



First Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(Hansard)

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Louise M. Dacquay
Speaker*



MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

<u>Name</u>	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Party</u>
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Mariame	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise, Hon.	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary	Concordia	N.D.P.
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	P.C.
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	N.D.P.
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	P.C.
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	P.C.
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane	Osborne	N.D.P.
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	P.C.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn	St. James	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	P.C.
NEWMAN, David	Riel	P.C.
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Pomme la Prairie	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
RADCLIFFE, Mike	River Heights	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack, Hon.	Niakwa	P.C.
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Gladstone	P.C.
SALE, Tim	Crescentwood	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	N.D.P.
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	P.C.
TOEWS, Vic, Hon.	Rossmere	P.C.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 25, 1995

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Recognition of Liberal Members

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, under the rules of our House, I have decided to take this opportunity to introduce a matter of privilege, something that is in fact very serious, and I hope and trust that all members of this Chamber will reflect very closely on what it is I am about to say with respect to treatment of individual members inside the Chamber.

I want to start off, Madam Speaker, repeating what you yourself said just a couple of days ago, and actually prior to that, I should point out that according to Beauchesne's in Citations 115 and 117, it is clear that you have to bring your matter of privilege at the soonest opportune time. I believe I have done that.

I am standing here to concentrate my efforts and thoughts on Question Period and what took place yesterday and today, after having some research individuals go through what took place yesterday. In fact, it reaffirms that, including supplementary questions, we saw in excess of 24 questions asked by members of the New Democratic caucus, while us as Liberal MLAs were completely discarded from being able to participate in a very important aspect of parliamentary tradition. That is why I believe it is timely to be able to present that, and according to Citation 117, I hope to impress upon individuals that in fact there is need for us to enter into some form of debate, or possibly even send it into committee.

As I was saying, Madam Speaker, I wanted to comment on what you said just two days ago inside this Chamber when you accepted the responsibility of being the Speaker, and I quote on page 2 of May 23: "It will be my aim and duty to uphold the principles and traditions of the House and secure for each member the right to express his or her opinions within the limits necessary to preserve decorum; to recognize the rights

and privileges of the honourable members, the political groups and the House itself; to facilitate the transaction of public business in an orderly manner and, above all, to seek to be fair and impartial in the decisions you entrust to me."

* (1335)

Madam Speaker, Beauchesne's is very clear in terms of the type of authority that you have. In fact, you can look into Beauchesne's and you will see that you have the authority to even look at the statutory orders and, if need be, to change or to do what you feel is the most appropriate thing to do. I believe you should do just that with respect to Question Period. Other Speakers, Speakers prior to you, have done that.

Tradition has not been that great inside this Chamber, of having three parties. When we have had independents, individuals, the recognition that they have been given for Question Period has been considerably better than what took place yesterday.

On numerous occasions, as everyone in this Chamber saw, I stood up to get acknowledged by the Speaker to be able to pose what I believe was a good question and in the best interests of the constituents that I serve, and, in fact, for Manitobans, and everyone should have the ability to ask that question, Madam Speaker.

In the past, what has happened? Well, if you look back, you could say there was June Westbury, the former member for Fort Rouge, and what sort of treatment did Ms. June Westbury receive? I had the opportunity to have someone talk to her earlier this morning, and she indicated that she was given the courtesy of being allowed to ask a question virtually every day, and on some days, she was given a second question.

Madam Speaker, if you look at when those questions were asked, you will see that in many cases, it was the third and sometimes it was the second. Sometimes, she followed Howard Pawley when Howard Pawley was in opposition. That was under a Conservative administration.

Let us go back not as far. Let us go back to when Sharon Carstairs was the lone Liberal inside this Chamber. What sort of treatment did this independent MLA have inside the Chamber? I would suggest to you, Madam Speaker, if you look at the treatment that she was given, and that was under an NDP administration, she was given at least one question a day as an independent. [interjection]

Madam Speaker, the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) might choose to make light of a very serious matter. This is something that is broader than maybe what the member for Kildonan really wants to deal with. He might be more focused on the New Democratic Party. I am talking in terms of what is right and what is fair to all individuals, all individual members of this Chamber. That member for Kildonan is no better than I and should be respectful in terms of what parliamentary tradition is all about.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would caution the honourable member to be very careful in the selection of his words.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, excuse me for digressing.

The point of the matter is, everyone inside this Chamber was elected. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) was elected as the Leader of the Conservative Party. Mr. Ashton was elected, or the member for Thompson, as a New Democrat, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I was elected as a Liberal MLA, and I am proud of that fact. I believe that I, too, as an individual have rights to be able to ask questions. I believe that if we look in terms of what has happened over the years when we have had independent members inside this Chamber who represented more than just their constituents, the June Westburys, the Sharon Carstairs, that they were allowed, they were provided, the opportunity from the Speaker to be able to express, to be able to ask and participate in Question Period.

* (1340)

Under the current setup, we have a question in terms of, well, a political party requires four. Madam

Speaker, we acknowledge we do not have party status. I am not asking for party status. What I am asking for is respect, and I believe I am entitled to respect, parliamentary respect. I believe that I and the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) and the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) deserve that respect. I will stand up today, I will stand up tomorrow, and I will do what I feel is in my best interest, in my constituents' best interest, thereby the interests of the people of this province to ensure that individual MLAs are given the respect that they are entitled to. I do not see that happening.

I believe that if you look at—because we have not had the opportunity—I have left messages to be able to talk to you, and we did have some opportunities to discuss. I trust that if we look in terms of what has happened in the past, if we look in terms of both Conservative and New Democratic administrations, the independents have been given their fair share. I am not asking for more. I believe it was something in the neighbourhood of 27 questions yesterday—it might have been 26, possibly 25—there was in excess. There are 23 New Democrats. There were more questions asked by the New Democrats than members, and, even though I stood up time and time again, Madam Speaker, after the third or fourth question along with supplementaries, I was not acknowledged.

I would ask that we look at customs from the past. We do not have too much. The New Democrats, some might choose to try to say, well, look what is happening in Ottawa. Look what is happening in this province. What we are talking about is the Province of Manitoba. What I am talking about is what is happening inside this Chamber and, Madam Speaker, you have the control. You are the individual who can allow us to ask the questions. If you decide ultimately to say, no, that we are going to continue to allow the New Democrats to have all of the questions for Question Period or assign them a question at the end of Question Period, well, that is your choice.

But I would strongly urge you in the very best way I can to acknowledge the fact that I am a Liberal MLA, that my colleague from The Maples is a Liberal MLA and so is the member for St. Boniface. We went through an election just like everyone else in this

Chamber. We are all proud of the political parties that we come from. We all have a significant role. The Liberal Party is going to survive. The Liberal Party will survive no matter what sort of decision that you ultimately make but as a member of this Chamber I do believe I have the right to be able to pose questions during Question Period.

Yesterday, whether it was an innocent mistake, Madam Speaker, or whatever it was, I do believe that we have to rectify what could be a very long-lasting decision that will have an impact because ultimately the average session sits for 91 days. If we are in here for another four years, you are talking at least—and the members from the government side say at least and they could be right—we are talking at least 360 days in which we are going to be sitting inside this Chamber and for a full hour discussing the affairs of this province. I do not believe that any member should be denied.

I even acknowledged under the previous Speaker, when he would sit down with me and he would say, well, you know, all of us have rights. I do not know if I can say my first name. He would say, Kevin, all of us have rights and that I have to even respect the backbenchers. I will tell you something, Madam Speaker, when a backbencher from the government stood up and expressed a question—and I remember the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister) in particular would stand up and ask several questions—I respected the fact that he, too, is a member and albeit I might have preferred that he did not stand up, I recognize, as the Speaker then, that he had a right to ask a question.

* (1345)

You know something, Madam Speaker, you will see that even the member for Portage (Mr. Pallister) and other backbenchers, when they asked questions, they asked questions that were not necessarily the last question of the day. Many of them were four or five questions into it.

I still appreciate the fact that for seven years—actually I was the House leader for just over four years, but as the deputy House leader, I had opportunity to meet

with the former Speaker on many different occasions. Question Period was something that we constantly talked about, because it was something that was always in dispute. You know, one of the unfortunate things is I never really got the opportunity to establish the same sort of a rapport with the Speaker as other members, because I had to defend what was in our caucus's best interest.

Madam Speaker, the Speaker who was there before you was very clear on what he believed was important in terms of questions and who should be able to ask questions and when they should be able to ask questions. When we talked about it, the Speaker indicated to me, look, we want to be fair, and you will get your fair share of questions. That is what the Speaker told me. We would then have the dialogue—well, what sorts of questions and where are those questions going to be, because that is important, to have your fair share. You could say, well, if there are 26 questions or 29 questions, you should be entitled to three questions, so I will give you three questions.

Madam Speaker, that gives you the proportion, correct, if you like, based on the number of people who are inside the Chamber, but it does not really allude to the fact of what priority your question is going to have during Question Period. This is what it is that we are talking about also.

It is not just good enough to say, look, we are going to give you—okay, fine, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) stands up, and maybe he has a valid argument, and we will give him a certain percentage of the number of questions that are asked during the day, because that is only one part of it. The other part of it, Madam Speaker, is, of course, where are those questions going to be asked.

That is the dialogue that the former Speaker and I had. We reached a consensus. Through that consensus, the members of the Liberal caucus were content, the members of the New Democratic caucus were content and so were the government backbenchers. They all had avenues in which to have dialogue. The Speaker spoke with the different members. It is important that we, too, sit down and we talk about Question Period in terms of the priority,

where the questions are going to be asked. Until we do that, it is the issue about which I have full intentions of standing up again and again and again.

I hope and I trust, Madam Speaker, and I am convinced that you will give it serious consideration. I believe you meant what you said the other day inside the Chamber. I trust and hope that this will be a matter that will be dealt with, with the utmost importance.

Suffice to say, I would conclude my remarks by making reference to Madam Carstairs and Madam Westbury and the treatment that they received while they were independents inside this Chamber and not to ask for anything better than what they received, but to at least be given the same sorts of courtesies, the same sort of acknowledgement. After all, we are not one independent; there are in fact three members inside this Chamber that were elected on the Liberal Party platform and sit here first and foremost as MLAs, but also as Liberal MLAs.

On that, Madam Speaker, I would move, seconded by the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), that this matter be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections for consideration at the earliest opportunity, and that the Speaker report back to the House on the results of those deliberations.

* (1350)

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, there can be no better indication of the rights of all members of this House that the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) was able, for the first 20 minutes of this sitting, to discuss this matter of privilege, and I think that should be commented upon.

I also believe that it should also be noted that we are in the second full sitting day of the Legislature, and I find it, quite frankly, somewhat surprising that the member would be bringing in a matter of privilege relating to one Question Period. I also find it somewhat concerning that some of the comments, I would suggest, were bordering not directly upon questioning your decisions as Speaker, and let there be no doubt about the role of the Speaker in determining who speaks, who ask questions.

I will quote Beauchesne Citation 461: "Officially there is no list of Members desiring to speak in debate. Any Member who wishes to speak may rise and endeavour to catch the Speaker's eye. . . ."

I would also point out, Madam Speaker, to correct the member for Inkster, that we have 23 members. I believe, yesterday, nine of our members asked questions. The tradition in this House is one question, followed by two supplementaries. Yesterday, 14 of our members did not have the opportunity to ask a question because of the time limitations. Neither did any of the government members, the government backbenchers, have the opportunity to ask questions later.

I would suggest we keep this in perspective and, quite frankly, I believe that the member for Inkster should receive the same kind of consideration that any of us would expect. Having served in this House, both on the government side and as an officially recognized third party and now as an officially recognized opposition party, I realize it can often be difficult to make the adjustments that occur following an election. I would suggest to the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) that he will be given every consideration possible by this House, but the fact is that the Liberal Party did not win the required numbers for official party status.

I would suggest that they should look very carefully at what has happened, I think, to the two federal parties that found themselves in that situation. The rules that we have in place were applied in those cases; they are being applied in this case. They do not affect the ability of any member of this House to ask questions. I would expect that the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) and any member of this House will be recognized in the traditions of this House, which is that you, Madam Speaker, are the final authority in terms of who is recognized.

I would suggest to the member for Inkster, and I have raised a number of matters of privilege in my time, one of the clearest indications when one looks at the tradition in terms of Beauchesne and other authorities in terms of a matter of privilege is that they are serious matters and ought not to be raised in this House unless we are dealing with a very serious matter.

I think what we are dealing with here is a concern based on one Question Period. I suspect there are other issues that the member was raising that really had very little to do with the matter of privilege itself, related to the new status that he finds himself in, and the three members do, of not being an officially recognized party.

I want to say, Madam Speaker, that we believe every member of the House should be accorded every consideration in terms of recognition, particularly in Question Period, and we believe also in the role of the Speaker in doing that.

I think it is highly inappropriate in this our second full day in the Legislature after one Question Period to be dealing with a supposed matter of privilege dealing with your actions in Question Period yesterday. We believe there is no prima facie case of privilege.

We also believe, Madam Speaker, as we indicated certainly in the first day, that we expect you will perform your duties as Speaker under Beauchesne 461 and many other citations in Beauchesne indicating that it is clearly your role to recognize members. There is no speaking roster. No one in this House takes precedence over other members, whether they be in the government, the official opposition or part of a party which is not officially recognized.

* (1355)

No one takes precedence, and it is not a matter of privilege if I do not get recognized one day, and I am not happy with it, or any other member of this House does not get recognized any one day and is not happy with it. Therefore, I believe there is no prima facie case of privilege.

Madam Speaker: A matter of privilege is indeed a serious concern. I thank the honourable member for Thompson and the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) for bringing this matter to the House.

I will be taking this matter under advisement to consult the authorities, and I will return in the very near future with a ruling.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Speaker's Statement

Madam Speaker: I am pleased to inform the Assembly that the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly today has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate showing the election of Darren Praznik as member for the constituency of Lac du Bonnet which was delayed due to an application for recount which was withdrawn today. I hereby table the return to the Writ of Election.

The honourable member has taken the oath, signed the roll and now has the right to take his seat. On behalf of all honourable members, I wish to welcome you again to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Funding Model—Public Education

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Surinder Kamdoz, Garry Paziuk, Noreen Head and others requesting the Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. McIntosh) to reconsider the funding model to ensure that Thompson and other communities in this province are able to maintain quality public education.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

American Airlines

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Madam Speaker, I have a statement to make. What a great day it is in Manitoba.

It is a great day in Manitoba. I was delighted today to participate in inaugurating American Airlines' newest service for Manitobans. I would like to commend the officials at American for their astute judgment in bringing Winnipeg into the largest airline hub on the continent. The addition of a nonstop flight daily service between Winnipeg and Chicago reflects the growing significance of Manitoba and of our capital city in North America.

Madam Speaker, this new service which will introduce three nonstop flights daily brings two major advantages at least to Manitoba. One is that it provides yet another link between the people of this province and cities across the continent and around the world. For business people based in Manitoba and those considering relocating and starting up new businesses here in Manitoba, convenient air service to major U.S. cities is clearly an advantage.

The second major benefit of this service is that tourists from across America and abroad now have another direct and efficient route to visit our great province. Madam Speaker, with the growth of free trade between Canada and the United States, and now with Mexico as well, being integrated into the hub of America's largest airline is of even greater importance to Manitoba. We believe Winnipeg's location at the northern end of a trade corridor running all the way south to Monterrey, Mexico, our central position within Canada and our airport's 24-hour operation make us a natural site as a commercial transportation hub for the next century.

This new service, Madam Speaker, starting today, is a long stride in that direction, and I thank honourable members for this opportunity.

* (1400)

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for his statement. This House seems to be preoccupied with jets of one kind or another, and this is the kind that we like.

We are very pleased that you are announcing the actions of American Airlines in establishing this route. We would trust that you will undertake a more comprehensive strategy of marketing the advantages of Winnipeg within that 10 million population catchment area, and that, hopefully, you will also manage to correct the tourism brochure regarding Brandon at the same time.

TABLETING OF REPORTS

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): I have the pleasure of tabling with the House the Annual

Report for the Manitoba Crop Insurance Corporation for the years '93 and '94; along with that, as well, the Supplementary Information for the Legislative Review of my department's Estimates which I am anticipating shortly.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Madam Speaker, I would like to table the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review for the departmental expenditure Estimates for the Department of Rural Development.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw attention to members of the House that in the gallery with us this afternoon, we have sixty Grade 11 students from Warren Collegiate. These students are under the direction of Mr. Jake Wiebe, and this school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Winnipeg Jets Agreement Information Release

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

Last year, when we were asking the government to make public all the information at the Public Accounts dealing with the operating loss agreement, the amendment to the operating loss agreement and the various proposals to deal with the Winnipeg Jets hockey team, the Premier stated in Hansard, and I quote: We will do better than presenting this to the Public Accounts. We will give the information to the public directly, so they can deal with it, rather than being confined to a partisan debate. We will take it all to the public.

Madam Speaker, we were quite concerned then that the government for a period of time kept everything silent and secret in terms of the various proposals, and

only the day after the election did we find out the state of play of the various proposals to deal with the hockey team and the Winnipeg Jets and the operating loss agreement that this Premier had signed twice.

I would like to ask the Premier, why did he keep the proposals secret until the day after the election, and what has been the cost in terms of the overall purchase of the privately owned team to the public and the private owners for the government not involving the public at an earlier stage?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, the information with respect to the MEC proposal was made public as soon as it was available. The information that we were operating on was based on their original business plan which they changed a matter of days before it was made public after the election campaign. It was made available on a timely basis.

With respect to the costs to the provincial Treasury for undertaking the losses in the agreement, they were something in the range of \$9 million of costs in picking up losses from the agreement that was signed in 1991, for which period of time the direct revenues to the provincial Treasury were in excess of \$17 million, so a net gain of \$8 million to the provincial Treasury by virtue of that agreement.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, the Premier did not answer the question. I asked what was the cost of delaying making that information public from May 1 on.

My supplementary question to the Premier is, how can the Premier create a loop of business people, be involved in amending an agreement and not be involved in what the discussions are in the loop and only make that public after the election?

Why was the public not involved in the various proposals that were going on until after the election campaign? Why will the Premier not table the amended and addended agreement from June 30 covering the operating loss agreements and all the proposals now that are before the lawyers across the

city of Winnipeg? Why are those proposals not being made public in this House?

We are responsible for the capital costs of the arena in the public sector. We are responsible for part of the operating costs with our shares. We are also responsible perhaps for tax provisions. Why will the Premier not table all that information today in the Chamber?

Mr. Filmon: First and foremost, Madam Speaker, the information the member is seeking is information with respect to negotiations that are going on between private sector entities. They do not involve our side of the equation, which is to provide a capital facility. That is our side of the obligation.

