



Fifth Session- Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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



Vol. XLIX No. 18 - 10 a.m., Friday, April 30, 1999

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	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	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Albert	Steinbach	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	N.D.P.
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	P.C.
FINDLAY, Glen	Springfield	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	N.D.P.
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, Hon.	Riel	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank, Hon.	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
RADCLIFFE, Mike, Hon.	River Heights	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack, Hon.	Niakwa	P.C.
RENDER, Shirley, Hon.	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, Hon.	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.
<i>Vacant</i>	St. Boniface	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, April 30, 1999

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members first to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us today three students with the Operation World Scholarship Exchange: Yesenia Gomez Dallas, Fiorella Fonseca Arce, Melissa Guillen Castro. The exchange is based in the constituency of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you this morning.

Also, seated in the public gallery this morning, we have twenty-three Grade 6 students from Faraday School under the direction of Mrs. Evelin Anderson. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale). On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you this morning.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Budget

Fiscal Stabilization Fund

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, throughout the period after the last election when the government was building up the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, they maintained that it must be maintained at a 5 percent level. In fact, in 1997 the former Minister of Finance said: The government is committed to maintaining at least 5 percent in this fund.

I would like to ask the Premier: why did he take this position in '97 and fire over a thousand nurses, and does it make any sense today to now have to rehire some 600 in the budget they announced yesterday?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, you know, it is ironic, coming from a member opposite who did not want to have the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, who argued against it, who said it was not necessary, who ridiculed it, that now he is very concerned about the fund. That is the kind of politics that we get every day in this House from the member opposite, and he ought to be ashamed of himself. But of course he has no shame. He has no shame.

I would just like to tell the member opposite that in their budget this year the Saskatchewan government, over the past year, has raided over \$460 million out of their rainy day fund, which they create out of the revenues that they get from gaming and from alcohol. It is now at its lowest level in the past couple of decades. It is less than a hundred million dollars. What is happening, of course, is that we have certain needs to ensure as a province—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Filmon: No, Madam Speaker, these are needs across Canada. Health care is in a stage of reform. We have not only to ensure that we can build the capital works necessary to move from an acute care base system to a long-term care base system, we need to ensure that our health professionals are well remunerated and are attracted here and we can recruit and retain them.

We have, of course, requirements to ensure that we build the dikes, the flood protection works as a result of the flood of '97, which is all ongoing. We have, of course, major capital works that are nonrepeating. We have a number of areas, and these are all accounted for. We have an agriculture fund, federal-provincial program that we must fund, and this is a one-time, short-term fund that has to be done because there is hurt in agriculture. The member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) gets up all the time and tells us about it.

* (1005)

Madam Speaker, these are the reasons why we have a Fiscal Stabilization Fund, and we are putting it to the appropriate use.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, on page 16 in the Monnin report he said he had never encountered more liars in his experience on the bench, and the Premier again misleads this House because we voted for the Fiscal Stabilization Fund in 1989—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Doer: You did not cut off the Premier, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Emerson is up on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): On a number of occasions we have heard the ruling from the Chair in this House on the use of the word "liar" and here the honourable Leader of the Opposition is again challenging and using the terminology "liar" in this Chamber, and I suggest to you, Madam Speaker, that we call the member to order.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, on the same point of order, I would point out to the member that the Leader of the Opposition quoted the Monnin report, that is, Justice Monnin. That is a report; it is a public document. I believe the exact quote is that Justice Monnin had never seen as many liars in his number of years on the bench. I think members opposite might understand some of our sensitivity on such matters, given the fact that most of the people referenced were key players of the Filmon team, but the point that the Leader of the Opposition was making was that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) stood up and put totally inaccurate information on the record. We supported the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, and our questions relate very much to the fact that this Premier now, going into an election, has decided to raid the Stabilization Fund, and as recently as

December it was supposed to be sacrosanct. There was supposed to be a target—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable First Minister, on the same point of order, and I would remind all members speaking to a point of order to be specific to the point of order with their comments.

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, the point of order is with respect to the member's comments about the Monnin report. I remind him that on pages 57 and 58, Mr. Monnin covers only one member in this House whom he finds blameworthy, and that is the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale). So, when he is talking about liars, we have to assume that the member for Crescentwood is one of those that he is referring to.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Leader of the official opposition, on the same point of order.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, on the same point of order, it is obvious that the Tories have one position on Monnin on one page, page 16, and another position on the other page. We are willing and able to discuss all parts of the Monnin inquiry. We feel free in this Chamber to quote from any section of the Monnin inquiry. We do not need a sock in our mouth like members opposite. We do not need any gag orders in this Chamber, and we feel that we are free to speak on the Monnin inquiry, including page 16 where Monnin states that he has never encountered more liars in his experience on the bench.

The Premier obviously agrees with us, Madam Speaker, because he, too, is quoting from Monnin. We are not afraid to quote from Monnin. Let the truth come out.

* (1010)

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Emerson, the Leader of the Opposition did indeed quote from the Monnin inquiry, but I did not hear him attribute that specifically to any member in this House. Now I recognize it is Friday, and I recognize emotions are running

high, but I would appreciate the co-operation of all members in using temperate language and not getting into enraged debates. So there is therefore not a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, on a new point of order, in his comments on the previous point of order, the Premier specifically made reference to a member of this House in terms of being a liar. I would suggest, in keeping with your ruling, that you once again—and I do not know how many more times we have to get this Premier to withdraw words and apologize, but he clearly, clearly broke the rules of this House. I would suggest that you ask him to, once again, I think for the thousandth time in this House, withdraw his unparliamentary language.

