencies, and so if we can refer to democracy as really governing by discussion, then democracy only becomes effective sometimes if we can stop the people from talking.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

That is where the importance of the Speaker's role lies, and to you, Mr. Speaker, let me welcome you back into the Chair. With the dynamics being such as they are in this House, particularly after the result of the last by-elections, with some seat changes, your role is certainly a difficult one. It is an onerous one, but I have every faith that you will carry out your duties with the usual skill, definitely with grace and certainly with impartiality, as beholds your position, and which you carry out so well. I am looking very forward to working with you in this Chamber during this session.

Let me also congratulate Madam Deputy Speaker. Let me say again that as she assumes the Chair, her role is very much the same as an onerous one. As well, I am sure she will carry out her duties with skill and with impartiality.

I would also like to welcome the six new Pages to this House. I think to date, in the last few days, they have done a tremendous job. I hope they will look on this experience as a learning experience, and I hope it will continue to interest them in politics in this province. I thank them very much for their work to date and the work they still have to do.

*(1720)

I would also like to welcome the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly staff, the Chamber staff for all the work they have done and are about to do. Certainly oftentimes we do not recognize these people. We appreciate their support, their advice and their guidance.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the Hansard staff, who must sort out all the "abs" and the "ums" and the unusual phrases and probably, in many cases, incomprehensible sentences. I hope they smile when they read this as they are working late into the night.

Also, let me welcome all members back to the Chamber, but particularly, as speakers have before me, to welcome the new members to the House. I know that in all of the campaigns that were fought in the summer, they were well-fought campaigns. There were candidates from all parties who were of excellent calibre, and they all deserve credit. We certainly welcome to the House the MLAs for Osborne (Ms. McCormick) and The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), who I am very pleased have joined our caucus.

I oftentimes like to tease the member for The Maples, who of course, most of his career was that of a City of Winnipeg police officer. At that time, he always had a partner usually in the cruiser car. Little did he know that when he joined the Legislative Assembly and became a member, because of the shortage of space in this building, he would still have to have a partner. I think that as politicians we always have to be able to laugh at ourselves. Of course, the joke going around our caucus with the MLA from The Maples and the MLA for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) is that rather than our names on the door in the front, it should say "law and disorder."

Let me also welcome three new members of the official opposition caucus, the MLA for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson), the MLA for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) and the MLA for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg).

I am very pleased that all of our new members have had an opportunity to get up in Question Period and put their thoughts forward. I give them credit. I certainly know when I stood in the House for the first time it was a very overwhelming experience, shall we say, and I give them all credit for doing a good job and I am sure they will continue to do that as they represent their constituents in this House.

I think we should all remember as we go into this session that politics are always cyclical and what goes around comes around. I think it behooves us to treat each other with respect as we oftentimes clash ideas. We will have many, many discussions over the next many, many hours as we go into the spending Estimates and as we discuss the throne speech and the budget.

Before I refer to the throne speech, I would just like to thank the constituents of Crescentwood for their continued support of myself. It is a very vibrant community, that of Crescentwood, and certainly one of the main attractions physically of that community is Corydon Avenue. Again, once we have summer weather it is a vibrant community. I look forward to meeting with many constituents, and I thank them again for their support and for the concerns that they have raised with me and for the issues they continue to bring to my attention.

Philip Snowden, a Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1924, once said that it would probably be desirable if every government, when it came to power, should have its old speeches burned. There may be a good point to that, that the Exchequer talked about.

When we look at the throne speech that this government presented last week, I think perhaps they should have burned their old throne speeches so they could not have copied, in some cases verbatim, some of the ideas from those throne speeches so they had to actually be creative and come out with a few new ideas.

Now, there are some ideas in the throne speech and there are some things in the throne speech which we support. The first area that I would like to speak on is in the area of health care and health care reform. There is no question that when this government brought forward their health care reform document in 1992, we supported the principles that were represented in that document. It would be very, very difficult for anyone I believe in this province, except at that time the official opposition, to actually disagree with the principles that were outlined there. We had some hope that the government would be true to their document,

would actually start implementing the principles as they had outlined them.