In the past, the member has been critical of being involved in the operating costs and operating losses of the team. That is not part of our responsibility. That is being taken over by the private sector. All of the negotiations that are taking place now are with respect to their arrangements, not with respect to our side of the agreement.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, again, I ask the Premier to table the information, because if we could have purchased the team for \$32 million before May 1, but because of delays of the provincial government, keeping this whole issue secret, the cost is going to be \$32 million plus the private owners maintaining 22 percent of the shares, that is, the equivalent of some \$15 million, the equivalent of all the money raised by the so-called grassroots campaign.

My question to the Premier is, why will you not table all the information in the House, the addended agreement which you were a party to before the June 30 deadline and the existing documents that are in play?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, the member has answered his own question.

The fact of the matter is he did not want us to purchase the team and take responsibility for the operating losses. We have not purchased the team.

That agreement with respect to the purchase of the team is being done between private sector owners.

* (1410)

Winnipeg Arena Provincial Funding

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

Yesterday, the Minister of Finance refused to provide information to this House on the scale of the tax expenditures involved in the Jets' deal while knowing that a proposal to buy the Jets had been prepared and forwarded to the current owners, which proposal certainly contains the data required to tell the House the scale of these tax expenditures.

Will the minister now provide this information? What are the tax expenditures implied in the current proposal which was forwarded to Mr. Shenkarow yesterday?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I want to correct the member for Crescentwood. I am sure he, hopefully, erred unintentionally.

I did not refuse to provide any information to this House, because as I indicated to the member yesterday, the issue of whether or not contributions to the potential endowment fund, whether or not those contributions are deductible for tax purposes as a donation is an issue that is being dealt with between the private sector and Revenue Canada, which is an arm of the federal government.

Donations—Tax Deductibility

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): To the same minister: Will the minister now confirm to this House, as he apparently already has confirmed to the media, that he and his government now favour the granting of charitable status to the Jets memorial endowment fund?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I hope the member for Crescentwood, only day two into our session, takes the time to do a little

more research before asking these types of questions, because we did not offer any opinion on what the decision of the federal government might be.

It is a matter that the private sector is dealing with Revenue Canada on, whether or not contributions to that kind of a fund will be tax deductible. It is a matter within the jurisdiction of the federal government and Revenue Canada, and it is a matter they will be ruling on, I am sure, in due course.

Provincial Funding

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, will the minister then at least confirm the calculations which were quoted this morning in the Free Press, and he was also party to that interview, that show that the tax subsidy for the proposed \$60-million endowment fund will be \$9 million from the province, bringing the contribution of his government to this project to at least \$46 million, 4.6 times the pre-election promises?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, we have indicated consistently that if an item qualifies as a donation for tax purposes, the approximate cost to the provincial Treasury is 15 percent of that contribution. The approximate cost to the federal Treasury is 30 percent of that contribution.

The member can certainly do the mathematics on any size of a fund that he so chooses, depending on where that endowment fund ends up and whether or not the matter is determined by Revenue Canada to be something that does qualify as a donation for tax deduction purposes.

Children's Hospital Psychiatric Unit—Bed Closures

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

During the election campaign and lead-up to the election campaign, we saw a flurry of government announcements regarding health care, and, in particular, we saw a lot of bed openings at the Children's Hospital.

My question to the Minister of Health is, why now, after the election, is the government ordering the closure of the eight-bed psychiatric unit that was opened only eight weeks ago at the children's psychiatric unit at Children's Hospital?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, the honourable member, if he reviews the circumstances, will recall that there were a number of respiratory cases presenting at the Health Sciences Centre, Children's Hospital, at the time that the swing or standby beds, or whatever they are called, were opened. At that time, it was made clear that they were open for a specified period of time. They were opened because there was a need to open them.

Madam Speaker, the honourable member wants to suggest that we should have hospital beds there that are not needed. That is all right, but I do not think that any responsible hospital administration or government can do that when you consider the realities that we all face together.

Mr. Chomiak: Can the minister give us assurances today that the children who require psychiatric care will not be forced to wait in long lineups or be forced to go into children's medical beds, since they are now closing the eight psychiatric beds that they opened eight weeks ago just before the provincial election?

Will he give us assurances that those children will not have to wait in line and will get the service needed?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, that has been, is and will remain our policy.

Mr. Chomiak: If the minister still chooses to close these beds, will he give assurances and outline what specific alternatives he will put in place to provide community-based services or other services to these children who require psychiatric services, so they will not have to wait in line or be put in medical beds, as they have done in the past since this government started so-called health reform?

Mr. McCrae: Everything that we do in the operation of our health system will be with the patient in mind.

It will be to be responsive to the needs that exist, and it will be evidence-based.

Family Maintenance Payments Supreme Court Decision

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, my question is for the First Minister (Mr. Filmon).

Today, the Supreme Court of Canada reversed the judgment of the Federal Court of Appeal and ruled against Suzanne Thibaudeau. This is unfortunate for many Manitoban women and their children, since it means that the recipients of maintenance payments rather than the person who actually earned the income will bear the taxation burden.

My first question is, what action is the present government considering to remedy the effects of this ruling?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Acting Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I will take that question as notice on behalf of the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Ms. McGifford: Madam Speaker, did the provincial government make any representation to the Supreme Court, and does the provincial government accept this decision as fair?

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, I will take that question as notice on behalf of the Attorney General.

Ms. McGifford: In order to alleviate the tax burden on custodial parents, will the government adopt our party's position and change provincial law, so that courts take into account tax implications when awarding maintenance?

Mr. Praznik: Yes, Madam Speaker, I can, as someone who has been through law school, advise the honourable member that courts do take into account tax implications when they are setting maintenance and making those decisions, but the specifics of her question, I will take as notice on behalf of the Minister of Justice.

**Sex Offenders
Community Notification Committee**

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, my question is to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon).

Before and during the recent provincial election, the Premier touted the government's new community notification committee, which we were promised would review every high-risk sex offender well in advance of each offender's release from jail and then would determine whether there should be notification to the community.

Would the First Minister now explain to Manitobans why the committee has taken no action, has not even been informed of two high-risk sex offenders, who, we understand, have moved to Winnipeg in the last month?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Acting Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I will take that question again as notice on behalf of the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Mackintosh: Madam Speaker, it was the First Minister who was closing the jail doors—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member, with his supplementary question. Please put your question now.

Mr. Mackintosh: My question to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon), would the First Minister now confirm that the notification committee was just another election gimmick, as proven by this committee's first test?

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, I can tell the member opposite that this party in the election and in government has always been consistent and has been very strong on Justice issues and in wanting to ensure that Manitobans are safe on the streets of this province, unlike members of his party when they have had opportunity to govern or to put forward positions.

I will take the specifics of his question as notice on behalf of the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Mackintosh: Madam Speaker, my final supplementary is to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon).

Would he now assure Manitobans when this government will finally do something about Manitobans' safety and take some action with these cases, as promised?

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, I can assure the member that this government and the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) is very much committed to ensuring the safety of Manitobans and in taking very strong positions on criminal activity, and I know that many of the actions we have taken have done that with the opposition of the member for St. Johns who has not been supportive of many of those strong positions.

The specifics of his question, I will take as notice on behalf of the Minister of Justice.

* (1420)

**Winnipeg Air Command
Relocation**

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson).

Earlier this year, in the federal budget, it was announced that Air Command headquarters in St. James will be moved to Ottawa, costing Winnipeg hundreds of direct and indirect jobs, many of those in my riding of St. James. My question is, what is the status of this relocation, as far as the minister is aware?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Madam Speaker, again, that was a very difficult situation for the City of Winnipeg and the Province of Manitoba with the federal government's budgetary actions which would have a devastation as far as the Air Command and the jobs in the city of Winnipeg.

We are currently waiting on an update from the federal government and will report as that comes forward.

Ms. Mihychuk: My supplementary question is, what is the status of negotiation for using the \$30-million Billy Bishop Building, which was opened just nine years ago and could be used to consolidate air force operations currently located in other parts of the country?

Mr. Downey: I thank the member for the question.

That was one of the options that was discussed. Our first desire, of course, was not to lose any jobs under Air Command. The option coming forward of the relocation of operational activities from four other centres is an option that we hope the federal members of this province can support us in, in going to the federal government, if given the opportunity, to advance that as an opportunity to fill the vacant facilities that will be left here.

Ms. Mihychuk: Why has this minister not put forward the same effort to save and get the hundreds of aerospace jobs in this province that they, this government, did to accommodate the ever-changing demands of the owners of the Winnipeg Jets?

Mr. Downey: Madam Speaker, the member could well be criticizing her own Leader and other members of this House who were part of an all-party committee who joined together co-operatively, in a nonpartisan way, to put together opposition to the actions by the federal government and request that they give consideration in a positive way that would encourage and, in fact, help the City of Winnipeg and the Province of Manitoba.

I am somewhat disappointed in her negative approach towards the work that her Leader was part of. I would hope she would speak to him and spur him on a little bit more.

Northern Manitoba Infrastructure Development

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, there are many questions being asked in northern Manitoba about the credibility and the priorities of this government that has gone from a \$10-million commitment to an arena in Winnipeg to save the

Winnipeg Jets to \$37 million plus whatever tax breaks will be involved.

It particularly comes from communities that do not even have the most basic of services such as sewer and water, many of which are under the jurisdiction of the Department of Northern Affairs—so the Premier (Mr. Filmon) gets that straight when I ask this question.

I would like to ask the Premier how he can justify finding this additional money for a professional hockey team and an arena in Winnipeg and at the same time not provide funding for sewer, water and other basic services in northern communities.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Northern Affairs): Madam Speaker, I find the question from the member most interesting, because in my brief tenure as Minister of Northern Affairs, I have had the privilege of attending the opening of new water facilities in a number of communities.

I have to ask, in the many years in which the member for Thompson has been an MLA representing northern Manitoba, why, when northern Manitoba has had New Democratic Party MLAs in government for many years, we are still having to put in basic water and sewers in a number of communities when that party in government did not make those communities a priority.

Mr. Ashton: With a supplementary, and again, to the Premier (Mr. Filmon), why has this government failed throughout its mandate to sign and negotiate a northern development agreement, when we are now seeing that some of the funds that will be going to the arena in Winnipeg will be coming from development agreements?

Why is this government not signing a development agreement in northern Manitoba that will bring sewer and water to those communities?

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, let us put this into perspective again around northern Manitoba.

The member for Thompson may like agreements, northern development agreements. I remember working for the federal government, for a federal

minister, on the Northern Development Agreement. I remember how many stores changed hands under that agreement and very little got done.

Let us remember, we have a new representative for Flin Flon. I hope he takes note of the millions of dollars that this government, that this party, committed to ensure that his constituents have jobs in that constituency.

Let us look at the Northern Flood Agreement that this government has brought along to almost completion when it sat with nothing done for years of New Democratic Party rule. Let us look at the many projects that have been done in the last seven years and the ones that we intend to complete over the next four, and I think the record speaks very loudly on accomplishments, although the members of the New Democratic Party will never admit it.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, my final supplementary is again to the Premier (Mr. Filmon).

I would like to ask the Premier, since he is now indicating that he has some interest in northern Manitoba, at least according to Winnipeg Sun reports, that he has actually even travelled to northern Manitoba, when will he make a commitment, as we now enter the next century, to have money allocated for sewer and water in communities that do not have that service, instead of a brand new arena to save a professional hockey team?

Let us get our priorities straight, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Praznik: Yes, Madam Speaker, it is a matter of getting priorities straight. I can tell this House that when the member opposite was in government, those priorities he talks about today were not being done, and it took this party in government to move towards doing them.

I can tell this House, as well, that on a steady annual basis with the resources available community by community, we are getting done the jobs that New Democrats failed to do in northern Manitoba in all the years they were in government in this province.

Flood Compensation Statistics

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources.

Thousands of residents living in communities along the Assiniboine River have anxiously watched over the past month as water levels rose, damaging their land. Last month, in fact, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) toured some of affected areas, and, even so, I was surprised to hear in the throne speech that the flooding challenge has been successfully met by the provincial government.

What are the predicted damages of flooding expected to be, and what percentage of costs will be picked up by the provinces?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Madam Speaker, I would like to inform the member it was not only the Premier who was on that flight. It was also myself, as well as the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey), as well as the member for Roblin-Russell (Mr. Derkach) who was on that flight, and we had a first-hand glimpse or look at what was happening out there with the flooding.

The government has set up a deputies committee that is basically looking at working with the concerns of the flood area. The Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board is out there already working. The last meeting we had, I think, was yesterday with the committee meeting that we had, and the municipalities have given this government accolades for moving as fast as they have.

I might inform the member that the flood is not over yet, so in terms of establishing how much damage there is, once the waters have receded, we will be on top of it. I am prepared, at that time, to give a figure as to exactly what has happened.

Mr. Struthers: Madam Speaker, when, then, will the minister be able to give a definitive figure on provincial contributions and how long will this process take?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Speaker, as soon as the floodwaters are down, we will have established a figure. I will then make it available.

Coverage Levels

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Is the minister reviewing the limits of coverage compensation, which in many cases will be just a fraction of the losses in property damage?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Madam Speaker, I would like to inform the member that this is not the first time Manitobans have experienced a flood. We have various things in place that deal with it on a step-by-step basis from within government with the various departments.

This flood was not a surprise to us. We anticipated this already early on, prior to spring breakup, that we were going to have water problems in a certain area. We had everything in place, as we have done in the past.

As this thing evolves, and finally comes down to the point of some conclusion, I will be able to make available the kind of money that is available to the individuals who are affected, either through the Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board, through the EMO, the cost-sharing arrangements we have with the feds, and the obligation that the provincial government, the Premier (Mr. Filmon), has given to the flood-prone areas that said, basically, we would be there as a province to try and assist them.

* (1430)

Point Douglas Constituency Bank Closures

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Urban Affairs concerning the closure of a second bank in Point Douglas, causing great difficulties for seniors and many other people in this area.

Has the minister met with the representatives of the bank to attempt to delay or postpone this closure, which is the second bank in one year in Point Douglas?

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Urban Affairs): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the honourable member for Point Douglas for my first question.

In regard to the banking in his constituency, I am not aware that there is another bank closed in that constituency. I will do some evaluation, take the question as notice and possibly get back to the member as soon as possible on the ramifications and some of the things that might be affected, not only the constituency but his neighbourhood.

Winnipeg Development Agreement Employment Creation

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Madam Speaker, for the minister, the bank is closing on June 2, and it is the Toronto Dominion Bank.

I would like to ask the minister, since so many jobs are being lost in the inner city that residents are unable to buy homes or take out loans, will the Winnipeg Development Agreement begin operation before more banks are closed in the inner city? Try and speed up that Winnipeg Development Agreement to get more people in the inner city working so that we can use the banks here.

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Urban Affairs): I can rest assured with the member that jobs and the creation of jobs are of a high priority within this government, and it is shown that the best type of work program is good jobs within a community.

I can possibly meet with the member, and we can try to discuss ways of meeting with the community if there is problem in trying to get a resolve towards some sort of direction, not only for the lost jobs within the bank, but also how it will affect the ripple effect throughout his community.

Mr. Hickes: Madam Speaker, why has this government not acted to address inner-city needs such as deteriorating services and closure of banks, instead of putting millions of dollars into the construction of luxury boxes at the new arena that banks and other corporations can use for tax write-offs?

Mr. Reimer: Madam Speaker, I think, as mentioned previously, the creation of jobs and the fact that this government has made it a high priority in trying to make available the availability for people to bring forth their ideas to develop the community, to be involved with the community on an ongoing basis, is something that I think is an indication of our government towards trying to be involved with a positive direction for economic growth.

In the association of his community, we can work towards some sort of meeting, if he is agreeable. We can try to get it resolved towards some of the problems that he is addressing.

Agriculture Industries Diversification

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, in the last few months, Manitoba farmers saw \$85 million vanish from the economy with the loss of the Crow rate. This devastating loss follows four consecutive years of cuts in the provincial Agriculture budget.

Although the government refused to put pressure on the federal government when they eliminated the Crow benefit, they did promise farmers relief in the form of a \$10-million agriculture diversification fund in the election.

I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture, now that the campaign is over, can the minister explain why there is no mention of this vital farm support program and why there is no mention of a provincial agriculture strategy in the provincial throne speech?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, let me be very clear. Thanks to the work done by my predecessor and the support that he had in this government, a very significant budget increase was afforded the difficulties that farmers and agriculture face.

I will be more than pleased, during the discussion of my Estimates, to indicate just how significant the financial contribution of the GRIP program and other

support safety-net programs were to the farmers of Manitoba at a time of need.

Madam Speaker, specifically to the questions about ongoing support, that is I think an appropriate discussion to have during the discussion of my Estimates. There have been movements, a broadening of the whole farm safety programs that is being advanced by Minister Goodale from Ottawa, expansion of the NISA program to different livestock producers currently not now covered under that program.

So I am more than prepared to discuss these issues with her in the discussion on the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture.

Ms. Wowchuk: I was asking the minister specifically about a program that was announced in the election.

However, I want to ask the minister now what steps they will take to ensure that farmers have the educational training and supports they need to diversify, since we have seen a cutback in all agricultural programs. Farmers have to have the ability to take courses. Will this government take some action to ensure that farmers also have supports, not only hockey players?

Mr. Enns: Madam Speaker, this question affords me the opportunity to solicit support from the honourable member for Swan River to ensure that what she asked for does in fact happen.

Firstly, there are many agencies, including the Department of Agriculture, that are providing that kind of extension work and education work, that are preparing our farmers for the changes in agriculture. Among the specific requests the farm community has is that they are allowed to be participants in some of this extension work and some of this research work, notably through check-off legislation that is being requested, for instance, by the canola producers of the province of Manitoba that have made that crop the cinderella crop, in fact, one of the bright spots as even reported on the front pages of the Free Press not so long ago about the importance and significance of that crop to Manitoba.

So, Madam Speaker, Manitoba farmers will face the challenges, will meet them and will see a brighter future for agriculture in the coming years.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Speaker, the minister should remember that the cinderella crop was developed—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member, please put your supplementary question now.

Ms. Wowchuk: Will this government give assurances that they are prepared to support research for farmers as they diversify so we can further crops such as the cinderella crop that was developed through provincial and federal funding for research?

Mr. Enns: Madam Speaker, yes.

Immigration Agreement Status

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): It goes to show, Madam Speaker, if you are patient and persistent—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Does the honourable member have a question?

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, there was a Memorandum of Understanding that was signed by this government last year, and that Memorandum of Understanding was in hopes of trying to achieve a bilateral immigration agreement, something that is very important to Manitoba. It contributes to our social fabric, our economic fabric. It is important that Manitoba achieve that bilateral agreement. We were supposed to achieve that bilateral agreement by March 1.

My question to the Minister responsible for Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, can he give us progress on the bilateral agreement? When can we anticipate that that bilateral agreement will be complete?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): I am pleased to have my first question from the member for Inkster.