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, on the point of order, I will make my point that the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) is the only member of this House who is found blameworthy in the report, but I certainly will not make any allegations of lying against him. I withdraw any implication of that.

Madam Speaker: I thank the honourable First Minister.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Opposition, with a supplementary question.

Mr. Doer: We have said for four years that hallway medicine and the crisis in health care has alternatives, and that is to use the rainy day fund to prevent the raining in health care in hospitals, to get our friends and neighbours and family members out of the hallways of our hospitals, to stop the indiscriminate firing of nurses. So, Madam Speaker, was the government telling the truth in 1997 when it stated: we are committed to maintaining at least 5 percent, or is it telling the truth now that a crisis in health care or a crisis for the Tories must be dealt with with the Stabilization Fund?

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I wonder if I might ask the honourable Leader of the official opposition to withdraw the words and rephrase his question. "To tell the truth," when referring

specifically to any member of this Chamber, has been ruled unparliamentary by Speaker Rocan on several occasions, and it has been raised previously in this Chamber on several occasions.

Mr. Doer: Well, Madam Speaker, I guess my question is: was the government telling the truth when it made the statement that it was committed to 5 percent, or was it telling the truth this morning?

Mr. Filmon: I think that the answer to the dilemma of the member opposite is contained in today's Free Press editorial, and it says: "The irony here and it is a big one is that the Tories are being criticized for doing exactly what opposition politicians have been demanding for years: Spend more money, particularly on health care."

That, of course, is what is really irking the member opposite.

An Honourable Member: It is really bothering you guys.

Mr. Filmon: It is really bothering him; he is terribly exercised and terribly upset by it.

Mr. Doer: Yes, absolutely, we have for three years said all this gambling revenue and other revenue that is going into the Fiscal Stabilization Fund should deal with the crisis in health care. It should deal with the situation of ending hallway medicine. It has been this government that has said for the last three years, and I quote again from the former Minister of Finance, now Minister of Health, on March 8 last year: The Fiscal Stabilization Fund is spoken for. The government is required to maintain a balance of 5 percent in that fund.

Madam Speaker, why has this government put people through this kind of crisis for four years, why has this government fired a thousand nurses when it had a Stabilization Fund, and why is it rehiring people just before an election campaign?

* (1015)

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I encourage the Leader of the

Opposition to look back at previous budgets, and if he does so, he will see in this budget year we are transferring \$75 million to deal with health and other social programs. If he looks back last year, he will see that we transferred \$60 million to deal with social programs. If he looks back two years ago, he will see that we transferred \$100 million to deal with health and social programs. Certainly our performance has been consistent in terms of continuing to utilize our savings account to protect the social programs that are very important to Manitoba: health care, post-secondary education and other programs. So, again, if he looks at the Stabilization Account, he will see that in fact we actually took more money out of the Stabilization Account a year ago than we are this year. The balance in that fund is still in excess of \$220 million, about 4 percent of our expenditure, and still gives us the flexibility on a go-forward basis, recognizing that that fund in its entirety was put in place and created by this government and has been applauded by people right across Manitoba.

Oakbank Personal Care Home Construction

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, we would like to look back now to 1995 and the words and the election promises of this government. The road of health care announcements is littered with broken promises from this government, from this Premier, from this Minister of Finance and from a myriad of health care ministers past.

Madam Speaker, in 1992 the government promised the Oakbank personal care home. In 1995, in the election pamphlet, and I have it now, there is a commitment to build the Oakbank-Springfield personal care home. I would like to ask the Premier: why did you break this election promise of 1995, and is this similar to the other election promises we are getting right now in this artificial Trojan horse budget?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, when it comes to personal care home beds, I believe as of today there are in excess of 1,100 that are either under construction or about to be underway very shortly right across Manitoba. This budget includes an additional

200 personal care home beds, net new personal care home beds. So, again, we have made a significant commitment to creating personal care home beds right across our province, recognizing the important service that those facilities provide so that people get the care in that kind of a facility as opposed to in our hospitals and our acute care settings. Again, if you look at this budget, there is \$15 million more for long-term care facilities, a significant commitment to continuing to provide those very important services to all Manitobans.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, and does this not sound like an echo from 1995? Does it not just sound like: This is a recorded announcement? Where have you heard it before?

Madam Speaker, I ask—

An Honourable Member: Well, we have certainly heard all of yours before, I will tell you.

Mr. Doer: Stand up.

An Honourable Member: Ride on the Jets again, that was a good one.

Mr. Doer: Save the Coyotes will be the slogan this time around.

The minister did not answer the question. I asked him specifically about his promise in 1992, 1995, a promise he recommitted in his budget in 1998. Madam Speaker, why did the government take down the sign that had been bleached by the sun, and why are there tumbleweeds blowing by the site where this government promised to build a personal care home four years ago?

* (1020)

Mr. Stefanson: Well, Madam Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition does just a little bit of homework and goes back to the 1995 capital program, he will see that the vast majority of those projects are going forward, and they are going forward with the input of regional health authorities in communities right across our province and with their support. So, again, this budget includes \$123 million for capital projects.