One of those key principles was consultation. Consultation with consumers, consultation with health care professionals, be they nurses, be they occupational therapists, be they physicians. We had hoped the government would do that, but it became very apparent as we began meeting with these very professionals that in fact these people felt left out and that these people felt that they were not consulted.

We recognize that there were committees and groups in the St. Boniface Hospital, in the Health Sciences Centre who supposedly were working toward coming up with suggestions and solutions on how they could reform the health care system in their institution, how they could make it more efficient. Unfortunately, a lot of these staff, the comments that we were getting back felt that they really were not real participants in that process. Yes, they sat on committees, but there seemed to be a feeling that a lot of the ideas had already been predetermined and that they were really there to sort of rubber-stamp it.

We also had situations where a variety of staff who were involved in those committees would be sitting on the same committees with, let us say, their immediate supervisor, who might be a physician, and some of these staff felt intimidated about making suggestions that might affect their supervisor's job. So there were some problems with that process, and I am not quite sure how successful the projects at Health Sciences Centre and St. Boniface have been.

We also feel that the government at that time did not do as good a job as they could have in consulting with other organizations, be they the Manitoba Nurses' Union, Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses, other consumer groups. I would hope that with the new Minister of Health that at least we have some renewed hope that in fact there will be true consultation as we move along in health reform.

It is actually quite interesting to note that once the hospitals have come up with these

recommendations that in fact the worst thing that the hospitals and the actual staff in the hospitals think that could happen is that with the new minister we will have a complete stop in health reform. There are a lot of nurses and other professionals in the hospitals who want to see some of these changes and recommendations go ahead, and right now there is a standstill and there is a stall, and it is really causing a lot of low staff morale.

So contrary to what the NDP is saying, let us stop everything and let us halt, that is not what staff are saying in the hospitals. They want to see some of these changes occur. They want to see some of the reforms go ahead because they feel they want to know what their future is. Will they have a job at the hospital? Will their job change? So it is going to be very important that the minister take a stand and allow the hospitals to actually move ahead with some of these reforms, and some of the reforms and some of the suggested changes are good ones.

The other principle in the health care reform which is mentioned by this government was that we were going to see an expansion of community-based services. Now, I have always supported an expansion of community-based services in health care, and those services include things like an expansion of home care. What we have seen, however, is the government, and I am not sure if the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) is actually aware of this, what we have seen is actually a reining in of home care services, and to this very day we still have staff in the department who are telling their workers who are passing that on to the clients who are on home care and saying, we have to be careful how much service we provide to you because in fact dollars are a concern. So rather than looking at an individual situation and saying, this person needs a nurse once a week, this person needs some homemaking assistance, what the clients are saying, the individuals out in the community, they are saying, we are more concerned about dollars and how much money we are spending on individual people as opposed to really ensuring that someone gets the

right service, and that is the wrong way to go about it. It is unfortunate that the staff in the bureaucracy are feeling that they need to pass that message on and that they are letting the consumers out there know that budgets and dollars are the bottom line as opposed to service.

So I would hope that the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) would take note of these suggestions, talk to his people in the Department of Health, particularly in the Home Care Program, and I would hope that he would see or assist an attitude change in that area. I would also like the Minister of Health to actually review the philosophy and the background behind the Home Care Program.

I think, when it was established in the early '70s, our society was different then than it is in the '90s. We had more families where one of the parents would be a stay-at-home parent. We had less children that were working part-time jobs outside the home. Families had more disposable time in terms of being able to do activities. That has changed over the course of the last 15 or so years, but yet the Home Care Program and the philosophy behind the Home Care Program has not kept up with '90s and with '90s families. I think the Minister of Health would do well if he could look at that entire program, because I think what we want to see is an expansion of home care and expansion of support services for people in their own home. We do not want to see a decrease, and that is what we have seen to date. So I hope the minister will review that program.