I can tell him that the officials of this department are in Ottawa today meeting with federal officials. We have been trying to move forward with this program. We are not getting a lot of co-operation out of the Liberal government in Ottawa. In fact, some of the agreements we thought we had have been changed with the introduction of a head tax, with the introduction of bonds, things that the federal minister seems to be going out on his own to do. We are not in favour of some of the direction that the federal government has taken on immigration.

We are hopeful that we can get an agreement, but we are not getting a lot of co-operation from the federal bureaucrats at this time.

* (1440)

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I am interested in the bilateral agreement. I am not—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I remind the honourable member for Inkster, I think he knows the rules full well. Supplementary questions, there is no postamble or preamble.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I am wondering if the minister can indicate to this House what this government believes is the optimum number of immigrants, classifications of immigrants that Manitoba can sustain in any given year. Can the minister indicate to this House today what that number is?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The immigration agreement that we are attempting to negotiate with the federal government deals with a lot of different aspects, and I look forward perhaps to Estimates when we can get into this discussion.

We are trying to negotiate the levels and the mix of immigrants that would come to Manitoba. We want to have more say in the recruitment and selection of immigrants. We want more support in dealing with the settlement issues. We have always stated that Manitoba wants their fair share of immigrants up to 4 percent of the numbers who are coming into the country.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would ask the minister to reconsider the approach possibly in terms of what he is arguing for. You should not be arguing for—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Would the honourable member for Inkster pose his question now, please.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, would the minister not agree that it does not make sense to argue for a percentage of the overall population of immigrants coming to Canada? What the minister should be arguing for is what number, what is Manitoba's optimum number—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Please pose your question. This is neither a time for debate nor postamble.

Mr. Lamoureux: To the minister, would the minister not agree that it makes more sense to ask for what is the optimum number of immigrants that Manitoba can sustain in any given year?

Mr. Gilleshammer: We want to achieve the levels of immigration that we have historically had over the last 10 years. We are trying to work with a federal government which continues to put roadblocks in the way for immigrants to come to this country.

I would urge the member for Inkster to talk to some of his federal cousins, particularly those who represent that area of the city. I know the Prime Minister does tend to punish some of the members who do not agree with him, but I would suggest that perhaps Mr. Pagtakhan could use his influence. You could talk with him to see if perhaps the federal minister could be a little more understanding and instead of imposing a head tax and an exorbitant bond that discourages immigration to this country, the member perhaps could do something very positive to see that there is more immigration to Canada and to Manitoba.

North Winnipeg YM-YWCA Funding

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): The north branch of the YM-YWCA of Winnipeg is an important

recreation facility in our community. It has a nursery school, daycare, life skills program and Night Hoops. It serves many low-income people, thanks to a generous subsidy from the United Way. Unfortunately, it is being closed or supposed to be closed on June 30 of this year. I would like to ask the First Minister—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Would you quickly pose your question.

Mr. Martindale: I would like to ask the First Minister—since he grew up in the north end, he may have been a user of the North Y—if he is prepared to find some money to help keep the doors open. He found \$37 million for the Jets. Can he find \$200,000 for renovations at the North Y?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, yes, indeed, I did frequent the North Winnipeg Y when I was much younger. In fact, I probably honed my basketball skills there several summers playing endlessly day after day after day.

Unfortunately, the funding for facilities such as the Ys is one that comes under normal community-based support, memberships and all of the various things that go into that support facility such as the Y.

Madam Speaker, I will take that question as notice and see if there are any instances in which funding is provided for facilities such as regional Ys. I will get back to the member when I determine whether or not that is something that has ever been done in the past.

Madam Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE (Third Day of Debate)

Madam Speaker: To resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable member for Riel (Mr. Newman) for an address to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor in answer to his speech at the opening of session, and the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the official opposition in amendment thereto.

Mr. Mike Radcliffe (River Heights): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me today to have the opportunity to rise and speak to our government's Speech from the Throne.

I would first like to begin by extending my congratulations to you as the new Speaker. The respect and experience you gained during your time as Deputy Speaker of this House will serve us all very well as we proceed to conduct the business of our government. Just as all members have benefited from the parliamentary excellence of the honourable member for Gladstone (Mr. Rocan), your presence will ensure that we are well guided and assisted in our roles.

As for my presence here today, I owe a great amount of thanks to the people from River Heights. The residents of River Heights form an outstanding community committed to their neighbourhoods, dedicated to their community well-being. The people of River Heights are active leaders in strengthening our province and our country. The people of River Heights are also seriously committed to the democratic process resulting in an exemplary voter turnout of over 80 percent, among the highest in Canada. The recent provincial election campaign is an outstanding example of how River Heights voters devote time and energy to examining the issues that face us as Manitobans.

Madam Speaker, the people of River Heights are well versed on vital matters such as job creation, health care, education renewal. I had the opportunity while walking the streets of River Heights to conduct many conversations on these subjects with the citizens of River Heights.

On all fronts, the vision of our government and our plan to realize these ideals provided the assurance that River Heights residents sought. The exceptional standards set by our Premier (Mr. Filmon) for the conduct of government were in complete harmony with the expectations of River Heights residents.

In selecting our government as the stewards of Manitoba's future, River Heights residents chose a plan founded on a record of stable, sensible and steady rebuilding of our economic platform. The work of our government since 1988, innovative, thoughtful and in

sync with the pace of Manitoba life poised us for a most crucial turning point.

The balanced budget position attained by our government in partnership with all Manitobans was welcomed as the eagerly sought end to the debilitating legacy of debt and irresponsibility that we had suffered.

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

An Honourable Member: Where did we get that from?

Mr. Radcliffe: At the hands of the prior government of the members opposite.

The balanced budget legislation soon to be introduced will serve to fortify our gains.

Mr. Acting Speaker, River Heights residents, like citizens throughout Manitoba, embrace protection from future financial fiascos. Freedom from the wantonness that tethers our capabilities and plunges our province into the expensive task of setting things right is what our citizens seriously seek.

In tandem with the outstanding achievement of a balanced budget, River Heights residents appreciate our government's record of the longest-running tax freeze in North America. Founded on this record of success, our government's pledge to continue the tax freeze for a record total of 11 years met with complete confidence in our government's ability to do just that. Manitobans have enthusiastically renewed our government's mandate. This foundation of confidence that Manitobans have in our government is the crucial base upon which our vision for the future will blossom. This is a future bright with vibrant job growth in secure sustainable fields. Job growth that is focused, that builds on our talents and strengths. Job growth that provides every opportunity for Manitobans young and old, new and returning and lifelong to build security and well-being for themselves and their families.

* (1450)

The people of River Heights are to be congratulated for their tireless contribution to job creation. Over 300

retail shops and services join with over 600 home-based businesses in River Heights to fuel the economic engine and spur employment opportunities far beyond the boundary of our community.

River Heights residents enjoy a strong work ethic, a precious inheritance from their grandparents and their great-grandparents who came to Manitoba from lands far away. Our family histories are rich with men and women who pioneered and toiled in our infant province. The people of River Heights can take special pride in Manitoba's 125th anniversary with the knowledge that their past generations played an important role in building our province.

As we all look forward to the next generation, security and well-being remain at the forefront of our thoughts. We are in a world full of change and challenge. The actions of governments far from our province struggling with their own debts and hindered by their late starts impact Manitoba in many ways. The extremist vision of the federal government, as a very significant example, offloads a tremendous burden onto Manitobans. The blow dealt to our agricultural sector will reverberate throughout our entire province impeding the progress that our province has worked so hard to enjoy and so richly deserves.

Fortunately, regardless of the outside forces that bear down upon us as a province, we have a determination and a talent for taking care of ourselves and those in need. Our spirit of generosity, our compassion for each other, our will to help and our commitment to wellness is very much alive. Within River Heights there are countless community leaders who devote innumerable volunteer hours to the important work of helping. They are helping families in distress, helping a senior take care of her home, helping a middle-aged man to learn to read, helping a daycare centre to repair their play structure, helping out at the community club.

We like to help. That is why for people in River Heights and people throughout Manitoba the most important component in any government's vision is how they intend to help in helping Manitobans point to three priority areas: health, education and family services.

Our government's record on health care is exemplary. At 34 percent of the budget our commitment to health care is the highest of any province in Canada. Our courage to include all partners in the process of strengthening and improving this immense system has earned our government respect around the globe and, most importantly, at home. Our strategy to shift health care from an institutional to a community focus opens the door to the ideas of talents, resources and inspirations.

Ready, willing and eager to help, our government's vision of health care is especially important to our maturing residents in River Heights as it supports their wish to remain in their homes, in their neighbourhood, both as valued and vibrant members of our community.

Mr. Acting Speaker, in River Heights there is a particularly passionate interest in education. Parents simply want their children to learn to their fullest potential, to be capable, confident and self-sufficient graduates, literate in the basic skills in the new technologies. Parents want to participate in developing the plans and strategies for realizing excellence in education. They want choice, a respect for access to schooling that is enhanced with teaching about their faith or their culture.

Our government's fair commitment to funding educational choice is soundly applauded in River Heights. Thanks to the help of a devoted community, the new Jewish campus will offer students a learning environment enriched with their faith. This is just one example of our government's investment in learning that will reap tremendous benefits to our province for many generations to come.

Mr. Acting Speaker, people in River Heights, like all Manitobans, also place great importance on our families. We want our families to be safe and secure, a place where our children can grow and thrive. The strong direction of our government in co-ordinating the services that contribute directly to family wellness finds many supporters in River Heights. A well-managed, straight-forward child and family support system means that resources go directly to rebuilding families in distress.

Safety and security in our neighbourhoods and on our streets is equally paramount. Under the direction of the honourable member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey), our government got tough on crime. The Holiday Inn atmosphere in our jails and detention centres has been replaced with a work schedule, year-round schooling and community service projects.

Residents at the Manitoba Youth Centre now provide valuable help to nonprofit organizations in a variety of on-site, volunteer assignments. I am told that over 2,600 International Year of the Family volunteer recognition certificates were promptly and professionally processed by Youth Centre volunteers. Clear consequences for crime, coupled with activities that teach alternative uses for pent-up energy and talents, is an approach that has gained worldwide merit. Mr. Acting Speaker, our government is also moving decisively into the maintenance enforcement area. The devastation to families denied their economic security through vexatious avoidance of support payments impacts on our entire province. The faulters can look forward to our government's vigilance in realizing the same measure of zero tolerance that drinking drivers or domestic abusers encounter.

Mr. Acting Speaker, our government's message is clear, and our goal is straightforward. Our vision is to make Manitoba the best place anywhere in which to live, to work, to invest and to raise a family. It is a vision backed up by a province rich with history, a citizenry alive with talent, and a terrain blooming with natural resources. It is a vision backed by a government that is unparalleled in its maturity, sensitivity and innovation. It is a vision of leaders. To River Heights residents and Manitobans, it is also the vision that has been made possible thanks to the leadership of one very special person in our government.

Manitobans know that we are blessed to have someone of the calibre and capability of our honourable first member working for us. Mr. Acting Speaker, when Manitobans need help, when there is a tough issue, when there is a complex problem, all eyes turn towards our Premier (Mr. Filmon). We look to him for help, and without exception he and his government have been there for Manitoba.

As a member of this House, I was deeply puzzled by the bitter attack on our honourable first member by the Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer) regarding our government's support of the unprecedented Manitoba drive to save the Jets. Had the member in question not clearly heard the plea from Manitobans throughout this province for the honourable first member to take a leadership role? Had the member failed to understand that this was an issue that reached far beyond playing hockey, that this was about our capabilities, our sense of worth, our ability to achieve? Does the member not understand that, when Manitobans say they want to try and they want their government to help, a good government does help?

* (1500)

Perhaps the member is unconsciously harbouring an envy of our government and the flexibility it has achieved through careful planning so that we can respond to changing circumstances and public will. Perhaps the member is feeling sheepish with a government of his ilk in provinces where hospitals are closing in dozen lots could not begin to master the capacity that our government has built up for contingencies just like these.

Mr. Acting Speaker, while I remain puzzled about the member's rationale for his attack on Manitoba's courage to try, I am not at all puzzled by the decision of Manitobans to keep him out of the honourable first member's chair. I may also be puzzled about the Leader of the official opposition for quite a different reason related to the first time that I had the opportunity of sharing his company, and I remember that moment very well.

It was in a home of a fine River Heights citizen, a well-known community leader. I was summoned to this gathering as the president of an association that all members on the government side of the House belonged to. The purpose of that meeting was to meet a young man with hopes of furthering his electoral aspirations as a member from River Heights under a banner as vibrant and breathtaking as the clear blue Manitoba sky. Mr. Acting Speaker, the young man was none other than the person who is now the Leader of the official opposition. Shortly after our meeting, he

switched to a banner with a hue similar to our splendid Manitoba sunsets, and I recall being relieved. I knew River Heights could do much better.

I am most humbled by the tremendous vote of support which River Heights residents have honoured me. Their confidence in my abilities to serve were in companionship with their deep respect and support for our honourable first member and his government. I worked very hard to be an MLA, and I was able to achieve this goal thanks to the thousands of hours of volunteer help in River Heights. There are hundreds of River Heights residents committed to the democratic process, and they are what makes Manitoba strong.

What makes me strong and filled with the herculean stamina one needs to be the lead participant in the electoral process is my family. Every step of the way, my wife, Linda, and our sons, Chris and Tim, were the life and love that I could always turn to at the end of a long day. Their caring, their nurturing and their support were my constant companions during my rather extended electoral process.

Now that the people of River Heights have invested a great confidence and trust in me, I look so forward to working hard as their MLA. With enthusiasm and thoughtfulness, River Heights residents from every perspective took time to share their views, raise important issues and provide vulnerable insight into what matters most to our community. Mr. Acting Speaker, every meeting, every debate, discussion and forum was a tremendous learning experience as community leaders and Grade 5 students alike told me what they stand for and what they will not stand for.

To continue the dialogue so crucial to forming a bond with those whom I serve, I have opened a constituency office. Over the coming months, it will grow as a community gathering place as the location for good ideas and exchanges. It will be a focal point for information from government and community for all to access.

I am also now well settled into my Legislative office. The welcoming process for new MLAs, I must advise, is outstanding. Government members have eagerly shared the ins and outs of the life here in the building.

The staff have done a yeoman's job of setting up new offices, installing telephones, distributing parking passes and explaining the security system. The Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and his team have, with great proficiency, introduced the rookies to the intricacies of House business.

Mr. Acting Speaker, there is a special camaraderie that develops among all newcomers in these extensive procedural training classes. While there are dry spells in these sessions, they are often punctuated with lively questioning from the keeners. One new member's discourse was particularly spirited, eloquently reflecting a true commitment to and respect for elected office. I like that person, the new member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk). While we may differ in our views and the paths we choose to deliver good government to Manitobans, I look forward to working hard with all members of the Legislative Assembly on behalf of our wonderful province.

I thank all members for their attentiveness and interest in my speaking to our government's Speech from the Throne. During the elective process, I gained the affectionate name of Windy. However, today I am honoured to be here to share these words and to do so as a strong voice for River Heights in the newly elected government of our outstanding Leader, the honourable first member. Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Mr. Acting Speaker, I wish to begin my inaugural address by observing tradition and congratulating Madam Speaker on her election as Speaker of the House.

The position is an historic and memorable one which encompasses the solemn responsibility of protecting the sovereignty of this legislative body, a duty which I am sure she will honour. Personally, I am gratified to see a woman as Speaker following in the footsteps of Myrna Phillips for, as I ruefully note, women are still not full and equal participants in our society. Her appointment may well be a glimmer in the darkness.

Certainly, as she assumes her duties she has the blessings of this Legislature. I ask that in return she view us all through the equal eye of fair play, tolerance and good humour, and I ask her special indulgence for

the newly elected members of this Legislature, at least during our initiatory period.

As well, I take this opportunity to extend my compliments to the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) on his appointment as Deputy Speaker. I know we can count on his judicious counsel in conducting the business of the House. I want to assure Madam Speaker and also the Deputy Speaker of my complete co-operation.

I am honoured to serve in this House, and I thank the people of Osborne for electing me. I am honoured too by their faith and trust and I commit myself to proving worthy.

I would like to pay tribute to my opponents in Osborne for their impeccable conduct and commendable opposition during the provincial election campaign. Osborne, I believe, was the only constituency with three female candidates, and the fact that this was barely noticed, indeed viewed as nearly normal, is both consequential and auspicious. Naturally the candidates were delighted.

* (1510)

Mr. Acting Speaker, the Osborne constituency lies immediately south of this Legislative Assembly, just over the Osborne Street Bridge. The Assiniboine River is Osborne's northern boundary, while a bend in the Red allows that river to be both the southern and the eastern boundaries. Finally, our western edge is Daly Street, with a small parcel of land tucked in just west of the Corydon-Osborne-Pembina interchange. The CN mainline and Pembina Highway divide Osborne into two distinct geographical areas—the north and the south.

Osborne's north end, dominated by apartments with a sprinkling of older homes, is among the most densely populated areas in Canada. The southern stretch, Lord Roberts and Riverview, is primarily a residential area where families are likely to own their own homes. These areas have a dash of country in that some families have lived in them for several generations. Young people return to start new families so that Osborne is home to many sets of great-grandparents,

grandparents, parents and children. Coming home to live and raise children is an Osborne tradition.

We are blessed as well in the southern part of our constituency with several parks. The centrepiece, Churchill Park, defined by the dykes from the 1950 flood, follows the Red River for several kilometres and all but links us to Winnipeg's historic Forks. The park has river access, bicycle paths, walkways, winter ski trails and sports fields. The riverbanks here boast some splendid river bottom forest which, in an era when budgetary priorities favour new bridges over garden green, is rapidly dwindling. Riverbank erosion, particularly during the past couple of years of high spring water and heavy rains, has not been addressed. So much for vision and a little of Jerusalem in our home and native land.

Osborne North has the odd tiny park but virtually no green space. They are developing community groups like the Osborne Village Residents' Association are lobbying for parks and for revitalizing the village's aging housing stock. Currently, the village area is enjoying a facelift: a water sculpture at the corner of Stradbrook and Osborne, and new bricks, benches, landscaping and signage along Osborne Street itself.

The Osborne constituency is characterized by concerted and continuous community action. Consequently, we have kept our local library, created progressive daycares, developed strong community centres and supported recycling and conservation projects. The concept of thinking globally and acting locally is alive and well in our constituency. For example, earlier this week, Sunday, May 21, many Osborne people participated in the twelfth annual AIDS candlelight vigil, an international event which simultaneously took place in cities across the world. People gathered at Fort Rouge Park just across the river from where we now sit and walked to the Legislature in remembrance of those dead from AIDS and in solidarity with the 21 million women, men and children who live with HIV or with AIDS.

In Osborne, we are proud of our energetic community boards, industrious school parent committees, keen business associations, conscientious neighbourhood groups and sound volunteer work, for

example, in schools, hospitals and personal care homes, religious institutions and community-based organizations. Nor do we restrict our community and volunteer work to Osborne. Rather, we acknowledge the interdependence with people across the province. We are proud of Osborne without being parochial.