Last year's budget included about \$150 million for capital projects, all dealing with more personal care homes, more hospital improvements, a number of improvements right across Winnipeg, significant capital improvements to our health care facilities right across Manitoba, something we are very proud of.

Mr. Doer: The only thing we have had from this Premier and this government is hallway medicine over the last four years because of your broken promises. You closed 1,400 acute care beds, you froze your promise on 600 personal care beds, you fired a thousand nurses, and now you want to rehire, just before the election, 600 more people. Do you think anybody believes you? Why do you not answer the question about the Oakbank personal care home, or do you not have an answer?

Mr. Stefanson: Well, Madam Speaker—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I am having difficulty hearing the honourable Minister of Health.

Mr. Stefanson: Well, Madam Speaker, this budget includes over \$2.1 billion for health care; 35.5 percent of all of our spending, in the last two years alone, approximately \$300 million more for health care, dealing with all of the issues that are important to Manitobans, continuing to reduce waiting lists, to continue to relieve hospital overcrowding, to provide more personal care home beds, to provide more home care support. The list goes on in terms of continuing to strengthen what is a quality health care system here in the province of Manitoba.

Budget Personal Income Tax Reduction

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Madam Speaker, there has been a lot of pre-election, prebudget hype with regard to significant tax cuts by this government, yet a lot of people in Manitoba will be very disappointed today to learn that the income tax cut was not what they expected it might be. In fact, when you look at this minister's—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Leonard Evans: What this minister is offering the people of Manitoba comes to \$71 per person per year or \$1.36 a week. You know that barely buys a cup of coffee. We should call this a cup-of-coffee-per-week budget, because that is all we get out of this, Madam Speaker. How can this minister, with a straight face, say that he is giving significant tax breaks to the people of Manitoba when all he has given them is a cup of coffee each week?

* (1025)

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I find it rather amusing that the member for Brandon East is complaining that the tax cuts were not significant enough. This is the long-standing member of a former discredited government in this province who created new taxes, who raised every tax there was, who voted against tax cuts in previous budgets, who voted against the balanced budget legislation. In fact, when we brought in the balanced budget legislation, every member over there spoke against it, and the member for Brandon East said it should be withdrawn. It is unnecessary; it is undemocratic; it is flawed. In fact, it would prove to be very embarrassing to the Minister of Finance. They opposed completely any form of balanced budget legislation.

I know that the Leader is trying to reinvent himself as today's Leader of today's NDP, but he does not have any support over there. His member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk) said it is the worst thing that ever happened to her constituency. Everyone over there has criticized the fact that we have had surpluses, and now the member for Brandon East is saying that the tax cuts were too minimal. I cannot believe it.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. We will get through this, I am sure.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Madam Speaker, the minister should know you can balance a budget without balanced budget legislation—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Leonard Evans: I was part of the government that had surpluses in the 1970s—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Would the honourable member for Brandon East please pose his question.

Balanced Budget Use of Fiscal Stabilization Fund

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): How can this minister, with a straight face, call this a surplus budget when his surplus of \$21.4 million would become a deficit of \$163.3 million if he did not draw \$184.7 million from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund? It reminds me of a business whose expenses exceed their revenues; they have a loss—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The question has been put.

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, the member has already heard this morning how our neighbours in Saskatchewan have taken substantially more money out of their Fiscal Stabilization Fund to balance their budget, and I have heard members across the way talk about Saskatchewan's balanced budget this past year. According to the member for Brandon East, it probably is not balanced then.

But a further quote from the member for Brandon East when he was talking about balanced budgets in the past, and he said: What is so magical about balancing the budget every year anyway? Do you really think you are going to get the Manitoba debt down to zero? This member, who was a member of a government who created new taxes, who raised new taxes, is now criticizing us for having tax reductions. Certainly we have indicated that our job is not done. We want to look at further tax reductions. We have announced in the throne speech that we are going to have a Lower Tax Commission which will consult experts and Manitobans, and we will make further tax reductions in the future.

* (1030)

Mr. Leonard Evans: Madam Speaker, how can the minister expect to sustain the level of

activity, the level of expenditures shown in his budget when he is using a one-time federal health grant and he is taking \$140.7 million from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, while at the same time his own budget document shows a lower level of economic growth in 1999, and we do know that there is a possibility of a slowdown of the American economy next year and that this would have a negative effect on our revenues? How can he possibly expect to sustain this particular situation?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The only dark cloud over any economy in this country is when they elect an NDP government. Manitobans and indeed Canadians have seen the devastation that one term of government can do in a province like Ontario—devastated that province where they have got a debt level that they are going to take many decades to get out of. That is what an NDP government does.

The member for Brandon East does not understand the relationship between lower taxes and a growth in the economy. We believe that the Manitoba economy will continue to grow, that there will be our ability to see the economy grow. If the members opposite do not want to take my word for it, I would like to table for them some third-party analysis from Nesbitt Burns. It talks about yesterday's budget, Manitoba—Prairie Prudence, and it talks about the fiscal outlook in this province.