I was pleased in the throne speech that the minister talked about support services to seniors—

* (1730)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Pursuant to Rule 35(2), I am interrupting the proceedings in order to put the question on the motion of the honourable Leader of the Second Opposition party (Mr. Edwards), that is, a subamendment to the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, which is:

1. this government has failed to address the needs of Manitobans by not formulating a strategy

on capital including public bond expansion and the establishment of a prairie stock exchange;

2. this government has failed to address the needs of unemployed and underemployed Manitobans by failing to create training initiatives to encourage Manitoba business to offer training to workers and has failed to offer programs to train our young people;

3. this government has failed to offer any initiatives to kickstart Manitoba's economy such as a three percent break on provincial sales tax for three months, or an increase in Manitoba's minimum wage to at least meet the national average;

4. the government continues to fail students at all levels through cutbacks to school divisions, weakening of curriculum and under funding of community colleges; and

5. this government has failed to provide leadership in managing health care change, and continues to allow the citizens of Manitoba to be short-changed in the provision of health care.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): Yeas and Nays, Mr. Speaker.

Division

Mr. Speaker: A recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

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

Yeas

Ashton, Barrett, Carstairs, Cerilli, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Edwards, Evans (Brandon East), Evans (Interlake), Friesen, Gaudry, Gray, Hickes, Kowalski, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Mackintosh, Maloway, Martindale, McCormick, Plohman.

Reid, Robinson, Santos, Schellenberg, Storie, Wowchuk.

Nays

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

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Yeas 28, Nays 28.

Mr. Speaker: Where the Speaker is required to exercise a casting vote, there are several principles to be considered. Among these is a concept that a significant decision should not be taken except by a clear majority of the House. In deciding how to vote, I was unable to find any precisely relevant Manitoba or Canadian precedents.

* (1740)

Indeed, occasions on which any Commonwealth Speaker has been required to exercise a casting vote on a motion of nonconfidence are extremely rare. Consequently, I have been guided by the 1859 precedent of Speaker Denison of the United Kingdom House of Commons, who concluded that if called upon to exercise a casting vote on an amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, he would vote against it and thus avoid committing the House by his one vote to a conclusive judgment.

Therefore, so that a decision to adopt the subamendment, which should only be taken by a clear majority of the House, will not be taken merely by the casting vote of its presiding officer, I am voting against the subamendment.

I declare the motion lost.

Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock? Six o'clock.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House now adjourns and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Friday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 14, 1994

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Presenting Petitions		National Hockey League Edwards; Filmon	230
Curran Contract Cancellation and Pharmacare & Home Care Reinstatement Plohman	226	Grain Exports Penner; Enns	231
Reading and Receiving Petitions		Seven Oaks General Hospital Chomiak; McCrae	231
Curran Contract Cancellation and Pharmacare & Home Care Reinstatement Cerilli	226	Forestry Industry Wowchuk; Driedger; Praznik	232
Schellenberg	226	Churchill Airport Robinson; Filmon	234
APM Incorporated Remuneration and Pharmacare & Home Care Reinstatement Dewar	227	Northern Airports Robinson; Filmon; Findlay	234
Tabling of Reports		Education System Gray; Manness	234
Annual Report, Finance Stefanson	227	Workforce 2000 Maloway; Manness	235
Annual Report, Residential Tenancies Commission Ernst	227	Railway Industry Reid; Findlay	236
		Education System Ashton; Manness	237
Oral Questions			
Grain Exports Doer; Filmon	228		
Post-Secondary Education Storie; Filmon	229		
Winnipeg Arena Edwards; Filmon	230		
		ORDERS OF THE DAY	
		Throne Speech Debate (Fifth Day of Debate)	
		Downey	237
		Lathlin	241
		Mitchelson	247
		Wowchuk	254
		Helwer	262
		Gray	268