Osborne people value our mix of downtown and residential life. We enjoy proximity to the heart of the city and the arts community, coupled with the sense of neighbourhood and community solidarity. Many of our streets are quiet and, in summer, almost pastoral with great green canopies of elms and elegant gardens. Most of us have deliberately chosen to buck the migration to the suburbs, to combat urban blight and reject urban sprawl.

Our allegiance is to community within the core of the city. Many resident observe this commitment by both working and living in Osborne at the Riverview Health Centre, the Winnipeg Transit and local daycares or schools, in their own studios or in their own businesses. Osborne's historic St. Augustine's Church, the Village church, is home to the Contemporary Dancers; the Popular Theatre Alliance performs in our Gas Station Theatre. We are famous for our artistic community. Many artists, musicians, writers, film makers and performers live in the constituency and add to its character.

Our businesses, Mr. Acting Speaker, are a source of community pride and a testament to human ingenuity and creativity. Osborne Village first established as a counterculture haven during the '60s, has passed through many phases but remains one of the most original and vibrant business districts in Winnipeg, with its restaurants, art galleries, craft shops, bookstores, specialty emporiums, ordinary and exotic food stores, as well as a growing number of community groups. Osborne Village combines bohemian colour and flamboyance, basic practicality and neighbourhood needs.

Further south on Osborne, the offices and businesses are geared more to neighbourhood necessity. Repairs and services, family restaurants, antiques, offices, shoes, barbershops and hairdressers, local dentists, lawyers and doctors. Here business people know their

customers by first name, another sign of familiarity and neighbourhood.

Truly, Osborne, north and south, is a model that encourages future inner-city community life. Our parks and rivers are well used and accessible. A lucky early morning walker may spot foxes, rabbits, merlin falcons and beavers, columbines in spring and milkweed in summer. The older homes in the south are well maintained and those in the north are being refurbished.

We have several seniors' housing complexes, a centre for the deaf and the Riverview Health Centre. One of our five elementary schools, Lord Roberts, houses an integrated program for the handicapped under the title of the Ellen Douglas School. The other schools offer a variety of programs.

Osborne has single-family dwellings, townhouses, condominiums, a range of stores and businesses. It is a community in process, intergenerational and interactive, stimulating, engaging and experimental. A multiplicity of possibilities means a host of lifestyle options.

Osborne too reflects the ethnic diversity of Manitoba, being home to aboriginal peoples, peoples from many Latin American countries, the Philippines, the Indian subcontinent, Italy and Greece, and this list is not exhaustive. Often these people must struggle to avoid the marginalizing hyphenated Canadian label and to maintain the integrity of their religious, cultural and linguistic heritages.

Clearly the Manitoba flag of the 1990s no longer waves over a province neatly divided into English, French and Ukrainian, Christian, of course, with a nod to Jews and Icelanders.

A walk through an urban centre like Osborne Village demonstrates our racial, religious and ethnic diversity. All Manitobans face the challenge of constructing communities commensurate with these transformations, ones which replace repressive archetypes and mainstream exclusivity with inclusive, respectable and open-ended models. Put simply, the ghost of racism continues to haunt us and must be eradicated if we are to thrive as a community and as a province.

Osborne's differences are even more conspicuous in our socioeconomic divisions, and it is this point that I say with deep regret, that while life in Osborne works well for many, it does not work for everybody. The constituency includes scattered, hidden pockets of dire abject poverty where individuals and families live disenfranchised and silenced, living, as Henry David Thoreau called it, and I quote, lives of quiet desperation.

Many are single-parent families, usually headed by women, which does not surprise those of us familiar with the socioeconomic injustices characterizing the lives of many women and their children. Since 1988, dreams of education and job training have receded. These single parents have no choice but the indignities of social assistance, hand-me-downs and food banks.

Mr. Acting Speaker, often these people have endured only by sheer force of will and plain raw courage. They want their children to live fuller lives, but since the supports necessary to move the families off social assistance are not available they fear their children will be another generation of welfare recipients. Manitoba in 1995 has broken faith with these people.

Increasingly, Osborne's poor includes the working poor, where two parents labour at insecure jobs for low hourly wages. For them trickle-down economic policies have meant drudgery at slavish tasks, perhaps more family violence and more children in care, certainly no luxuries nor hope of escape. These people are John Kenneth Galbraith's underclass living amidst the culture of contentment. Their plight in the disparity between the underclass and the affluent is encapsulated in the current hockey fiasco.

* (1520)

The Winnipeg Jets are promised a minimum of \$37 million in provincial taxpayers' money while the working poor struggle just to keep afloat. Manitoba's social justice has been weighed in the balance and found wanting. Just think of this: A choice to live with nothing is renunciation, a mystical experience reserved for the saints, or so I am told, but when choice is removed renunciation becomes humiliation, an unjust and degrading imposition, we would all agree.

Another reality of Osborne's demography is the growing population of street kids and, I think it must be acknowledged, a growing reputation for panhandling, vandalism and violence. Some people in Osborne, especially seniors but not exclusively, are afraid to walk in the village day or night. Panhandling, merchants say, is interfering with business and some are moving to rival business centres. Several young people in both north and south Osborne have been viciously beaten, most recently on Friday, May 19, four houses from where I live.

People see a direct link between the growing numbers of street kids and crime. Whether the link is valid or not, it lives in public perception. Personally I want to distinguish between homeless kids who hang out in groups and gangs who attack others. They are not synonymous, or so I believe.

Osborne is home to many young people who, for a variety of reasons, have fallen between the cracks. These kids often look strange, they frighten people, no surprise for some of them are frightening, mean, bitter and angry. Some are intimidating and confrontational. Most of them are victims themselves, doubly betrayed, rejected first by their families and then by their society. Many have lost interest in customary orderly life and live on the street or in crash pads or put themselves at risk by trying to find a warm place to stay. Some form cliques and subcults, and with little education and few marketable skills, they beg on the street for their livelihoods. When begging does not work some steal. Most are good kids, but if they are to transform their lives and find places in the community they need leadership, guidance and support, and of course they need food and shelter.

Community workers tell me that these kids might appear in droves this summer. Whenever the weather is reasonable the first wave hangs out at the corner of River and Osborne. Yet the Youth Resource Centre at 161 Mayfair, which includes a shelter which is a project of Macdonald Youth Services, may be forced to close in late June because the project lacked stable, predictable funding.

The very successful SKY Project, with its splendid art drop-in centre, closed down a couple of years ago.

Surely the first step in stemming youth violence is recognizing that young people need something to eat and a place to sleep. We know that violence and poverty, and let us throw in disease, are bunkmates and that Manitoba is the childhood poverty capital of Canada. Our current responses to street youth and poverty—nothing, nothing and then boot camp—is a failure of imagination and justice and simply will not work.

The Osborne people I have talked to want to throw out the lifeline to our lost generation and work with government for a safer community.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the extreme northeast corner of Osborne has a very specific worry. Heavy traffic has transformed the Stradbrook-Mayfair area, home to many families, into an island surrounded by cars and trucks. Furthermore, once the Main Street-Norwood bridge is completed, the noise and air pollution may be intolerable and simply crossing the street may be dancing a minefield.

Parents here fear that the local school, Fort Rouge, will be forced to close and that their children will be bussed elsewhere. These people, like those in other localities, value neighbourhood schooling, believing that education close to home makes life easier for children and parents and fosters a sense of belonging, responsibility and civic pride.

They wonder why there were no Clean Environment Commission hearings on the Norwood-Main Street bridges. The hearings on the analogous Charleswood bridge had given them reason to trust that hearings would ensue, especially since the new Norwood-Main Street bridges will be twice the size of the Charleswood and will disrupt densely populated areas. Inner-city Osborne people have concluded that, because they have no money, it is judged all right for them to live under a bridge, surrounded by loud noise and bad air, that their lives are not as valued as those of their suburban Charleswood cousins.

Throughout the Osborne constituency, people are distressed by the drift toward two-tiered systems in health and in education. Seniors on fixed incomes and families worry about the costs and the availability of

health care and Pharmacare. At best, people live in uncertainty, and at worst, under the shadow of privatization. Everyone has horror stories. My constituents want their fears allayed and their confidence in Manitoba health restored.

The situation in education is a parallel one. The public has watched helplessly while heavily endowed private schools flourish and underfunded public schools stagnate. So-called education reforms have soured teachers, students and parents. Some families have sacrificed to send their children to private schools and others have nothing left to sacrifice and simply no choices. Some children continue to receive excellent educations in public school, but it is a matter of chance or committed shop-around parents. Some parents do not have the time or energy to shop and others do not have the skills. In either case, children are the victims and children in inner-city communities—this means parts of Osborne—will suffer disproportionately. The writing is indisputably on the wall.

Quality education in Manitoba is fast becoming the domain of the lucky and the privileged. This is true whether we are talking about daycare, primary, secondary or post-secondary education. No wonder political cynicism is ripe and epidemic at a time of growing disparity between haves and have-nots. Cuts to social services, health and education further jeopardize the lives of our poor citizens, those most in need of a social safety net. Counting on good hearts and charity, current practices sends these people to food banks and soup kitchens leaving politicians free to ponder arenas, bail out the Jets and hamstring, for example, post-secondary education.

As the Canadian poet F.R. Scott so succinctly put it when characterizing another government, and here I quote: Let us raise up a temple to the cult of mediocrity. Do nothing by halves which can be done by quarters. End quote.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I come to politics by way of feminist thinking and theory and by way of the women's movement. I cut my political teeth on the ideas of John Stuart Mill, Virginia Woolf, Simone de Beauvoir, Germaine Greer, and, closer to home, Nellie McClung, Margaret Laurence and Nicole Brossard. I

recognize my incredible good fortune as a member of the first generation of women to have what Virginia Woolf, brilliant as always, named "A Room of One's Own."

I recognize too my debt to my New Democratic predecessors and their supporters, both men and women. Like many women of my generation I joined my party in the knowledge that together we will build a society based on co-operation, community and compassion. Furthermore, I believe that actions are outward and visible signs of an evolving political consciousness. I am proud of my grassroots accomplishments, my work in education, social services, health and communities. These are the visible signs of my evolving political consciousness.

At this point, Mr. Acting Speaker, I return to my beginnings, to the Osborne constituency. One of my very early memories is visiting my father when he was working on the dikes in the 1950 flood. We took him some tea and some sandwiches down to the Elm Park bridge which remains part of Osborne. This was my first close encounter with the flood, and the only one I remember. To my utter astonishment I saw huge trees and small outbuildings and finally a house come tumbling down the river, but the men did not miss a beat. They just kept on sandbagging, building the dike and pushing the river to subside so that they could go home. Most of Osborne, you see, was under water. My current house was, or so the oldtimers tell me.

* (1530)

These men were struggling for their homes and community and had no time to watch the river, but Osborne surfaced, recovered from the flood and saw the rainbow as Osborne people always will. We are a tough breed, and here I mention by way of illustration one of our tougher expatriates, the Leader of the Opposition and honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), who first saw light on Rathgar Street right in the heart of Osborne.

Mr. Acting Speaker, a few years ago I saw an NFB film on prairie women of the 1930s, those tireless, hard-working, hard-fighting women who helped get the country through the Great Depression. When one of

the women was asked if she had any regrets, she said, well, yes, I have been in rooms where I knew what needed to be said and I did not always say it. When we do not speak, writes the poet Audrey Lord, our silence is heard as a scent and used against us. When we do not speak our minds, we lose our ideas. When we do not speak our hearts, we break our spirit.

Osborne is my community. My pledge to the Osborne people is this: I will struggle to say what needs to be said wherever the room or whoever is in it. I will speak my mind and my heart, and in the best of New Democratic traditions, I will speak for and with the voice of Osborne's people.

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Mr. Acting Speaker, I want to add my voice, as is traditional in the House, to those of other members who have congratulated the Speaker on her election and the Deputy Speaker on his election, to the returning Pages for their service to us all and to all members who have worked hard in their election campaigns and who have gained sufficient support to sit among us here.

I look forward to a long association with all of my colleagues and a learning curve which, for me at least, I think is fairly steep. I have a lot to learn and I look forward to that process along particularly with the members of the back bench of the opposite members and my own colleagues here on our side of the House.

It is a great honour and a privilege to begin a term of service in any legislative assembly in any democratic country in the world. The British Commonwealth of Nations has a rich tradition and we are immensely privileged as members to be part of that tradition, and I am very conscious of the long history that brings us here today and that will continue long after we have ceased to be members, and I am proud to have a tiny part in that very rich history.

I want to thank the voters of Crescentwood for entrusting me with the responsibility of representing all of them, and I will try to do that, to represent all of them fairly and honestly and forthrightly in the House.

I say this in spite of the cynicism towards things political which I sometimes met at the door and I am

sure all members here met at least several times in their door knocking during this past recent election. People in the general public, I think, have some right to be cynical, and I would hope that one achievement that this House might point to at the end of its sitting would be that that level of cynicism had been at least somewhat diminished by the actions of all members of this House.

There is much more, however, than simply diminishing public cynicism to do, and I welcome the chance to work with all members to strengthen the fabric of our province.

In responding to the Speech from the Throne, I am reminded of something my great-uncle said to me. He was really my father during the time when my father was overseas serving in the second war, and he said that if you have nothing much to say, at least be brief. I commend the members opposite for that. They did not have much to say, but they were at least brief.

In responding to my first opportunity to speak on a throne speech, I will attempt to canvass a range of issues that are in the previous Speech from the Throne and in this very brief one which we have just heard.

First, though, to touch on Crescentwood, it is in many respects, as are many ridings in this city, a model of urban Manitoba. Fully half of our residents live in apartment buildings, and the turnover rate in those apartment buildings is over 30 percent a year on average, so we have half of our community a very transient community, many of them students who come to attend our universities, Winnipeg and Manitoba, and College Saint-Boniface.

They are finding it very difficult to continue their studies in the current situation of cutbacks and rising tuition fees. I look forward to the actions of the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh), as she hopefully begins to address those very serious issues which are causing numbers of young people to not be able to attend our community colleges and our universities. More than 20 percent of our members in the Crescentwood area are senior citizens over the age of 65. This is a rate which Manitoba is slowly approaching but which only in some rural areas has

now achieved, so seniors in our area are a particularly important community. They fear this government's actions on medicare. They fear the federal government's actions on pensions. They are, I think, being undeservedly attacked. They are, after all, the people who built this country, the people who are concerned about the medicare of the country. They were concerned to bring that in. They were concerned to bring in the kind of post-secondary education systems that benefit us all and, now, in their declining years, in their golden years they are facing the end of medicare, not something which I welcome and I hope not something which the members opposite welcome.

We also span the income gamut from the wealth of Wellington Crescent, homes of numbers of Manitoba's senators and former opponents of the Senate, leaders of the Conservative and Liberal parties, home to our wealthiest families and a great deal of our corporate history, the old Ashdown home, for example, now the Masonic temple, home now to a lovely stretch of riverside parkland, as Winnipeg slowly regains public access to our river heritage.

As you move south in our riding, we come quickly to the older streets full of rooming houses, which look quite pleasant from the street, but when you get inside you find they have been subdivided into 18 and 20 single rooms. They may barely meet the fire standards of this city, but I would not want to be in one that caught on fire, let me tell you. They are not pleasant places. They do provide housing for very-low-income people, of which there are many in our riding.

We are served by community clubs like the community club of Earl Grey, in which hundreds of volunteers make life in that community more pleasant for their children, for their families and provide a base for community social action. I want to share one particular group's work with the house and that is the Earl Grey Neighbourhood Safety Association. This association serves a triangle of community between Harrow on the west and Pembina on the east and covers down into the member for Osborne's (Ms. McGifford) riding down into the Roslyn area.

These are all volunteers. Their total budget for a year is less than \$1,000, and yet they have performed safety

audits throughout the entire neighbourhood. Block by block they have audited the safety of this community. They have looked at the site lines in terms of areas where people might hide. They have looked at lane lighting; they have looked at all of the issues of urban safety and addressed a good number of them.

They have incredible tenacity. One project at a time they have strengthened our community, strengthened its safety, strengthened the ability of citizens to feel safe as they go about their daily business. I would say to the members opposite that when they are concerned about crime and community safety they could do no better than to talk to the Earl Grey Neighbourhood Safety Association and say, what do you really do if you want to strengthen a community.

What you really do is you get involved with those who live there. You get involved with the young people. You look at the opportunities to make the community a safer place, and you act on those opportunities with community co-operation. You do not talk about boot camps and jail doors slamming shut. You reduce the opportunities and the supporting environment in which crime can take place. Focusing on the criminal is simply looking at symptoms of opportunity instead of dealing with the real underlying problems. I commend to all members of the House the work of that safety association.

Our schools, partly in Fort Garry and partly in Winnipeg School Division No. 1, are staffed by competent and caring teachers. They engage large numbers of our students and their parents in innovative programs to help children to make sense out of their lives.

* (1540)

I share a story shared with me by a principal of Winnipeg School Division No. 1 who talked of a little boy who was walking by her office carrying a clipboard. He was in Grade 1, and he was just a little guy. She said: Sammy, where are you going? He said: I am a conflict mediator. He was referring to the fact that that school has trained and put in place some 25 students in Grades 6, 7 and 8 as conflict mediators. They have learned how to gently intervene in a

situation and say: Wait a minute. Now are there some alternatives to having a fight here? Are there some alternatives to the kinds of activities which we read about sometimes in the paper? Are there alternatives to confrontation?

These 25 children, well-trained, competent conflict mediators, have not only done something fundamentally valuable themselves. They have become role models for the little kids. When peacemakers become role models, Mr. Acting Speaker, I say we have made a great achievement, and the schools of Winnipeg have made a great achievement when peacekeepers become role models for small children.

We are home also to two high schools, Kelvin and Grant Park, and my experience in those schools is that the students of those schools are better equipped than the students of our generation ever were to encounter and interact with their world. I do not share the doom-and-gloom views of the former Minister of Education, and I sincerely hope that the new minister will adopt a far more positive approach to building on the strengths of our system instead of tearing at its roots. I have tried to show a few examples of some of those strengths. There are countless more. Build on the strengths, Mr. Acting Speaker. Do not tear at the roots.

To the south and west in our riding are newer homes built in the '40s, '50s and '60s, and many of the residents of those homes have been there since they were built. It is a very stable community, deeply concerned about preservation of their neighbourhoods. Very slowly they are turning over as new residents move in to replace those who are moving out into retirement communities. A regional mall, Grant Park, is a magnet for shoppers as well as a major employer, albeit with many low paid, part-time and seasonal jobs.