Budget Health Care Initiatives

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, in 1995 this provincial government, the same group of individuals, stated they were giving the greatest increase in the history of the province to the capital health program of the province of Manitoba, the greatest increase ever. What they said was untrue, what the government said was untrue, what they said was not honest, and I said when they were re-elected, they would cancel it. And when they were re-elected, they cancelled that program after the election. They were not fair; they lied to the people of Manitoba; they lied to the people of Manitoba. Now we are hearing a budget that says the greatest expenditures in health care ever—before

a provincial election. They lied then, they are not telling the truth today—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the honourable member for Kildonan to pick and choose his words carefully and to please pose his question.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, facing a provincial election, why should the people of Manitoba have any faith that these expenditures the government has been saying they cannot do the past four years and we have been recommending—why should anybody in the province of Manitoba believe that they will carry through on their health care initiatives when people are waiting in the hallways today as a result of their lies in 1995?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, that was quite a performance from a desperate man over there. All I need to tell him is to look at health spending in the province of Manitoba in the last 11 years; it is up \$800 million or 60 percent. Health care in Manitoba continues to occupy over 35 percent of our budget, the second-highest allocation of any province in Canada. On a per capita basis, we are in the top few provinces in all of Canada. Health care has been, continues to be and will always be the No. 1 priority of this government. We have proven it by our financial commitments and we will continue to do that.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Kildonan, with a supplementary question.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, why should the people of Manitoba believe this government's desperate health budget expenditures when last year they said they were going to save \$5 million on frozen food, and the day before the budget we find out they are spending \$2.5 million in addition and the hospitals are paying money for frozen food they are not receiving? Why should anyone believe these people who over and over again fix these numbers and cannot be trusted with health care?

Mr. Stefanson: Well, Madam Speaker, this government commits to balance the books and we do it time and time again, starting back in 1995. When we have had additional resources to

dedicate through our surpluses, the majority of those funds have gone to health care. We are seeing the results of that right across our province, whether it is more capital facilities being built, renovated, improved, whether it is enhancements in programs like our Home Care program, like our personal care home program, like relieving the whole issue of waiting lists, continuing to reduce waiting lists for diagnostic services and surgery, and so on. Manitobans are seeing that right across this province. That is why this budget includes \$2.1 billion, the largest expenditure ever, over 35 percent of our money, and \$800 million, a 60 percent increase over the last 11 years to health care. That shows commitment.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, how does the Minister of Health or the Premier or anyone expect Manitobans to believe when they lied in 1995? And after firing a thousand nurses, for the first time in 11 years this government is now saying they are going to hire more nurses—after having laid off a thousand in the past 11 years? How can anyone trust these people on health care?

Mr. Stefanson: Well, Madam Speaker, I certainly question the parliamentary language and the desperation of the member opposite. I have already outlined to him very clearly the financial commitment to health care, how we rank right across Canada in terms of our total commitment, the second-highest in Canada as a percentage of our budget. On a per capita, we are amongst the highest in Canada.

We are spending \$5.8 million every day in the province of Manitoba to do all of the things we are talking about to continue to improve health care. When it comes to the issue of nurses today, there is a nursing shortage right across Canada, in NDP British Columbia, in provinces like Ontario, and so on. We have a plan in our province to address that issue by setting aside funding to retain and recruit more nurses, by putting in place more permanent positions, by working with the Faculty of Nursing and the Assiniboine Community College to bring more nurses through our educational facility. By balancing our budget, we are able to dedicate these additional significant resources to health care, unlike the

kind of government we had from members opposite who ran massive deficits of hundreds of millions of dollars. They took our debt from \$1 billion to \$5 billion in six years. They took our debt servicing from \$100 million to \$500 million. Without those interest costs, just think if we had that money to go for health care services right across Manitoba.

* (1040)

Budget Fiscal Stabilization Fund

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): How things have changed since 11 years. We have in fact, Madam Speaker, made full circle. Eleven years ago, when they created the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, they borrowed \$150 million in order to create it, creating a deficit at that time, and the New Democrats supported the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, the slush fund that we called it, as it is today. At one time the two parties used to work together. Today, the NDP are joining the Liberals in opposition to what this government is doing with the slush fund.

My question for the government is to recognize that in fact they are using that Tory slush fund that the NDP supported in '88 in order to create a surplus budget in order to put a bunch of election goodies in front of Manitobans for this coming election.

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, during last fall and early winter we consulted with 1,200 Manitobans about the direction this budget should take, and the approval of those 1,200 Manitobans for balancing the budget, paying down the debt and reducing taxes but also spending on priority programs was very strong. What we have done in this budget is have a balanced approach to it. We have balanced the budget. We are paying down the debt, we do have a surplus, and we are spending significant resources on our priority programs.

In this budget alone we are spending \$194 million additional on health care. That is a 10 percent increase. That is the direction that Manitobans want us to go.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, can the Minister of Finance tell us why, when thousands of nurses, thousands of teachers asked this government to tap into the slush fund, they did not? It took an election, a provincial election for them to bring out the umbrellas.