Then moving south across the CNR tracks we come to the community in which I live, the community of Fort Garry. Unfortunately, the riding I represent is called Crescentwood, but about a third of it is really in Fort Garry. I do not know whether there is any mechanism to do this, Mr. Acting Speaker, but it would be very nice for the residents of Fort Garry if our community could be recognized as the constituency of

Crescentwood-Fort Garry. It would be much more accurately reflecting those who are there. I have lived there for some 30 years since I came to Winnipeg on one of the streets—actually it is a very famous street. It is one of two streets that has not been paved. We petition every several years to keep it that way because it slows the traffic down.

Throughout this riding that I represent, Mr. Acting Speaker, there are shops and businesses, major industries, Manitoba Hydro, the Liquor Control Commission, at least the initial head of the Pollard printing business and many other major industries, many small service industries and many consumer shops. In fact, the employment base in the riding that I represent is considerably larger than the workforce to which it is home.

Within this riding there are many of the problems that are so evident in Manitoba today. I visited with over 7,000 households during the election, and I was saddened by the evident poverty in significant sections of our community.

I heard over and over again from those who had lost jobs when they were in their late 40s, early 50s, late 50s. They were not lazy people. They were not people who did not work hard at their job. They were displaced. They had never worked again. Behind some of the nice-looking facades of homes in east Fort Garry, for example, live people who have been unemployed for three and four years now, are living on their savings, are living on their RRSPs, are not able to keep their homes up. Those homes are going to come on the market. Those families are going to go into retirement impoverished, not because, as some neoconservatives assert, they are not willing to work but because there is no work to be had. There are no jobs out there that will hire people of that age. They would rather hire somebody younger. Like so many, they have followed all the rules. They have taken extra courses. They have gone back to school. They have sent out resumes by the bundle.

One woman said to me, I have sent out 700 resumes. She was a person with significant skill. She had had good jobs all her life, but the company she had served had downsized, in that famous phrase. She asked her

community Employment and Immigration counsellor if there was an allowance for stamps. She had spent almost \$300 on stamps simply sending out resumes. They followed all the rules. They have been willing to reduce their expectations. They have been willing to work at anything, but at the end of the day, there is no work.

Let me make common cause with those who say that when push comes to shove human capital is more important than financial capital. This is the position of the Roman Catholic church, of my church, the Anglican church, of every other mainstream church of which I am aware. Human capital, that is the economic term for people and their skills and abilities, is more important, has a higher precedence and more value than financial capital.

In other words, it would be better to have 100 percent of the people who want paid employment working 90 percent of the time at decent secure jobs than to have 80 percent of the people who need employment scabbling 110 percent of the time at poorly paid jobs while capital maintains their reserve army of the unemployed with which to beat labour into submission.

In 1770, at the beginning of the industrial revolution, rural folk in England and Scotland were being forced off the land by the closures, various clearances. Oliver Goldsmith wrote in the *Deserted Village* the following words: ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey, where riches increase but the folk decay.

This is what we are seeing across our land and in the faces of the young and the discouraged, of which my colleague for Osborne spoke so eloquently a few moments ago. They played by the rules but the rules have let them down, often down into deep despair.

I think of the Newfoundland fishers who listened to the experts instead of to their own deep knowledge of the sea and are now marooned on shore likely for the rest of their lives, while offshore factory trawlers still continue to strip mine the sea. I think of the young people who worked hard and stayed in school but cannot find a decent job, of the older people who believed that they were building a secure future for themselves and for their families only to hear that

medicare and their pensions may be things of the past in only a very few short years.

I want to say in particular that I have sat in this gallery while the former Minister of Health, Mr. Orchard, and the former Finance minister said that those of us who knew the mathematics of federal/provincial transfers and said the transfers are falling and will go to zero, they said we could not do math. They said down was up. They said less was more, but now today they seem to now understand math. Even Mr. Axworthy points in his book to a declining line and says, see, the transfers are running out.

We pointed out that they were running out in 1985 when we were government. We fought the campaign across the country to inform Canadians that the consequences of the Conservative cuts to health care and education were the eventual end of all those transfers. Only one other government did their homework, the government of Quebec. Two other governments published after the fact a position paper, New Brunswick and Newfoundland, and finally said yes, there is some danger here.

Over 10 years, Mr. Mulroney's government and now Mr. Chretien's government have gutted the ability of the federal government to have any say in health standards in this country. We are on a very fast track to the end of all fiscal transfers for health and higher education. By the end of 1997-98, there will be but \$3 billion left in federal cash transfers for health and higher education. That is less than half of 1 percent of Canada's gross domestic product.

That, Mr. Acting Speaker, is a scandal. It is obscene when a country cannot commit more than half of 1 percent of its GDP from the federal government to maintain its health care system. That is a shame, yet wealth accumulates.

* (1550)

I think of the farmers who stayed on the land as agribusiness moved in and made them essentially serfs in their own community, of aboriginal people who got an education, who sought work only to encounter

racism, of the wood lot operators who practise sustainable yield forestry only to have clear cutters move in and swathe the forests even into our provincial parklands, yet wealth accumulates.

Canada and Manitoba's gross domestic products are bigger than ever and the wealth is less fairly distributed than ever.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we forget to our peril that society is both fragile and very strong. When it has a sense of purpose, a sense of hope for its future, no force on earth can prevent the achievement of great things.

I watched with both sadness and pride much of the V-E Day celebrations in Holland. My father, like many other fathers represented I am sure in this House by sons and daughters, was part of the liberation of that lovely land from Nazi tyranny. He brought home with him a book filled with pictures from Holland, pictures from before and after the war. Whenever I began to think that war was somehow a glorified activity, a thing of pride, he would say to me: go and get the book out; go and take another look at the book. That was my first exposure to people who had died of starvation, of torture, of the wounds of war.

The Dutch people with their very strong sense of history have nurtured in themselves and especially in their children an astonishing level of understanding of the war, of the high costs of tyranny and of liberation, yet we in our country teach our own history somewhat poorly. So often our young people are adrift without a real memory of their past.

To cite but one example, we teach virtually nothing of the history of either our enterprises or our labour movement. We teach virtually nothing of the history of our social contracts evolution. We teach nothing about medicare. Even nurses that I used to teach at the University of Manitoba do not know where medicare came from. They do not know our own history.

Only very recently have we begun to teach the true history of our aboriginal and Metis people, with their role in weaving our collective stories. Without a sense of memory, Mr. Acting Speaker, there cannot be hope. Hope comes from a sense of memory.

When the unspoken but very, very real contract that undergirds the sense of memory and hope and purpose weakens or disappears, then chaos is just around the corner. The Bible captures this understanding very clearly in the saying that without a vision the people perish.

Perhaps our recent sad history with the Winnipeg Jets is a case study. On the one side are the hockey players and owners who in Carl Ridd's eloquent words are skating furiously to move the league up-market, up-salary, up-scale and down south.

In spite of all evidence that this was a process and is a process destined and designed to bankrupt small markets, Manitobans watched as this government cynically promised the electorate four times during the election campaign that the Jets could be saved for only \$10 million, while privately the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Finance minister (Mr. Stefanson) knew that this was nonsense. They knew it was nonsense. They at least knew it on April 13.

I think there is abundant evidence that anyone with a calculator knew it from the time the discussions began. Indeed, only a few days after the election, the ante went from \$10 million to \$37 million. Now, with a tax grab it will go over 50.

By the time that all of those tax expenditures of which I spoke yesterday are counted and the costs of borrowing the public contributions are added in, the direct cost to the treasury of Canada, Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg will be over \$175 million.

For many, many months Thin Ice, which has been vilified by people, have been making careful, thoughtful, analytical attempts to make it clear to people what the costs were, and they were vilified, just like those of us who said the federal government is going to end transfers to health and higher education were vilified. We cannot do math apparently.

But in the sober light of day the math becomes clearer and, unfortunately, truth is on the side of those of us who pointed out the failing transfer payments, and it is on the side of Thin Ice, who pointed out that we were talking about at least \$131 million in payments.

Yesterday, in this House, the Finance minister said that he had no opinion about making the Jets a charity like the Christmas Cheer Board and the United Way, yet CBC reports today that the minister has apparently clarified his feelings on the matter. Now apparently he hopes that Revenue Canada will make it a charity.

What a spectacle—millionaire hockey players owned by millionaires who report next taxation year that among their charitable activities was a gift to a foundation designed to prevent them and their friends from facing losses on their investments in the Jets.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I think this is a great new industry that perhaps my honourable friend opposite might begin to develop for Manitoba. Set up foundations so that for-profit companies can avoid their losses in bad times and keep their profits in good times. It is a growth industry we could probably all profit from.

For Conservatives, fiscal prudence apparently only applies when cuts are being made to health and higher education, children's services, women's shelters. That is when fiscal prudence is important. When the Jets are skating down the ice, fiscal prudence goes right out of the arena.

The Finance Minister (Mr. Stefanson) anxiously shovelling money into the arena tells the press there are no more deal breakers, just tidying up the agreement. But the final agreement apparently is not going to be available until August 15. Does that mean that we are not going to see that agreement until August 15? Is that what that means? It means that we are going to be digging holes in the ground when we have not seen the agreement that is supposed to fill the hole.

The private money for the deal is still short, apparently. If we believe Izzy Asper, it is \$50 million to \$60 million short. Others say \$30 million. Well, what is a million? I mean, you know, they are just short a bit.

The federal contribution, in addition to the \$30 million or \$60 million that the private sector is short, is \$17 million short. That means, unfortunately, Mr. Acting Speaker, that the federal contribution is not only

short but it is going to come from things that were going to be done anyway. It is going to come from infrastructure money. It is going to come from the Pan Am Games.

Will the government tell us what roads and sewers and sidewalks are not going to be built because the federal government infrastructure money is no longer available? How will the union members, the workers who said they will put up a dollar an hour to help build this arena feel when they find out that the federal money is not new money, is not new construction, that for at least \$20-million worth of their labour it is not new money. They have simply been trapped into subsidizing a millionaires' hockey arena. Indeed, ill fares the land.

I agree with some of the members opposite that ultimately it is ideas which finally drive and determine public policy. In particular, the member for Riel (Mr. Newman) made reference to this in his opening address. Ultimately, I think he would agree with me that policy that has no intellectual underpinning will ultimately die. So I want to devote the remainder of my speech to some of the driving ideas and motifs behind our society and some of the new ideas which I think are hopeful for the future.

The Jets, Mr. Acting Speaker, are a motif for competition, again a sport. When competition is a friendly game or a sport, it is fun, adrenalin flows, skills are built, friendships and loyalties develop. But when the competition is for life itself, when it is with faceless, nameless millions in third world sweatshops, when it requires the rape of the environment because others have weak or nonexistent laws, then this is competition no longer but a gladiator contest in which at least one and likely all must die to please the crowd.

* (1600)

It is the large corporations who encourage competition. They think that they are safely insulated by their global reach, their massive size, but they too are vulnerable as we saw in Barings bank, in the massive losses in Hong Kong and Japanese real estate markets, in the collapse of Trizec and Bramalea and the collapse of the Campeau empire and the collapse of

Massey-Ferguson and the Trustco bankruptcy. How long will it be before we understand that the iron fist of the market is a poor tool for building a human society?

Mr. Acting Speaker, Statistics Canada, in spite of massive pressure from the Conservative federal government, stood up and said our economic problems are not because we have had a problem with overspending in the social area. Statistics Canada pointed out that social spending had fallen as a proportion of our overall economy, not risen, that it was excessive real interest rates and compounding interest rates on the debt, that at most, spending on health and social services might have contributed less than 3 percent to the accumulated debt of this country.

We have utterly unrealistic real rates of interest still in this country, and the compounding costs of that interest are ruinous. Every time there is a twitch in the dollar, up go the interest rates. The boys in red suspenders reign, not policymakers, whether they are in this House or in any other House in this land. It is the red suspenders that call the tune, made worse by the tax loopholes through which upper-income Canadians and their companies make their way, easily avoiding or indefinitely postponing the payment of taxes.

The same agency, Statistics Canada, showed that on fair international comparisons Canada's tax rates are not high. I know that is an unpopular subject, but the fact is that our tax rates are not high. Indeed, they are rather lower than the OECD averages, and when health care costs are taken into account, when they are fairly taken into account, our tax levels are lower than most taxpayers in the United States. Only the wealthy and upper-income Americans pay less taxes, and I think that is a shame. I am so tired of hearing members such as those opposite whining about high taxes and comparing our tax rates unfairly to those in the United States when they know that the costs of health care are 55 percent higher per capita than they are here, and when those costs are added into the tax burden, taxes here are not higher than they are south of the border.

(Mr. Gerry McAlpine, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Manitoba, in fact, as members opposite pointed out and as we pointed out in our budgets from the early

1980s, is a low-cost environment in which to do business. We pointed that out; you pointed that out. It is true. We are a very low-cost environment. Winnipeg is the third lowest cost urban environment in which to open a small business or a medium-sized manufacturing firm. There is nothing wrong with our tax rates, and yet this government after making the case that this is an inexpensive place in which to do business, after bragging about that, is now going to give away \$200 million in tax breaks to the largest corporations in this province, \$220 million to eliminate the health and education levy. They are going to do this when they know that their revenue from the federal government is going to fall by \$260 million over the next three years. That is \$460 million they apparently think can come from somewhere. Where from? More lotteries.

Mr. Acting Speaker, where will the resources come from when the federal government, which was elected to save medicare and scrap the GST, but it has it backwards, they are saving the GST and scrapping medicare—where is that money going to come from when the federal cuts hit?

We are told that a further 2 percent cut is being demanded of Manitoba's public sector employees, and not just a cut on their current wages, but a cut in the base. When will we learn, as our former Premier Edward Schreyer said, that we are just laying off each other's customers? When will we learn that when we depress consumer demand it is not a mystery why consumer sales fall? When will we learn that when we drive interest rates sky high housing starts are bound to fall and shelter will become an increasing problem for our poorer citizens? We allow the minimum wage to erode to the extent that for a family of four the minimum wage now provides an income of less than half the poverty level for that family.

We wonder why young people appear rootless and angry when we know that virtually all of the jobs in this weak recovery that we have experienced, virtually all of the jobs have gone to those over 25. Indeed, The Globe and Mail reported that had young workers rejoined the workforce at the same rate that they rejoined the workforce in 1983 and '84 and '85, had they simply come back at the same rate, our

unemployment rate would now be 13 percent—13 percent. Worse than it was at the depths of the recession. Thirteen percent, if young people had rejoined the workforce. It is no wonder that they do not rejoin the workforce. They know there are no jobs there for them.

This government talks about jobless statistics. It is easy to make unemployment rates fall. All you have to do is export the unemployed. Another strategy that works really well is not to count them. We do not count numbers of our younger people because they have never been in the workforce, so they are not out of it, right? They just do not have jobs. They do not get counted as unemployed. The real unemployment level among our young people is far higher than the reported rate.

As the government's own numbers show, the actual job creation record of this government has been something between a gain of 3,000 and a loss of 6,000. It is something between—let me correct myself—a gain of 6,000 and a loss of 3,000. In other words, at best, less than 1,000 a year. As I canvassed through my riding, I found house after house in which older workers had lost their jobs. I found young person after young person who has never joined the workforce, and, unfortunately, too many of them were planning to leave Manitoba. I found single mothers who wanted to go to work, but under the rules that this government has put in place, if they need child care, they only have two weeks after school to find a job. If they lose their job, such as many did at Christmastime with the seasonal layoffs, they only have two weeks to find another job before their child care space is gone.

I asked the members opposite to consider this silly rule. If you want people to work, then provide access to child care so that those who want to be off welfare and want to contribute can do so.

I found single mothers wanting then to go back to school but being told that there were no subsidies available to make school accessible to them.

For young people and for families, there is a great deal of fear for our future. In other words, they are not very hopeful. At the same time the glue that holds our

communities together has been weakened by the demands to work longer, work more overtime, work at two and three jobs to make ends meet. People barely remember when there was time to work on community issues as volunteers, because volunteer hours are becoming more and more scarce. Without memory, without hope, the people perish, and the chief enemy of memory and hope is the slavish adherence to a dogma that says that the markets of the world are the iron fist which must be obeyed.

It is such an attractive weapon. Work harder so that you can compete. Work harder so that you can consume more. Work without proper safety to keep costs down. Work without concern for the environment so that you can maximize the short run. Be flexible— a favourite word of neoconservatives, flexible labour policies. "Flexible" means take any job with any working conditions at any wage. That is what flexibility means in neo-Conservative speak, but Mr. Acting Speaker, this dogma is being revealed slowly for what it really is, a dogma without intellectual substance, devoid of human dignity.

For the past 40 years, North Americans have been bombarded by the thinking of Milton Friedman and the Chicago School of Economics. Simply stated, that school says that markets are the only proper mechanism to price everything, that minimalist government and minimalist public services are the only way to keep from interfering with market pricing signals. Under this baleful doctrine the United States has finally achieved the status as the developed nation in the world with the worst distribution of wealth. We used to think that imperial Britain was bad for distribution of wealth; the United States has now assumed that leadership role. Whole sectors of the United States, whole sectors of their cities are quite outside the money economy of that American—[interjection] Two minutes? Forty already, Mr. Acting Speaker? I have much more.

* (1610)

We used to think imperial Britain was bad, but look at the capital of the United States of America, barricaded the White House. The city is a running sore of drugs and violence. Children go to sleep in that city every night to the sound of gunfire. The only nation in

the world without a decent health care system. For that dubious privilege it pays 50 percent more than we do per capita.

I would ask first, do I have leave to continue?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McAlpine): That is 40 minutes.

Mr. Sale: Then I will come to a conclusion, Mr. Acting Speaker, and say to you that like many members of this House, we had a wonderful election campaign in Crescentwood. We had a fabulous election campaign, great workers. We stayed on the high road, we stayed on the issues and we were rewarded with hundreds of volunteers who worked hard and had fun.

We cheered on election night like many of you did, but we will cheer loudest when child poverty is zero, not 25 percent. We will cheer loudest when unemployment is 3 percent, not 10 percent. We will cheer when violence against children and women and men is no more. We will cheer when our environment can sustain the demands that we make upon it. We will cheer when we know that medicare is safe from Conservative cuts. We will cheer when our education system is a partnership of children and parents and staff. We need above all else in this province a sense of hope which comes from strong stories, memories rooted in our past achievements and values.

Thank you.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): It is with great honour that I come back to this House and join with members who were here in the last session and all the new members who are here. I would like to welcome all the new members, and I hope that they enjoy their experience in this House as much as I have in the past four years and will continue to for the future years.

I would also like to welcome the new Speaker to her position in the Chair and hope that she can handle it as well as the—I know she will handle it as did the previous Speaker. I would also welcome the Pages,

and I hope that they enjoy their time in this House as they do their duties here.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity first of all to thank the constituents of Swan River who saw fit to elect me back to represent them in this House. I have to say that for a short time on election night I was not sure that I was going to be here. It was a very, very close election, but it is a very humbling experience to see that people have faith in you. When I look back over the last year it was a very difficult year, when we had the government make such a big issue about the whole Louisiana-Pacific and throw everything they could at me as the representative for Swan River. They thought that even if they weakened some regulations and if they pushed through—[interjection] That is right. The Conservative government threw just about everything at Swan River but the kitchen sink, but it proved that the people wanted the kind of representation that I was able to give them over the past four years, and I will continue to do that.

I will continue to speak up on the issues that the people in Swan River find important. In particular, when we had the issue—again I want to refer to the environmental issue. The Conservatives continued to say that I was against Louisiana-Pacific in all the time that I was speaking out for the best issues, for the best possible conditions for the people of the constituency. The people of the constituency knew it. They were not prepared to sacrifice their health or the health of the people who work in that part of the province for jobs. I am very pleased that there were people in the constituency who stood up. Even though they were ridiculed constantly, they stood up and fought for better emission controls even though this government was willing even during this spring to weaken and change regulations to allow for different emission controls.

They were prepared to put the scrubbers in rather than the E-Tube emission controls to try to win more votes, but in actual fact, it was Louisiana-Pacific that came through. Louisiana-Pacific recognized the concerns of the people in Swan River and have put in the better emission controls despite the fact that this government chose to weaken those.

There are many issues that still must be addressed in the Swan River constituency. We are very pleased that we are going to have jobs, but I have to tell this government that there is a concern that they have chosen, Mr. Acting Speaker, not to look at a local hiring practice. When you go to the mill, we see many people from out of province when we have high unemployment and many of our tradespeople in the province. We have people coming from out of province because this government chose not to use a local preference hiring. There are many people that are concerned about that. At the Louisiana-Pacific in trades they—[interjection] But governments have the ability if they want to have local preference hiring. They can negotiate it, but this government chose not to. That is an issue for the people of the Swan River area.

There is the whole issue as well of treaty land entitlements that must be settled, and I was very pleased just before the election that the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Praznik) said that he was going to meet with the bands to discuss treaty land entitlement. Unfortunately, I think, that was just a promise because in communication with the bands they have not heard one word from this minister. So I hope that is not just a hollow promise to try to appease these people, because that will not work. These people have rights. They have treaties that have to be settled, and this government has a responsibility to settle those treaties.

So the issues will continue, and I will continue to speak up on those issues in the hope that we can resolve them and have a balance between jobs and sustainable harvest and economic development for the Swan River area and throughout the area.

I mentioned Swan River as the constituency that I represent, but I wish, again, that the constituency name could be changed. Perhaps that will happen when we have the boundary review because it is such a large area and there is a southern part of the constituency that does not identify too closely to Swan River. If it would be possible, I would like to see that changed to Swan River-Winnipegosis, because Winnipegosis is the second largest community in the constituency, and I think that those people would feel much better if that

part of the constituency was identified in the naming of the constituency.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I want to say that there were many issues that were raised in this election that I would like to address that I feel the Conservative government has neglected over the past few years. I hope that they will take seriously, as their candidate said they would, and address these. One of them is the condition of the roads in the constituency. I can bet that there will be no road in southern Manitoba that is in the condition of some of the roads that are in the Swan River constituency. As roads are in the North, they are deplorable, as into the community of Indian Birch, into the community of Red Deer Lake and Pelican Rapids, Shoal River Reserve. Those are communities that have only one road, and there were times this spring that, had there been a fatality in those communities, people would not have been able to get out.

* (1620)

It is a disgrace that in 1995 we have roads like that in this province, and lots of those roads are a result of cutbacks from government, offloading of roads onto municipalities. We told this government when they made the cutbacks to rural development and transferred roads back to municipalities that there would be a problem. It is unfair that people who have no other access should have to put up with such conditions. It is something that this government has to address. It is absolutely unfair. I honestly believe that there is nowhere in southern Manitoba where people would travel that they would be denied access because of road conditions.

The roads that I indicated into Shoal River, Pelican Rapids, Indian Birch this spring and Red Deer Lake, those are three communities that had no access for a time this spring, they are roads that were put on to the agenda before. I hope the Minister of Highways is here and I hope that he will have the opportunity to meet with those communities and address that very serious issue.

The other issues that were raised throughout the campaign were the jobs, unemployment. We have a

very high unemployment rate in our part of the province, and there is not much hope. Yes, there is high unemployment in other parts of the province that has to be addressed as well. Yes, there is no doubt that Louisiana-Pacific will help some, but all the farmers that are going to be put out of business because of the change to the Crow benefit that this government did not address very strongly is certainly going to have an impact.

I just want to address that whole issue of what the impact is that we are going to have on the farmers throughout the province, and the Swan River area is going to have some of the highest freight rates for wheat. The highest freight rate is going to be out of the Swan River area, and that is going to have a tremendous effect. [interjection] The member across says that they did not change it. Well, I certainly did not hear them fighting against changing the Crow rate. Over the past few years they have been promoting it, and they could have, you know, Mr. Acting Speaker, they could have gone to Ottawa and said, this is not good. They said, well, I guess they did it, we have to accept it.

The money could have been phased out over a three-year period, and that would have made a much bigger difference to farmers, because they could have had a time to adjust. The government instead chose to just lay their hands down.

It is too bad that they could not get a radio station to hype things up a little bit to raise some funds just like the radio stations hyped up the Jets. Now, can you imagine if we could have got everybody going to help the farmers? Maybe we could have got a train to go to Ottawa and fight for the farmers to keep the Crow rate there, but we never heard the Premier (Mr. Filmon). We never heard anything. I guess, like our Leader says, maybe if we would have given the farmers hockey sticks they might have got some attention from this government, but there was no attention paid to the farmers, and the farm industry is going to suffer tremendously.

Now we hear we are going to have a diversification fund, and I commend the government on putting \$10 million. I wait for the day to hear what the details of

that program are, because \$10 million will help some farmers, but I want to assure you that if everybody starts switching over into cattle and livestock, all we are going to do is create another problem in another area where we are going to drive those prices down.

So I feel very strongly, Mr. Acting Speaker, that this government did also add to the unemployment problem in this province by not really taking a strong stand on agriculture and fighting when the federal government took the stand that they were going to take away the Crow benefit. There could have been a much stronger fight put up by the federal government. They were prepared to get involved in the fight on gun legislation. Why were they not prepared to get up and stand and fight for farmers on the Crow benefit and now the pooling costs? Again they are saying they are accepting the pooling costs being changed without having a guarantee that there is going to be a compensation out of the \$300 million. They are prepared to lay down and let the farm industry decrease. There is just going to be a whole change and you will see a lot more people suffering and a lot lower income in this province. So that was an issue.

Certainly the issue of health care was one that was raised many times in my constituency and in particular again in the more remote communities where they are saying why is it that we cannot have better health care services here. I really support the idea of community-based nursing, and I look forward to the government listening to the concerns of the people in those communities and looking for better health care for people who live in remote areas. They have to recognize that not everything happens in southern Manitoba and close to the city of Winnipeg. There are people that live in the North and in rural Manitoba, and I consider Swan River to be a northern part of the province and the people in that area deserve the opportunity to have good health care as well.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the other issues that were raised again—one of them that is a broken promise—of natural gas. Again as we look at ways that we are going to diversify the rural community we have to have an alternate energy source. It was a promise that the government made over the last couple of years. It was in the last throne speech. Now in this throne speech it

is forgotten. What happened to that promise? Where is the natural gas? Where is the alternate energy source so that people in rural Manitoba can have that opportunity? We want the opportunity to develop ethanol plants.

Again, the government talks about Louisiana-Pacific, we need the natural gas so that we can have proper emission controls operating there. If you are going to bring one in, you have to bring the other, and the government had the opportunity to intervene in that. They say that they did not. Then they should have signed a better deal. They should have worked out a better deal with the infrastructure program so that there would be the ability there for the gas to come.

I hope that we will see them fulfill that commitment in this election, and I hope that they will move on it very quickly, because Louisiana-Pacific will use as much natural gas if not more than the whole town of Swan River. If they do not move on it quickly, Mr. Acting Speaker, Louisiana-Pacific is going to sign a contract for propane for five years, because that is how they can get their best buy on propane. That is going to shut everybody else out for getting gas into the area.

I think the government should look at this as an opportunity where they can help. There is no reason why they cannot address it and help us get natural gas into the Swan River valley. I look forward to working with the government and with the people of the constituency to address that whole issue.

One issue that I find quite interesting is the issue of the Lenswood Bridge. I remember, last June I believe it was, when I asked the Minister of Highways where the Lenswood Bridge was, he said: Oh, I can guarantee you that bridge will be there, by the end of this year we will have plans for that bridge. Well, I was quite surprised to hear that the Lenswood Bridge is on hold for another three years. It sort of makes me think, well, maybe that is—

An Honourable Member: That is ridiculous.

Ms. Wowchuk: That is the announcement that was made in the election—that the Lenswood Bridge would be built in three years time. It kind of sounds like it is

in time for the next election. It is a serious matter for the people of the area.

An Honourable Member: Are you against it?

Ms. Wowchuk: The minister says, am I against it. I am definitely not against it. I think it should have been built a long time ago. It is something that has been promised for a long time. Both parties promised it in 1986, and you have been in government since 1988. In 1990 it was a promise in the election and nothing has happened.

We have farmers who are driving 30 miles to get from one field to the other because the equipment that they have has outgrown this bridge. I guess it is not the Jets again. You can find money for the Jets, but you cannot find money for a bridge to help farmers.

I have to say that the candidate—I should not say the candidate, somebody within the Conservative Party said to me: Well, we have been promising it for 20 years and they still vote for us. I think that is wrong. That is a very strong poll for Conservatives. They do, they win that poll four to one, so I do not understand why they will not put that bridge in.

It does not matter to me whether those people vote for me or not. I will continue to pressure this government to ensure that there is service, because I do not believe that you should only speak up for the people that vote for you. You should speak up for all people in the constituency. I will continue to pressure this Minister of Highways (Mr. Findlay) and this government to ensure that we do have a new bridge in Lenswood before the next election, because it is not fair to the people. It is unsafe, and they have to address that.

* (1630)

I want to bring up a couple of other promises that were made during the election. I hope this government will be accountable to the promises that were made. One of the communities that has very high unemployment, Mr. Acting Speaker, is the community of Duck Bay. These people, during the campaign, asked about how they could have some economic

development with forestry because there is some good forest across the lake from them. We had a discussion about that.

The candidate for the Conservative Party said if he was elected that maybe they could build a factory in Duck Bay. There is a lot of wood there. Maybe they could build beams for houses. They could build furniture. I hope this government recognizes the high unemployment—[interjection] No, he said the bridge could wait, the bridge was going to wait three years. The whole issue of the factory of Duck Bay was something that could happen.

I would be very proud if the government would fulfill that commitment because we hear these comments of all these people who are living on social assistance. They are not doing anything. I would be really proud if they would fulfill that commitment and build that factory in Duck Bay, just as I would be very proud if they would fulfill their commitment to put artificial ice into the Camperville arena. Now I am not sure how they are going to do that or how they are going to justify that one, but that was a promise that was made to the people of Camperville. If it was made by a candidate in the election, then I guess this government is going to have to be accountable for those promises. We will hold them to it because, as I say, I represent those people and I am going to be sure that commitments that were made will be fulfilled.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, I guess I would like to again say that I want to thank the people of the Swan River constituency for the faith that they have put in me. I want to thank the people in the outlying communities who were so supportive.

The candidate, after the election, said he just did not understand why those people in the outlying communities did not vote for him. Well, I want to tell this government why the people of Barrows and Red Deer Lake and Pelican Rapids do not vote for them. It is very clear. It is because this government ignores those people.

Do you think that changing the payroll tax will have any impact on those people? No. In fact, they will suffer for it. You change payroll tax and have less

revenue, you will not be able to address the concerns of the people in those communities.

Do you think cutting back on education funding or cutting back on the number of teachers' aides in communities, in schools where we have a high number of children who have special needs, is going to help those people? No, it is not.

Do you think that cutting back on health care is going to help the people, and not addressing the concern about putting nurses into the communities or cutting back on the rural dental program? No, Mr. Acting Speaker, that is not going to help these people.

That is why the people in those communities do not vote for them, because they know. They know what New Democrats stand for, and they know what Conservatives stand for. Conservatives stand for cuts to payroll tax, tax breaks to big business and help for millionaires like the Jets and building an arena for big business. Those are the things that Conservatives stand for. They do not understand the concerns of people in the communities that I represent, and that is why they cannot vote for them.

I would urge the representatives of this government in their term to get out to some of those communities and not just come in when there is an opening of a community centre or an opening of a hall but really get down to the grassroots and meet some of these people and see them in their homes and see how they are suffering and look at ways that they can help them as well, because it is not just important to represent the people in the higher income bracket. You are elected to represent all people.

One of the other issues was the issue of a regional health centre. The people of Swan River have worked and lobbied the government over the past couple of years for a regional health centre in Swan River, and they have been denied. It is surprising that the people in Swan River would be denied when in southern Manitoba, again, one of the regions can be divided into two or three regions, and they would have separate regions there. I think that it is very important. The Swan River area has regional boundaries that are very clearly identified. I think it is a wise move to have a

regional health centre there. I hope that the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) will take that into consideration and look at ways that we can deliver better health care services.

We have some serious problems in rural Manitoba, and I think that the problems we are facing are going to increase. Changes that are happening to agriculture are going to put a real drain on the economy of rural Manitoba. I hope that they can be addressed, and there is a way that we can bring some stability to the community, some diversification, some value-added jobs from the products of agriculture and natural resources so that we can stabilize the population of rural Manitoba.

If people are leaving rural Manitoba, they are going to end up in Winnipeg where there are no jobs anyway and increase the problems here, or they are going to leave this province. By leaving this province, as people have been doing over the past few years, we are losing some of our best resources. We have invested in our children. We have invested in our people. We have to give them hope, and we have to give them faith so that they can come back to this province, so people can stay in this province.

There is a big job ahead of us. There is not very much hope out in rural Manitoba. I fear that the next year is going to be very difficult in the farming community and in the other communities as well. Particularly, again, I think of some of the Metis and aboriginal communities along Lake Winnipegosis, those people who have the fishing industries.

Again, that is an industry that is suffering, people who have brought their concerns to this government many times, but again have been ignored. You cannot do that, Mr. Acting Speaker. You have to treat everybody fairly, and you have to look at ways to address the concerns of everyone in the province.

I think that we have big challenges in rural Manitoba, and I am very concerned with what this government is doing. I am concerned that they are bringing in balanced budget legislation and I am not sure how with the amount of money that they are proposing to spend on the Winnipeg Jets, that as a result, with balanced

budget legislation, we are going to see some very serious cuts.

I would hope that we would not be seeing cuts in health care and education because those are the two key areas that must be maintained. I am sure that we are going to see less effort—we have not seen much effort, but job creation is also going to be a very serious problem for us.

I look forward to the session. As I say, we have many, many issues that have to be addressed. One of the issues—I get back to agriculture again. I am disappointed with the position this government took, that they were not more forceful in their position in fighting the federal government, because I think that we could have had a united front from western Canada and said to the federal Liberals that no, we do not accept this; there has to be a phase-out period; it cannot go all at once. But since the government has chosen to take that route I think we have to look at alternatives for farmers.

One of the alternatives is the Port of Churchill. Right now that is the only hope for farmers in our region of the province to be able to continue to grow some of the products, particularly wheat, if they are able to ship it through the Port of Churchill. That means saving the bayline, but that line must not be saved on the backs of farmers only. We have to look at ways of funding that line and developing two-way traffic to make it a more reasonable cost.

I think it is important that we save that line as well for all the other communities. There are real opportunities where we could develop two-way traffic, develop tourism, develop trade with other countries to the Port of Churchill and at the same time ship grain out and be able to save some of the farm industry that is going to suffer because of these changes.

* (1640)

We have to, Mr. Acting Speaker, look very seriously at the problems that we have in this province as far as our children go. Our children are our future but yet we have the highest poverty rate in this country. Our government should be ashamed of those kinds of

statistics, and we have to look at ways that we can improve that so that our children, our future, can have the opportunity to contribute to society.

When I look at the throne speech put forward by this government, there is very little here. Very few of the promises that were made by this government over the election have been addressed, and I hope that those were not just promises that were made for the sake of an election. I hope this government will fulfill those commitments, and we will be following very diligently to ensure that they do. I will be looking to ensure that rural Manitobans are treated as fairly as urban Manitobans but I think that people in both rural and northern and urban Manitoba are going to suffer because of some of the decisions made by this government.

Again I have to refer to the decision that they have made to put in that tremendous amount of money into supporting the Winnipeg Jets and the arena, which will cause suffering, I believe, to many people. I do not believe that they are listening to the majority of the people. They are listening to a very narrow group of people.

I am really surprised, Mr. Acting Speaker, that the rural members of the Conservative caucus did not address this. This is a Winnipeg issue. Where are the rural members? Where are they? Is the arena going to help people in rural Manitoba anywhere? Is it going to help us? Is it going to help us to build that, whatever it is, monstrosity, that palace for the rich? What will that help us in rural Manitoba?

I can tell you that I am sure we are going to see less money put into roads. Those communities that I just outlined who do not have roads now will continue to suffer and not have good roads, because you have to put money into the infrastructure in Winnipeg. Those communities that have no water and sewer will not have water and sewer. Their plans will be delayed because of the money that has been put into this.

The Children's Dental Program I am sure will not come back, because we have supported the Jets. There are many programs that will suffer, and we will see cutbacks.

I am disappointed that rural members of this government did not take a position and speak out but, of course, when you get that kind of hype that you had with all the radio stations and media and newspapers who had their own self-interest in this project building up such a hype, I would imagine that some of the governments were afraid to take a stand on it.

But I can tell you that I believe they made a mistake, and it will not take very long before we realize what kind of a mistake they have made and that they have broken their promise. Manitobans are not going to forget that if a government changes from \$10 million to \$37 million on one election promise that they will not trust this government, because they will be breaking other election promises just the same. We will be watching very closely to ensure that the commitments that were made will be fulfilled.

So again, Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people of the Swan River constituency for the support they showed me despite the efforts by the Conservatives to tell the people that I was not representing them well. I am very pleased that the number of people who voted for the NDP this time was higher than it was last time.

There was an increase. Although the margin may have narrowed, it does not matter how narrow the margin was, there was still the support there. I want to assure the people of the constituency that although there were over 4,000 that voted for me, there were another 4,000 who did not vote for me. They voted Conservative or Liberal. I want to assure those people that I will represent them as well as I will the ones that voted for me, because I do not know who they are, but I will represent them. I will not be afraid to speak up for them. I will continue to fight to ensure that we have equal opportunity for people in rural Manitoba. I will continue to fight to ensure that our environment is not sacrificed for jobs.