Mr. Gilleshammer: In those consultations, Manitobans who were consulted—and all Manitobans had an opportunity to contribute to that—asked us to use the Fiscal Stabilization Fund wisely. We did that last year as well, making a \$226-million reduction. The draw from the Stabilization Fund this year is actually less than it was last year, but we are following the direction that Manitobans very clearly gave us to make expenditures on priority programs.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I ask the Minister of Finance: does this then mean that he did not want to listen to thousands of teachers and thousands of nurses and health care workers that were calling on the government to use the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, that the only time that he is prepared to listen to Manitobans is when it is in the government's best interests in terms of re-election and is saying to this House today that this is nothing more than an election budget in case this government wants to have a spring election?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Madam Speaker, I just indicated that we listened to all Manitobans who came forward either at the meetings that were held across this province or who wrote in to the Department of Finance to give us their advice. I can tell you that Manitobans are very pleased with the fact that we have a balance. What the member should see is that we have done similar things. There has been consistency in our approach to budgets over the last five years. This is our fifth consecutive budget that is balanced. We are using the available funds to spend on priority programs, and our priorities have always been health care, family services and education.

Budget Growth Projections

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): As an economist, I was always taught to carefully check the assumptions behind any modelling,

and a careful check of the facts and figures of this budget show, Madam Speaker, the sincerest questions about the sustainability of this budget and the government's fiscal and economic policy.

I would like to ask the Finance minister if he can explain why the budget document projects a growth this year of 2.4 percent and an increased growth of 3.4 percent the following year when independent projections show the range is as low as 1.2 percent in growth this year and most forecasters are looking at declining growth over the next couple of years. Why has he painted very rosy financial pictures in growth when independent forecasters are indicating that is not the case?

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Finance): Well, Madam Speaker, I tabled, in response to an earlier question, the analysis by Nesbitt Burns called Manitoba–Prairie Prudence where they acknowledge certainly the deficits that were run up in the 1980s by the opposition party when they were in government but also recognize the fact that we have balanced the budgets over the last five years. They have taken a look at our fiscal outlook and described this as Manitoba–Prairie Prudence. So, rather than use the forecasters that the member for Thompson might use—probably his seatmate from Brandon East—the third-party objective observers have endorsed this budget and indicated that we are on the right track.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, as a follow-up question, I am wondering if the Finance minister can explain, given the reality of the growth projections I indicated, why he is projecting an 11.2 percent growth in income tax revenue, despite the income tax cuts, and a 7.5 percent projected increase in retail sales tax. Is it not the truth that this government is inflating numbers going into this election in a desperate attempt to get re-elected?

Mr. Gillehammer: Again, I would urge the member for Thompson and the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) to look at the document I tabled by Nesbitt Burns. What the member for Thompson does not seem to understand is that lower taxes create a competitive economy. It allows us the ability to grow the

economy and grow the jobs in this province. We have now had more people working in Manitoba than we have ever had in our history. We also have the lowest unemployment rate at 5.4 percent and the lowest student unemployment rate in the country. So we feel very confident that our economy is going to continue to grow.

Manitoba Hydro Privatization

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): As a final question, I am wondering if the minister will now confirm, which is obvious from a review of the financial documents, that they have used the revenue from the sale of MTS and in three short years have flushed that through the system, something that took us 88 years to build. I am wondering if, to sustain this budget, the real plan is that, once they get elected, they are going to sell off Manitoba Hydro and do that with the revenue collected with MTS.

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, the short answer is no.

Madam Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Budget–Economic Growth

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): I would like to make a brief statement with regard to this budget and the lack of sustainability of this budget, because, if you read the documents themselves, they show a serious drop in investment expected in this coming year. Here it is on page 14 of the economic section of this budget. Likewise, the manufacturing investment is predicted to be down, not up but down. This is in the document itself.

Also, Madam Speaker, if you look at the figures on economic growth, they too show in the document a reduction in the rate of economic growth. So the question is: how can this minister with a straight face say that he can sustain the revenues to maintain the books in this province, to maintain a balanced budget? I would say that this is not a balanced budget; it is

a major deficit budget, and anyone who thinks otherwise is really being dishonest with himself or with the public of Manitoba.

* (1050)

Madam Speaker, if you did not draw over \$180 million from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, you would have a serious deficit of \$163.3 million. So what we really have is a deficit budget. Talk to the Provincial Auditor. I ask the members of the government to go and sit down over a cup of coffee, which they are providing the people of Manitoba with once a week—maybe a refill as well, I am not sure—to go down and sit with the Provincial Auditor and ask him what does he think about the bottom line. And he will tell you the bottom line is a deficit, not a surplus. So I do not know how this minister can stand up and take pride in saying, again, he has given us a surplus budget. As a matter of fact, this is true of the last several budgets: not surpluses but deficits. It is analogous to a private enterprise, to a business—the member for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger) knows a lot about business—which loses money during the year, but in order to show a profit, he dips into his savings account and covers his losses and says: hey, I made a profit. Well, what nonsense. And that is exactly what we have in this budget.

University of Winnipeg—Funding

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to stand in the House today and talk about a recent announcement that illustrates this government's continuing commitment to education and training. We are proud to have given \$3.525 million in funding to the University of Winnipeg so that it can purchase the Salvation Army's Citadel building. This building will be renovated and will house the university's esteemed theatre and drama department. The renovated Citadel building will also provide students with improved facilities for instruction in film production and other areas of communication related to the employment needs of business, media, technology and culture.

Film production has experienced unprecedented growth in this province in recent years, and we are committed to helping this

nontraditional industry succeed. Madam Speaker, this expansion will help the University of Winnipeg appeal to a broader range of students and in so doing increase its enrollment. In fact, enrollment in theatre and drama is expected to go up by 290 students as a result of this announcement. Post-secondary education facilities must continually evolve to meet changing needs in our communities, and this is exactly what the University of Winnipeg is doing.