There was one quote that was made in one of the pamphlets that came to Swan River from the Conservative candidate, and they said that Gary Doer puts the environment ahead of jobs. Something like that—that is not an exact quote. Well, I guess we had all better put our environment ahead of jobs or else we will

have no environment left and we will not have anything. We have to protect our environment.

Everything we do has to be sustainable, and I will continue as will members of my party here continue to ensure that we find balance between jobs, balance between the environment and health. We will not flip-flop on our position as we see this government do in some cases. We will ensure that we stay with the position that we have and work towards a better rural Manitoba.

I hope that we can count on the Conservative government who is in power to ensure that there is that ability for people to make a living and earn a fair wage for the living that they are making and give people the opportunity to provide services for other people and continue to help and have a healthy environment.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): I just want to follow on the words of my colleagues here and say what a great honour it is to be back in the Chamber after the election campaign.

I want to begin by thanking the people of the constituency of Selkirk, and that includes the areas of the Town of Selkirk and Lockport, St. Andrews and West St. Paul. We are all here at the bidding of our constituents and of those individuals who decide to support us. As my colleague the member for Swan River has just stated, we are here to represent the interests of all of our constituents. Although I did receive the majority of the support, there was significant support for both of my opponents, and I respect that and pledge that my job here in this Chamber will be one—I will ensure that their concerns are raised here as well.

I want to not only pay tribute to the constituents but also to the candidates that ran in the election, not only those of us who were successful, but all of the candidates who put their names forward to run in this past election. Those of us who are here obviously know what a vigorous and difficult time that can be. It is at times I guess very difficult, but in the end it is a rewarding experience for all.

I want to pay tribute to the two individuals who contested the seat in Selkirk; both of them were very able individuals. I want to thank them for their involvement in this particular election. Either one of them would have been a very good representative for the community in this Chamber.

I want to as well congratulate all the members who were elected, especially all the new members, members opposite and members on this side of the House. I want to as well congratulate the individuals who were just appointed to the cabinet—the Minister responsible for Housing and Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer). We have had a chance to listen to him today answer a question, and we were very impressed with his attitude to listening to members on this side, his willingness to work with members over here. I know that over the next number of years we will have that opportunity to raise issues with him related to public housing, in particular in Selkirk, and I look forward to working with him to solve the concerns of our constituents.

As well, the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister), who was appointed the Minister of Government Services—that was until a few weeks ago a critic area of mine. I worked with the former Minister of Government Services on a number of different issues, whether it was this particular Chamber that we are in, this building that we are in, or any other issue—many different issues that we did manage to discuss within that department. We got along quite well. It was a good debate. I look forward to that. In fact, I have some issues that I want to raise with the minister later on in my address today.

I want to congratulate the new Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) on his appointment to his position. I look forward to dealing with him. The new Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh), I want to congratulate her on her appointment. I believe there are few other changes. The former Minister of Labour is now the Minister of Energy and Mines and of Northern Affairs (Mr. Praznik) and many other different things. He has quite a lengthy portfolio there. I want to congratulate him for accepting that role.

I want to as well, of course, make mention of the new members on our side of the House. I want to start with the new member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers). He has had a chance to raise questions in Question Period already, and all of us were impressed by his approach to the Chamber. He has, as he has mentioned often, large shoes to fill. We all of course remember the former member for Dauphin, and he was a very, very able member. I know that he will carry on in that fine tradition. As well, the new member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), he too has large shoes to fill. Mr. Storie was an excellent member. He did represent his constituents in a very, very good manner, and I know you will too, sir.

The member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale), who just spoke recently here today, gave a very, very good speech bringing forward the concerns of his constituents, bringing forward his own personal beliefs in terms of political activity in this province. We look forward to him raising issues. He has already raised a number of very good issues related to this government's position, a flip-flop, on the issue of the Winnipeg Jets.

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

The member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford), who just spoke, again I was very impressed with her comments and look forward to her representing that constituency.

The member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk), who will be speaking in the very near future, in particular I welcome her to the Chamber. She was at a fundraising event last night in Selkirk as our guest speaker, and she of course is a professional geologist. She worked in Manitoba, she worked in Ontario, and she worked in Newfoundland. When she spoke, she mentioned that it was an NDP government that brought her home. It was an NDP government that brought her back to Manitoba, and that is one of the wishes of all members of this Chamber that we reach out to bring back the many, many Manitobans who have left this province over the term of the government, bring them back to our province.

The colleagues that were elected on April 25 on our side of the House represent all the regions of the province—the North, rural areas, the city of Winnipeg—areas that the government does not represent

even though they mention in their throne speech that they do.

I would like to congratulate the appointment of the new Speaker of the House. I wish her the best. As well, I would like to congratulate the Deputy Speaker on his appointment, and you, Sir, as the Chair of the Committee of the House. I want to also pay tribute to the previous Speaker of the House. We had a lot of respect for him on this side of the House, as all members did, for his ability and his impartiality. I do, however, support the position put forward by my Leader yesterday that we should be moving towards an elected Speaker. They do this now in many jurisdictions across the country, as well in the House of Commons, and I think in Manitoba we should move ahead and adopt that system of electing a Speaker.

I want to pay tribute to the staff of the Chamber, to the Pages and to the Hansard staff, Mr. Acting Speaker. We rely very heavily upon them as we attempt in this Chamber to represent the will of our constituents.

I want to pay tribute to our Leader who did an excellent job in the campaign. As he said, we came a little bit short, but he did a wonderful job articulating our vision as a party and as a caucus throughout this province.

As was mentioned several times, this of course is the 125th anniversary of our province, and I was very pleased yesterday when my Leader raised the issue that this is the 125th anniversary of our province; however, there are individuals who have lived in this community, have lived in this province for literally thousands of years. That of course is the First Nations and the Metis people of this province. We should recognize them. They have given us a tremendous amount through their treaties and their insights in how to survive in this harsh land, and I think it is important that we as members of this House stand up and raise their concerns in this forum.

We did not agree with the government when they cut back on such programs as ACCESS, New Careers, BUNTEP and in particular the friendship centre movement. During the election campaign we held a press conference in Selkirk where we said that if we

were elected we would reinstate the funding to the friendship centres. Having worked in the friendship centre movement and having sat on a board of directors of the friendship centre in Selkirk I know the fine work that they have done and that they will continue to do. However, they were hampered somewhat by the government's decision of two or three years ago, one of their budgetary decisions, to withdraw all provincial funding to the friendship centres in this province, a move that we condemned at that time and a move that has proven to be correct.

We were right in our assessment that the friendship centres do valuable work. We condemn the government. We voted against that budget, but the government in their narrow-minded view did not heed our advice. I even brought forward a private member's resolution on that issue, but unfortunately the government would not let that private members' resolution come to a vote. So, unfortunately, the friendship centres in this province still are existing without provincial support. As well, they have had to deal with the fact that the federal government, even though they said that they were committed to the issue of friendship centres prior to the federal election, has since followed along with the federal Conservative government cuts and has reduced funding for them as well.

I want to speak a bit about the election campaign and some of the issues raised by some of the constituents I met. Of course, like all of you, we knocked on literally thousands of doors and met hundreds of individuals. One thing that people raised with me is, they wondered who was running in our constituency, because the government obviously was ashamed, they are ashamed of who they are. They are ashamed of the political party that they apparently are running under.

The member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) today stood up and said he was very proud to be a Liberal. He is very proud to be a Liberal, but the government, the members opposite, are not very proud at all to be a member of the Conservative Party. There were big, big signs throughout the constituency. They had the name of my opponent and in even larger letters was the name of the Premier, and in small little letters below his name was Manitoba Progressive Conservatives.

So people were wondering who actually was running in Selkirk. Was it my opponent or was it the Premier of this province who was running in Selkirk? People were confused.

As I mentioned, people were a little bit confused as to who was running in our community. They thought, well, I do not know who it is. Regardless of that, they did not vote in large numbers to support the government.

We know that the Premier has stated that he is not interested in seeking re-election. Only time will tell if he will or not, and the members opposite will have to run under a different banner. Either they will pick a new leader and put his or her name on there or they will have to maybe increase the size of the Progressive Conservatives on their information that they give out during the campaign. At least then people have a fair idea of who they are voting for when they voted in the last campaign.

We on this side of the House were very deeply concerned about a number of the issues and, as I mentioned, many of them were raised during the campaign. We were concerned about the high level of poverty here in the province. It is a national disgrace that we have the highest child poverty rate in all of Canada.

The member for The Pas raised an issue yesterday about how the government is trying to hide or trying to run away from the reality of the high child poverty rate here in the province by saying, well, that is your responsibility, that is not our responsibility, it is their responsibility and, meanwhile, there are children who are living in great need in this province. I would say, Mr Acting Speaker, that that is a shame.

We also talked in the campaign about a program, a nutrition program for children, about a minimum wage strategy for our families, a strategy to deal with jobs. None of these, even though the government promised that there would be this strategy, Manitoba Works, a strategy which sounds quite familiar to what we had presented in the campaign, there is no strategy to deal with the working poor. All these things that a little bit of photocopy, a little bit of xeroxing here, some of it

the Liberals are famous for doing, but now once they are into government we are seeing that it is the same old group as it was prior to the election, same old group with the same old narrow-minded issues.

Anyway, getting back to the issue of the election, one thing that was a small issue in the campaign was, of course, the issue of the Winnipeg Jets. The government opposite and the Premier opposite said many times that he would only spend or would only allocate \$10 million to deal with the issue of the Winnipeg Jets, and that, of course, lasted only until they were elected and now that amount has increased to, I believe, up to \$37 million, a point that has been raised by my Leader and other members of my caucus over the last number of days, and an issue that I am sure will be dealt with further as we proceed along in this session.

* (1700)

I want to ask some of the rural members opposite: Where were you? How come you would not stand? Why would you not stand up in your own caucus and say, well, this is madness. Where was the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer), for example? I did not see him. He is not even here. The new member for Morris (Mr. Pitura), the new member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), for example. I mean, do you have no clout in your caucus as rural members? There was a very good article in the Brandon Sun, Rural Politicians Invisible on Jets, where they chastise several of the members opposite for their position. It is quite a shameful thing, Mr. Acting Speaker.

All of us here, we have to on this side of the House raise the issue because the back-bench members, the rural members of the government caucus, are, for some unknown reason, afraid to do so. I am not sure that if they stand up and do it there will be some type of repercussion, which the federal Liberal government has already indicated that they would bring about to their own members who do not follow the government line. So we are a little bit disappointed with some of the rural members opposite who did not stand up and say: Well, this is getting a little bit too far. This whole process is going a little bit too quick. You know, we do not have a plan. We only promised \$10 million

during the campaign, and now we are promising \$37 million once the campaign is over. There are many issues that need to be addressed. The money could be spent in many other ways than to simply provide, as someone mentioned, a palace for millionaire hockey players.

I want to discuss some of them now as it relates to our own constituency. As the Minister of Highways (Mr. Findlay) knows, the No. 9 Highway between Winnipeg and Selkirk is in serious need of repair. It is in very serious need of repair, Mr. Acting Speaker, and during the campaign the candidate in Selkirk said, well, get us elected. First of all, he said that they would concentrate instead on the proposed corridor, and we would do some patching up of No. 9. Then they sort of flip-flopped when there was a 1,300-name petition that came in.

I am pleased the government is acting on the will of the constituents because I do have a copy of that petition. The petition calls for the No. 9 Highway to be properly rebuilt with a median down the middle, widening of the road to make that road a safe route for the many hundreds of individuals who travel that road every day. So during the campaign that was an issue that was raised. Their candidate from the area said that—[interjection] Well, he was 930 votes short of being a member, but he did, nevertheless, make the commitment that this government—he said, my government would proceed with the rebuilding of that highway. So we are here today, I am here today, to once again raise that with the minister, as the minister sits across from me, to begin to take an approach to rebuilding that particular route between here and Winnipeg.

I noticed today and in the last couple of days there has been some patching done to the road, but it is still in serious need of repair. I realize that it is quite an expensive undertaking, \$39 million, I believe.

An Honourable Member: Thirty-eight million dollars.

Mr. Dewar: Mr. Acting Speaker, \$38 million, the minister corrects me. Of course, they are prepared to spend \$37 million on the Winnipeg Jets and the arena.

When we sat here for the last four and a half years and raised questions such as this, the government said, oh, no, no. We are broke. We cannot do this. We cannot do that. Then at the last moment they somehow manage to dig into their pockets and come up with this extra money to be spent on the Winnipeg Jets in building the arena for them.

That is just one of the issues that we feel that perhaps the government opposite could begin to that highway, hopefully in the next number of years. I know that there has been talk about waiting until the end of the century, but I hope and I once again plead the case of the constituents who live with in Selkirk and who commute and those individuals who live along the way that the government is prepared to take action soon.

Another one is the strategy to deal with the issue of the Red River, for example. This is an issue that would involve both the province and the City of Winnipeg and again it is a very expensive undertaking to deal with the problems associated with the sewage. Every now and then, unfortunately, raw sewage is discharged from the city of Winnipeg into the Red River, and of course the Red River flows north past my community and into Lake Winnipeg.

There is no money from either level of government, of course, to clean up the Red, but there is again a substantial amount of money from both the two levels of government to solving the problems associated with the Winnipeg Jets. I know that the current Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) a couple of years ago in a bit of a media event jumped into the Red River and he swam around and swam around. I was there when he did it and he managed to survive. He is still here with us today and we are all glad to see that, but we are a little bit concerned about some of the side effects of that.

Health care professionals warn us that it is dangerous. It is dangerous to come in contact with the water in the Red. My mother tells me when she was a little girl living in Selkirk they could go and swim in the Red. They used the Red for swimming. Now, unfortunately, it is dangerous to do that. The fecal chloroform count skyrockets as it leaves the city of Winnipeg. The Red originates in the United States and comes up to here fairly clean, and then the city of

Winnipeg does not disinfect its discharge and as it approaches Selkirk the fecal chloroform count goes very, very high. As members in the Chamber know, every now and then we have to rely upon the Red River for emergency water, but we are very pleased that that does not happen very often.

There seems to be an impression out there that we go and we dip our cups in the Red and we drink from it. It is not quite that bad, and even though in the past, two years ago we were forced to drink water that was taken, extracted from the Red. It was treated and it was safe to drink but it does not convince everybody that it was safe to drink, and we would plead once again that we wish the government would take some action on those issues.

I raise this as especially the rural members who also have constituencies that are adjacent to the Red River, the member for Springfield (Mr. Findlay), the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik), the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer), all of us who live near that waterway and are concerned about the effects that it is having on that waterway.

We will talk a little bit about the issue of public housing and the minister is here, and as I have said, he has already given notice that he is prepared to listen to the concerns of members when they raise the issues. Residents in public housing are seeing their rents go up and up, and I realize that part of that is because of the federal Liberal government forcing them to do so.

I have seen the rents go from 25 percent to 26 percent to 27 percent, and what they are seeing is their rents going up and the standards of those housing units are going down. They see the standard of their housing units going down. They are seeing windows that leak and doors that do not close properly. They are seeing grounds that are in serious decay, and so I raise it once again with the minister that he perhaps come out and visit the community and look and inspect some of the housing units here and in the city of Winnipeg and in areas such as Selkirk and examine the problems that individuals who live in those communities, who live in those residences have to endure every day.

* (1710)

Mr. Acting Speaker, I want to raise the issue with the new Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) of public education. Under the former ministers, and there were three of them, we in Selkirk and those who live in the Lord Selkirk School Division have had a fairly tough time. We have seen our funding drop by 5 percent, which meant the layoff of 25 teachers and 25 support staff, a substantial reduction in the quality of the public education system in our community.

I make the plea to her when she decides upon those types of decisions in the future that she bear in mind that it is her job to represent the interests of students in the public education system and that she take her position very seriously and that she not follow through on some of the actions of her predecessors.

I want to talk a little bit about the issue of public health, which is another issue that was often raised in the campaign. One of the issues that was frequently raised is the fact that residents in Selkirk have to travel to Winnipeg for kidney dialysis. They have to make that trip sometimes three times a week. The treatment lasts for six hours so, when you factor in the travel time, they are away from their homes seven to eight hours three times a week.

So I raise the issue with the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) that he consider developing a system where individuals in our community can stay in Selkirk who have to utilize that kidney dialysis treatment, that they can do so in their home community and not travel to Winnipeg. It is bad enough for them of course that they are ill but, as well, they have to endure the fact they must travel and spend more time away from their family and from their homes.

Mr. Acting Speaker, what we are actually doing today of course is, we are speaking on the motion put forward by my Leader, a motion of nonconfidence in the government. We realize that the government was recently elected but we feel they have let us down, that they have betrayed the trust of Manitobans who voted for them in this past election, whether it is the record number of teacher layoffs or the failed policies of the government in terms of education, whether it is the hardships that children in rural Manitoba have to endure, as I mentioned earlier the incredibly high level,

the record high level of child poverty here in the province, the fact that they have said they were going to bring in a balanced budget although the Dominion Bond Rating Service actually stated that there will be a deficit of \$96 million.

We know the only reason that they were able to do that is that they sold off some Crown corporations and the huge, huge infusions of lottery money, well over \$200 million, I believe, in total from gambling in this province.

Gambling was an issue that was raised by constituents in the election, by voters in the election. What they have seen from this government is just a nonstop expansion of gambling without any thought given to the long-term effects of that type of economic activity. We now have 5,300 VLTs pumping away every day bringing in this government revenue.

Just prior to the election the government announced, well, we are going to review gambling. After four and a half years of unchecked expansion just, oops, I think gambling could be a problem here. There are two things associated. Well, gambling could be a problem and the fact that we are heading into a general election. They only discovered that after four and a half years of just expansion, expansion, expansion. First VLTs were only in rural Manitoba, only there, and plus all the money would go back into rural Manitoba and then VLTs were introduced to the Assiniboia Downs and, of course, now into the city of Winnipeg.

We are pleased that they have brought in a review, a pause in the expansion, a chance for Manitobans to take a look at the whole issue of gaming. We would like to see public hearings on the issue throughout the province, not only meetings within the vicinity of Winnipeg but in northern and western Manitoba as well, to make sure that all Manitobans have a chance to put forward their concerns on this very important issue.

I want to just make a brief comment on the fact that the Leader has given me the right to be the critic for our party on issues related to the environment. I am very pleased about that. As I mentioned, we are deeply concerned about the issue of the Red River and the Red River cleanup. Not only that is the water

contamination of the aquifer in the Stony Mountain area which was raised by this side of the House a number of years ago. We are pleased that the government recognized that there was a problem there, and we are pleased that they took some action.

I think there are still some concerns about the level of contamination and to the extent of that contamination, but those are issues that we will be following up as the session progresses. As well, dealing with the aquifer between Selkirk and Winnipeg is the level, the quantity of that water in that aquifer, and that is an issue that is debatable at the moment. I asked the question of the Minister of Natural Resources in the last session, and he said he did not even know that there was a study done by his own department which states that there are serious concerns.

We should be very much concerned about the level of the water in that aquifer and whether it can sustain any more development in that area. We know that that area has increased in population very rapidly over the last decade and a half, and it is important that when we do development that we do it in a sustainable manner to ensure that the environment and all issues related to the environment are looked after.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I just wanted to make a few comments and I was very, very pleased that I had the chance to do so today. We look forward to the debate. Once again, I want to just recognize the quality of my colleagues on this side of the House and the quality of their speeches this afternoon. We look forward to working with the government over the next number of years on issues. The government must realize that although members opposite are in the government, they do represent all of Manitobans, all of Manitoba, and that is why we are here today to ensure that they do.

As well, as I mentioned earlier, we are speaking today on the motion put forward by my Leader, a motion that I, on this side of the House, have no problem supporting. I will be voting in favour of this motion when it does come to a vote. Thank you very much, Sir.

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Mr. Acting Speaker, I was advised by my elders when I was

young: If you want to be heard, you had better stand up and speak up. That is what I am doing.

First of all, I would like to congratulate all re-elected MLAs, of course the newly elected ones, and among the elected ones those who are appointed to positions of responsibility and authority as well as positions of honour.

I would like to say thank you also to my constituents in Broadway, all the volunteers who worked hard for the election of their member. I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to all those people who devoted themselves, their time, their energies, their talents, in order that we may win the riding again.

I want now to go to the heart of what I am going to say, namely a theoretical description of what I consider to be a truly democratic government. How can we make our government truly democratic? When can a government be said to be genuinely democratic? What is a democratic government?

This question I ask because when I observe around me and in the past the opinions of the citizenry of all the people and the corresponding reaction of parliament or legislative bodies, I find no congruence between what the people want and what the government finally enacts as policy.

* (1720)

For example, in recent current times, there is vehement opposition against gun control in the western provinces, and yet apparently the federal government in position of power and authority is resolved in trying to promulgate and pass gun control legislation.

The same thing happened in the past. If I remember right, there was also wide-spread opinion among the citizens on that penalty, yet parliament passed exactly the opposite of what the citizenry wanted. Therefore I ask this question: Do we really have a democratic government? What is a democratic government?

Let me attempt a definition of what I consider to be a truly democratic government. It is a government which derives all its authority and power directly or

indirectly from the people and which is directed by people holding their public offices as stewards of the general interest of all the people and accountable to the people, and who as such stewards seek to promote and advance the general interest of all the people according to the doctrine of majority rule and the protection of minority rights.

Now, if I tried to disentangle all the elements in this definition, the first point, the first ingredient that I stated, Point No. 1, is that a truly democratic government is one that derives all its authority and power from the people. If it is directly the people themselves who exercise this power and authority of the populace, of the people themselves, like in the old Greek city states of Athens or Sparta, we call it direct democracy. But, because of the explosion in the number of people, and the population and the expanse of the area of more than a nation state, it is not possible today to have direct democracy, so we have what we call representative democracy.

Whether this representative democracy is in the form of a parliamentary form of government or whether it is a presidential form of government, like across the border, the essence of government is that it derives its legitimate authority and power from all the people. This is the doctrine based after the Glorious Revolution in England, the bloody revolution in the United States, and the revolution in France. When we replace the old doctrine that the voice of the king is the voice of God, we replace that with the voice of the people is the voice of God. Vox Populi, Vox Dei. So it is the authority and sovereignty and power of all the people that gives legitimacy to whatever the government is exercising as authority over its own domain.

It follows that people who are elected to positions of public office, positions of public authority, and who enter as rulers or governors of the people, are doing so in the name of the authority and power of all the people themselves. This is an important point. It takes a lot of energy, a lot of resources, a lot of sacrifices, before anyone can attain to such a position of public office, especially an elective office. You know the difficulty of dealing with the citizenry and the voters. It is essential that you devote yourself to the purpose of being their representative and trying to satisfy all the

competing claims and demands that they express and try to please them, and they are not at all unanimous in what they claim upon one who wants to serve the public interest.

There are many groups in our society, each motivated by its own special interests and can either help or make it difficult for anyone who is offering himself to be a public servant if he does not or would not at least please or achieve the support of these various groups in our society. We know for certain that all these groups are working because they have their own legitimate group interest which is not exactly compatible with the general interest of all. So it is really very demanding and very difficult for any individual to achieve such a position in our system of government.

The second point I want to define very carefully is that once you are elected to a position as a public official, especially an elected public official, the position you are elected to is simply a position of fiduciary relationship, in relation and on behalf of the entire population as the beneficiary of that fiduciary relationship.

Although the specific political parties and the specific interest groups at work behind your election and you owe them certain gratitude, because it is a fiduciary relationship of all the authority and power of all the people, you should be able to balance the competing interests of the specific vested interest group with the general interest of everyone.

Therefore, as a fiduciary, the elected public official has an overriding duty, and his overriding duty is to promote and protect the interests of all the people in the country or in the province or in the territorial unit that you represent. There is no compromising of this duty.

It is the duty of everyone elected as a public official to act as a steward and a trustee of the general public interest. He is not the trustee of only the specific interest group that elected him because they have their own specific interest. You have to respond to them, and yet you have to balance the competing claim of this specific interest group with the general public interest, the interest of all, if you are to be true to your office as a steward and trustee of all the people.

Therefore, the fiduciary is not permitted by fiduciary morality to diminish his responsibility and his accountability to the entire citizenry, to the entire people of a province or of a country. He cannot compromise that duty because that is a primary responsibility of one who is placed in a position of trust.

Therefore, you also have a duty as the trustee of all the people to make sure that all the people you represent have an explanation or a justification or a rationale for all the decisions that you make as trustee of all the people. The beneficiaries have the right to an explanation, to information for the factual basis of whatever choices are made by those people who are placed in positions of authority.

* (1730)

One contradictory and puzzling thing is this doctrine of confidentiality or secrecy in government. They say you do not have to divulge everything. Why not? If you are working for the general public interest, what is it to conceal, unless it is demanded by reasons of high security of persons or property or security of the nation?

I think the assumption should be that everything should be open. All information should be available to the people that we serve. They are the beneficiaries of our decisions. If information is withheld, I consider it a breach of fiduciary trust of those placed in positions of public authority.

Do you think that we will be in a deficit position nationally in the federal government if all information was offered, was open? Do you think that we will ever be in a deficit position provincially if all information was open? I do not think so. I think they will desist from making decisions that will put the country or the province in debt, in a perpetual deficit position if all information is open to all of the people.

The beneficiaries therefore have the right to know the factual basis of the choices that we make in positions of government. There are only two bases for making choices in one's life: the information, our factual premises of that position, all the available information

that can reasonably be collected, and your value position, your value preferences, the ideological belief that you hold. The confluence of these two bases for decision—the factual premises and the value decision—results in the choice. And the choice affects everyone. It affects all people of the province; it affects all people of Canada. Therefore it affects them—they are entitled to know the factual basis of all those decisions. If any fiduciary refuses to divulge or explain the basis for making the decision, they are in breach of their fiduciary duty. It is a duty, not a privilege, to serve the public interests. In Australia, I believe, voting is a duty. It is not a privilege. And it should be so in all truly mature democratic societies.

I had campaigned in the last campaign and I explained and used lots of my time explaining to people who said, I am not going to vote. I said vote, whatever your preferences are, but vote, because you cannot blame anyone if you do not participate. You have no reason to blame anybody unless you participate in the process. They said, what is the point of voting, they are all the same? And I said, what do you mean? Oh, you only serve your own interests. Are we going to confirm that public scepticism, or are we doing to demolish that by acting in a responsible manner as fiduciaries of all the people.

People are supposed to exercise—one of the benefits of our political system is the peace and orderliness that we enjoy in any political contest. I have grown up in a political system, democratic as it is, it is rather not a peaceful kind of election. In the Philippines where I was born in every election somebody has to die. They try to use all kinds of persuasion, if they can use persuasion, but sometimes they resort beyond persuasion and they eliminate the opposition, and that is not a good system.

We are blessed with a system where there is a peaceful transition from one political party to another political party. There is peaceful transition from one set of political officials to another set of political officials, so long as we can maintain the public trust and confidence of all the people in our system.

We have a responsibility, collectively and individually, to make sure that we are truthful to our

sworn duty to act as the tribune and trustee of all the interests of all the people. We are not accountable only to those who help us. We are not accountable only to members of our political party. We are not accountable only to those who labour for us. Of course, they expect such rewards, and I wonder whether we can possibly get rid of giving them benefits in terms of appointments to some kind of position as reward for their effort. That is part of the whole political process that we are working on. So we have set up many kinds of rules like conflict of interest and all reportings and all kinds of things, and yet we are also smart enough sometimes to circumvent all these rules and render the public skeptical about the real processes of government.

A responsible government is one where the executive committee is accountable to and selected by the elected assembly of all the representatives of the people. Not only is that government responsible and accountable, it must also have a sense of social stewardship, which is a doctrine that as stewards of all the welfare of all the individuals and all groups in society every government has a duty to regulate the claims of powerful and special interests in order to protect the general public interest. Once we put the special public interest claim above and beyond the general interest of everyone, then we have slipped and failed in the duty as fiduciary of all the people, and we have degraded the true democracy that we say we are trying to preserve and protect in our society.

If democracy is a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, as one great American president, Abraham Lincoln, put it, then everything that a democratic government must do must be for the general public interest of all the people, not just for the special interest of some private group no matter how powerful they are. Whether they are the medical association or whether the sport association or whatever group they are, their interest is always subordinate to the general interest of all the people of the province.

If we are the people's representatives—and we say we are temporary agents—then we owe it to our principle, the general populace who delegate their sovereign power to rule over them in our hands—we owe it to them that they have a right to know all legitimate and

relevant information by which we make our choices in positions of trust and responsibility in government, because whatever choices we make will affect their lives, their property, their future, their freedom, their children, their grandchildren and their grandchildren's children. Because it affects them, they are entitled to know the basis of our choices, of our decisions that we make in our society.

* (1740)

Sometimes political fortunes are not so predictable. There was a time when, if you remember, if some of you are old enough to remember, Thomas E. Dewey was Governor of New York, and he ran for the presidency in 1948, and there were headlines in all the papers. He was heavily favoured. They said, Dewey elected as President. Then suddenly it dawned upon them that Harry Truman defeated Dewey in an unexpected political upset. Do you know how Dewey described how he felt? This is what he said: I felt like a drunk person who passed out and I was laid in a coffin to sleep it off. When I came to, I realized I was in a coffin, and so I asked myself, if I am alive, why am I in this coffin, and if I am dead, why do I feel I have to go to the bathroom?

The political arena is a difficult arena. It is like an arena of war, except of course that you do not die. You can die politically in a metaphorical sense, but you do not endanger your life or your fortune. It is a very dangerous situation all the time, and you know what it looks like? Imagine the wildness of Africa. Imagine Africa.

In Africa, every morning a gazelle gets up, and he knows that he must outrun the fastest lion or he will get eaten, and every morning the lion, on the part of the lions, the lion gets up, he knows it all. He must outrun the slowest gazelle or he will starve to death, so whether you are a gazelle or a lion, if you enter political life, you better be up and running all the time or else you will not survive. That is a lesson that we have to remember.

Whether we are gazelle or lion, we have to do our responsibility. We have to do it in a moral integrity

that depicts a true representative and steward of all the people.

I am saying, what is the greatest qualification that a person can bring to effectively discharge his duty as a steward, trustee of all the people? Her duty or his duty? I say it is moral integrity. It is moral integrity that gives us the courage to be fair to everyone, both friends and enemies or adversaries alike.

It is moral integrity that makes us honest in our dealings with anyone whether in business, in politics, in political life or any area of human activity. It is the one that will steer us to do what is correct and morally acceptable to all. It is not a new doctrine. It is written in the good book: and he had shown thee what is good but to do justly and do some mercy and to walk humbly with your God. If God had spoken to all the totality of the population of what our solemn duty as representatives would be, then all we need to do is be upright morally in the decisions that we make as stewards and servants of the people, forgetting our interests, because once your interests conflict with the general interests, you know which interest will win.

It is the most difficult part of a trustee's job to forget his own self-interest, and therefore it was Plato who said: the philosopher king has to be divested of all his interests. That is an ideal system. That is not possible in the real world that we live in, but if we had the moral courage and the moral integrity to place our self-interests beneath the public interests, then we will truly be successful as the stewards and representatives of all the people.

I was told, if you want to be heard, you stand up and speak. I also was told, if you want to be appreciated after you have spoken up, you sit down and shut up. That is what I am going to do.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Acting Speaker, once again, you know, it is a pleasure to be in this Chamber and to be able to speak out again on another throne speech.

Let me start off by, of course, thanking my constituents, the area that I represent being Meadows West, Garden Grove, Tyndal Park, the Burrows-

Shaughnessy area. I very much appreciate the honour once again that they have bestowed upon me, and this being the third election that I have gone through, I am quite pleased with the effort that individuals that have participated and assisted me in being successful made, in particular the volunteers. Quite often, Mr. Acting Speaker, we do not give the appreciation that is due to the many volunteers that it takes to put together a campaign, and I am very grateful to each and every one of those volunteers, not only to the individuals that volunteered within my own campaign, but in fact to all volunteers throughout the province that participated.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

I wanted to again indicate appreciation of the honest and great effort that my leader, Mr. Paul Edwards, has put into the last provincial election. I believe that the quality of candidates in all likelihood is one of the best at least that I can recollect that the Liberal Party has ever put forward.

You know, I had the opportunity to meet with a good number of them, and he did a very admirable job in getting wonderful individuals, as all political parties strive to get, as candidates. You know, I give them my best for putting their names on the ballot and giving it their best shot also.

* (1750)

There are always going to be individuals that we are going to miss, even individuals on different sides of the House that are not returning. Again, within my own caucus, it goes without saying, with the member for Osborne and the member for Crescentwood, the amount of work and effort that they contributed to the caucus was very impressive and very, very much appreciated.

I have had opportunity to have discussions, both myself and my colleague from The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), with both of these individuals, and I am sure that people in the Chamber will be glad to hear that they are still quite prepared to assist us in whatever fashion they possibly can to ensure that we still appreciate and understand their perspective on so many different issues that are out there.

I am also extremely pleased and appreciative that the leader of the Liberal Party has seen fit to appoint me as the deputy leader of the Liberal Party. I take on that responsibility and look forward to the many challenges that lay ahead of me, in particular, with that role. I know that some days it will be more challenging than others, but the bottom line is the fact that the Liberal Party received substantial support in the last provincial election and approximately 100,000 individuals voted for the Liberal Party, the leader and the candidates that were put forward to the electorate.

I take great pride in the fact of being here, as I indicated earlier in that matter of privilege of being a Liberal MLA and look forward to be able to continue being a Liberal MLA for many, many more years in the future, of course, my constituents allowing that to happen.

We are celebrating here in the province of Manitoba 125 years. I think that is wonderful. You know, it was just a few years, three years ago, when we were celebrating Canada's 125th birthday, and there were many celebrations that took place back then. Today, we are seeing many celebrations with respect to our 125th birthday.

One of the celebrations that I thought was really nice, that I really enjoyed, was the citizenship court that we had inside the Chamber. I have had opportunity to participate in a number of citizenship courts, but that by far is the best citizenship court that I have had the opportunity to be able to observe and to at least witness, if you like, because it is so symbolic being inside the Chamber, the centre, if you will, of democracy, and having new citizens being sworn in. That is what is Manitoba, that is what Canada is all about in terms of being a multicultural society. I am very proud of being a representative in an area that has been so fortunate over the years to be one of the major recipients of immigrants over the last decade, 15 years.

Madam Speaker, there are a number of different issues that came out during the election. During the election, door after door, we tried to address all of the different issues that are out there, but there are some that came time and time again. People were genuinely concerned about the economy, education, crime, child

poverty. There were a lot of issues. Health care was definitely another one of those major issues. It was important from my perspective to be able to deal with all of those issues in what I perceived as a fair fashion, not necessarily to put fear in the minds of the voters but rather to let them know what sort of alternatives we have within the Liberal Party and, as a local candidate, to offer to the people of the constituency of Inkster.

For example, when we were talking about the economy, we thought in terms of, well, how can Manitoba address the economic problems that we face today? There was one very interesting statistic that I always watched somewhat closely, and that was the manufacturing industry. I have always thought that what is important for Manitoba is to remain diverse in our economy. That is why it was interesting in 1988. When I was first elected, we were at 60,000-plus in terms of manufacturing, full-time type jobs, and today we are in the 50,000s.

These are the type of economic issues and discussions and debates that I think need to take place, how we as legislators ensure that the diversification of our economy can take place. How can we, for example—and the leader of the Liberal Party often talked about the hundreds of millions of dollars that leave the province every year in terms of pension monies—tap into those dollars that are leaving and going and being spent and invested in capital pools in the province of Ontario, in the province of B.C.? We do not really have, in my opinion, the debate that is needed to try and come up with some good ideas on how we can try to retain some of that money.

I met with the Manitoba Teachers' Society, and one of the discussions we had is just the amount of millions of dollars that the teachers in themselves commit into pension plans, and much of that money leaves the province. Is there a role for government to try to provide some form of incentive for some of these government pension plans in different forms to remain in the province, to invest for capital, because many of the jobs that are out there, that could be created, just need access to capital pools.

I toured a number of businesses in which they indicated to me that if they could gain access to capital

dollars that they would in fact be able to provide additional jobs. Of course, the best way to deal with all the social issues that are out there, whether it is the health care, the deficit, whatever it might be, is to deal with the issue of jobs.

If we provide jobs and give dignity to individuals, revenues will increase, social costs will go down, more money will be available to be able to really tackle some of the serious social problems that we have, such as the child poverty, and providing a better quality health care system.

The whole question in terms of training, you know, I visited companies that indicated to me personally that it does not necessarily pay for them to train someone and then put them into the work scenario, because it costs too much to train that particular individual. They are better off to advertise and leave that position vacant until they can actually fill it sometime in the future.

There were three in particular, and between those three, there were over 30 jobs that were there, but we were not meeting the demands of what the economy was actually saying.

We have individuals that go through training programs, and after months and months of trying to acquire a job that is related to the training, they leave, because in many cases they cannot find anything. Then they leave for the other provinces.

Those are the types of jobs, if we put a concentrated effort, that we should be able to retain. These are the types of people that we cannot afford to lose.

Health care, as I say, is another one of those issues that came up time and time again. I do not believe any one of us supports the two-tier health care system. A lot of the things that the government of the day has done over the years I could call into question in terms of some of the sincerity of their health care reform package.

For example, on the one hand, they will cut back on health care dollars at one end, but we do not necessarily see those health care dollars being spent at the other end. I do not believe for a moment that any political

party has a monopoly on the issue of health care. In fact, I recall when myself and the former member for The Maples negotiated a resolution on the five fundamental principals of health care and we received—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Inkster will have 27 minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, May 25, 1995

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