Madam Speaker, my government is committed to helping our post-secondary facilities grow and adapt so that they can provide our young people with important skills and knowledge. I am proud to be part of a government that works in partnership with educational facilities to help all achieve success. Thank you.

Fiscal Stabilization Fund

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, the Fiscal Stabilization Fund was born out of deceit on the part of this government when they borrowed money to create a phoney fund. Through the whole history, the Fiscal Stabilization Fund has been used with deceit to understate deficits, to remove money that should have been kept for the period of time when everybody, even people on our side who saw the balanced budgets legislation in some different lights, even our people said: if you are going to have balanced budgets, you have to have a Fiscal Stabilization Fund. You do not take it out for one-time capital projects. You do not run the sale of MTS through the Fiscal Stabilization Fund and back in to balance your budget at election times.

The government, the Premier (Mr. Filmon), the former Finance minister, the Health minister, the current Finance minister have lied to the people of Manitoba in how they have used this fund, Madam Speaker—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Hon. Darren Praznik (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, the member for Crescentwood, who is one member of this House

who has no cause to call another member a liar, does that plainly on this record, and I demand, on the part of this side of the House, an apology for that.

Madam Speaker: Indeed the honourable government House leader does have a point of order. I distinctly heard the honourable member for Crescentwood refer to at least two if not three honourable members in this Chamber as liars, and I would ask that the honourable member for Crescentwood stand and withdraw his words immediately.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Speaker, I challenge the ruling of the Chair.

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The ruling of the Chair has been challenged. All those in favour of sustaining the ruling of the Chair, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Formal Vote

Mr. Martindale: Yeas and nays, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: A recorded vote has been requested. Call in the members.

Order, please. The question before the House is shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained.

Division

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

Yeas

Cummings, Downey, Driedger (Charleswood), Driedger (Steinbach), Dyck, Enns, Faurichou,

Filmon, Helwer, Laurendeau, McAlpine, McCrae, McIntosh, Mitchelson, Newman, Penner, Pitura, Praznik, Radcliffe, Reimer, Render, Rocan, Stefanson, Sveinson, Toews, Tweed, Vodrey.

Nays

Ashton, Barrett, Cerilli, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Evans (Brandon East), Friesen, Hickes, Jennissen, Mackintosh, Maloway, Martindale, McGifford, Mihychuk, Reid, Sale, Wowchuk.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Yeas 27, Nays 18.

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): Madam Speaker, by prior agreement, I had been paired with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Gilleshammer). However, if I had been able to vote, I would have abstained because I did not hear the comments and neither of the parties involved chose to give me any information that would have allowed me to make an intelligent vote. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has accordingly been sustained. I would therefore request that the honourable member for Crescentwood withdraw the unparliamentary language used.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, the words I used were intemperate and ill advised, and I apologize to the House and withdraw them unconditionally.

Madam Speaker: I thank the honourable member for Crescentwood.

* * *

Madam Speaker: We are still on Members' Statements and the honourable member for Crescentwood does have one minute, eight seconds remaining.

Mr. Sale: As I was saying, the Fiscal Stabilization Fund has been put in place with one purpose in mind, as defended by the then Minister of Finance when the legislation was being defended before committee. The purpose was to deal with a downturn in revenues from

the federal, from the provincial or from other sources on which the province depends. The purpose of the fund, in other words, was to provide for the cycle that the economy still goes through. I do not think the rules have been suspended. So we have gone through, in North America now, nine years of economic expansion, following a disastrous recession in which this government ran the highest deficit in Manitoba's history, \$766 million in '92-93. Now, if a government like this could run a deficit that big in one year, Madam Speaker, we need a Fiscal Stabilization Fund that would be of significant size. Instead, they have spent it on one-time capital issues, they have flushed the entire Manitoba Telephone System's sale through the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. This is unacceptable.

Manitoba Agriculture Hall of Fame

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Madam Speaker, I rise today to offer my congratulations to Bert Hall for his induction into the Manitoba Agriculture Hall of Fame. The induction ceremony will take place in Morden July 9. Mr. Hall is a lifelong resident of Manitou who has dedicated his life to improving the agricultural industry in Manitoba. His distinguished farming career began when he was still a teenager in the 1930s. Mr. Hall and his older brother started Manitoba's first turkey hatchery on the family farm. After returning from the second World War serving as an aircraft mechanic in the Royal Canadian Air Force, Bert built a barn just outside of Manitou and began raising broiler chickens. This worthy investment led Mr. Hall to more than 40 years of success in the business.

Mr. Hall has served on numerous boards and committees designed to promote farming in Manitoba. His service includes chair of the Manitoba Broiler Industry Association; first chair of the Manitoba Broiler Chicken Marketing Board, a job he held for 15 years, active in Manitoba Farm Bureau; chair of the Western Agriculture Conference; director of the Canadian Broiler Council, which led to the creation of the Canadian Chicken Marketing Agency, which he chaired from 1981 to 1983; director of CANFARM; and was appointed to the ad hoc grains committee to ensure adequate feed grains to supply Canadian farmers.

Mr. Hall's service to the community is nearly as long. He has demonstrated his commitment to the community of Manitou and surrounding area, serving on church committees, school boards and health care committees. Mr. Hall's dedication to the farm industry and his community is admirable. Even during the busy times on the farm, Mr. Hall remembered the most important part of life, his family and the importance of family. Please join me in congratulating Mr. Hall on his induction into the Manitoba Agricultural Hall of Fame. I wish him well in the years to come.

* (1200)

Winnipeg Police Service—Graduation

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): Madam Speaker, I rise to give best wishes to a group of people I spent some time with yesterday at the Cadboro Range, and this is the recruit class of the Winnipeg Police Service that did their last day of training today. They will be hitting the streets starting tomorrow.

To see in those young men and women the hopes, the aspirations they have for the police service, the dedication, the fine quality of persons that are going into the police service, it gives me great relief that I am going to be working with them as partners. They are a group of people that I am sure will take good care of me, so I know, on behalf of all members of the Assembly, that we wish them best luck, God's protection, and that they will do what is in the best interests of all Winnipeggers.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUDGET DEBATE (Second Day of Debate)

Madam Speaker: To resume adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Gilleshammer) that this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government, standing in the name of the honourable Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer).

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, quite simply put, this is an election budget, and quite simply put, the people of Manitoba and we on this side cannot trust election budgets from this government. So this budget really is an issue of trust with the people of Manitoba and this Premier (Mr. Filmon), his Finance minister and, more particularly, his Minister of Health (Mr. Stefanson) who was the former Finance minister and the head of Treasury Board. Along with Mr. Jules Benson, the three of them have crafted the fiscal promises of the past and the fiscal broken promises of the past, and we simply do not trust this Premier anymore. Therefore, we do not trust the numbers contained within this budget.

Madam Speaker, we must harken back to the promises made in 1995. The Minister of Health, the former Minister of Finance, the former supervisor of Mr. Jules Benson, along with the Premier—[interjection] Oh, he is denying it now. I know his former golfing partner, I guess they are handling that individual with asbestos gloves now, and I do not blame them. But when the Minister of Finance last tabled his pre-election budget in 1995, they made a major capital announcement just weeks before the election on March 16, 1995. At that time, Minister McCrae announced a health care spending budget of \$678 million. They claimed, as the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) expressed in Question Period, that this was the greatest promise in health care spending ever in the history of this province for capital investment here in Manitoba. So, when we close our eyes and listen to the recorded announcements from the members opposite in 1999, it has a familiar ring to those of us on the other side to something we have heard, the ghosts of promises past from the Tory government that have evaporated regrettably after the election campaigns.

Madam Speaker, this is not just a matter of debate in this Chamber. Two days ago or three days ago, I was with my daughter at a soccer practice. Like most parents, you talk with other parents. You hope the coach does not bring you on for a practice game, because these kids can go a lot faster than you can, but like most parents you talk with other people. They are from all walks of life and they are from all political persuasions. One lady said to me at the time,

that night, that she had voted Conservative in the last election campaign. She said: What do these people—she used more specific terms in terms of the Premier—what does this person take me for? Do they think they are going to play the same movie again in 1999 that they did in 1995 and I am going to forget what they told us before? Do they really believe that they can fool me a second time after I put my ballot and my trust and my faith in their commitments?

She obviously had come to the conclusion, as many Manitobans have, that this government cannot be trusted. This Premier (Mr. Filmon) cannot be trusted. His word means nothing. Just like the Mulroney-Campbell Conservatives of the past, they have lost the public trust. This Premier has lost the respect of people in this province, and people will vote accordingly, I believe, if the government has the nerve to call the election in the next short period of time, this being 50 months since the last election was called.

So I remind members opposite of their promises in 1995 and the comments from the lady at the soccer field, because next day in the Legislature Mr. McCrae crowed about his announcements: "we have a recipe for a sustainable health care."—no, that is not 1999; that is 1995—"even in the light"—this is in Hansard, that is the great thing about Hansard; it is a record—"of massive, massive cuts at the federal level with respect to health care."

So, Madam Speaker, these people opposite said they would build personal care home beds and invest \$600 million after the federal budget was tabled in February of 1995, and they said they would do it in spite of the federal cuts. So what did you do in June of 1995? You woke up and said we are going to put all the health care spending on freeze because of—why?—the federal budget cuts of \$260 million.

You tried to fool the people in '95 on health care. You are not going to be able to do it again. You just are not going to be able to do it again. In commenting about the capital budget in 1995, the member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae) said: "There is an election coming." I guess he lowered his voice: "There is an election coming. I think the people are entitled to know what is

going on in the capital budget which is very important to the budgetary process of the government of the day." He said that on March 17.

Madam Speaker, the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), I guess he is getting sensitive about the Liberal's questions on the Emerson health care facility, and I do not blame him for getting sensitive because it must bug him too. It must bug him too that his ministers of Finance and his ministers of Health and his Premiers make promises five and six times and break them. It is only a matter of time before you can go to the credibility well and keep drawing water and then you are going to have a dry hole because you have no credibility left at all.

Point of Order

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): On a point of order, the honourable Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), in his reference to making and keeping commitments, the people of Vita will not soon forget that we built a brand-new hospital that they refused to build in Vita. The people of Altona will not soon forget that we built a brand-new hospital in Altona during the period of time that is being described here and we did meet the commitments. They will remember. The people in my constituency know what commitment means, and so do the people of Emerson know what commitment means when we do make that commitment.

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, on the same point of order, I suggest that the member for Emerson does not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts and in fact, the facts the member is disputing are the facts of his own Health minister who has let him down over and over again by promising him something that is not there, so it certainly is a dispute over the facts, but it is over the facts wrongly interpreted by the Conservative Party.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Emerson did not have a point of order. It clearly is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

* (1210)

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, I know the member for Emerson is feeling hypersensitive lately with all the questions being asked. Perhaps he has developed a thin skin with those broken promises, and I am sorry that he is so vulnerable to these comparisons of promises versus reality. Yes, maybe I will go on and talk about the Manitoba Telephone System next.

How many times has this government promised capital investment in Brandon? I was told by nurses in Brandon that seven times the hedge cock crowed with the government promising promises in Brandon, and I know, with the greatest of respect to Macbeth, twice and once the hedge cock crowed. They always used numbers of three, I think. I am referring to my literary experts here. But seven times the hedge cock has crowed in the community of Brandon, and seven times, seven times I think the members opposite cancelled capital commitments.

Now you have to ask yourself: What are the people of Brandon going to think? Are they going to think that now, oh, the eighth time they really mean it? This time the Premier is going to go to Brandon and say, oh, we were just kidding the first time; the second time we were just joshing you; the third time we were just poking you around; the fourth time when we made the promise, we were teasing you; the fifth time; we were getting closer on the sixth time; on the seventh time we really did not have the money because the feds made us do it; and the eighth time, oh, we really mean it this time. Is that what their election campaign is going to be about? This time we really mean it. Honest, we really mean it. I think they will go from Manitoba Strong to "this time we really mean it," nudge, nudge, wink, wink. That will be the Pinocchio Premier's promise in this election campaign.

An Honourable Member: What did they promise?

Mr. Doer: Oh, nothing. If you promise and do not keep it, it is nothing.

An Honourable Member: The elevator that does not work—

Mr. Doer: The member for Brandon East (Mr. L. Evans) is correct. The elevator that does not work, and the CAT scan equipment that was not even operating equipment.

Madam Speaker, when the government promised to build these capital commitments, it was a debate that went on between the government, the Premier and our health critic. Now I want to show—I think it is important to look at what people said in 1995 and what is the reality today.

The government said: Oh, there is an election coming, but I want the people to know that this Health department and this Health capital procedure is going to go through, includes the biggest single hospital project ever built, replacement of the Health Sciences Centre surgery, emergency and intensive care services, at the cost of \$100 million.

Dave Chomiak, the member for Kildonan, said: "This is a shell game. They are trying to convince the public they intend to do something, but if they are elected, they will not proceed."

Now who was telling the truth? Who was telling the truth? The people who promised to build the \$100-million health facility in 1995, or the member for Kildonan who said they are trying to get re-elected? I want to give the truth award to the member for Kildonan and the opposite award to the member from Tuxedo in terms of the last election campaign.

Madam Speaker, how many fruit flies were in the operating room since they made that promise? How many walls and roofs crumbled after the government made this commitment? What has been the long-term cost of broken promises from the Tory government? Every time this government breaks a promise on capital, it usually costs the people of Manitoba more money in the long run.

Let me refer to the broken promises on Swan River made in '92, remade again in '95. The promise to renovate a hospital, to do the needy capital that is necessary. The government could not find the money to make the repairs to the hospital in the early '90s. So now the hospital has mould. Now the hospital has been

condemned. Now we have to replace the whole hospital. What we have been saying all along in health care is we want to fix the roof of a health-care facility first and spend the money in a capital investment as you would in your home or as you would in a business, not like the Tories who then have to fix the whole darn hospital because of some blind ideological decision.

Madam Speaker, these are the promises made in '95. You just have to close your eyes and you hear the recorded announcements. The government saying shortly after the election, they say on March 16: we will do this in spite of the Liberal budget, even in spite of the massive—not "massive" once-massive, massive cuts at the federal level. We are still going to go ahead.

Now that is one point on which we agree with the government opposite about the massive, massive cuts of the Liberal government. That is why when the potential member for River Heights, the candidate for River Heights, talks about health care—and he is going to put a stethoscope on and talk about health care—we will remind him that he voted to cut \$260 million out of health care. He had a chance to vote for health care, and he voted against health care. That is the only point on which we will agree with members opposite, I am sure.

However, massive, massive cuts. Okay, what happened shortly thereafter? The government said and issued a press release months after the election—not years, months after the election: With the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars from the federal government transfer payments, essentially we have no choice, Minister McCrae said. We are suspending all our health care capital projects.

This is less than one year after the election campaign, and this decision to break your promise, this decision of the Premier to say one thing in an election campaign and do something completely opposite is why the people of Manitoba do not trust the government anymore.

Now one of the symbols of this broken promise is the Oakbank-Springfield personal care home. Now I have been to that site for the last four years, before that in fact, and they were happy to have the announcement made in 1995.

In fact, they were happy to have the announcement made in 1994; they were happy to have the announcement made in 1993; and they were really happy when it was first made in 1992. But it is 1999. It is seven years after the campaign. The only activity we see in that community on health care is chiropractors writing letters with patients' lists. Just shows your dirty tricks will not win you a campaign.

So, Madam Speaker, we have the Tory pamphlet. Just so that they do not think this is an NDP speech, we have the Tory pamphlet. I thank the party opposite, the Manitoba Progressive Conservatives, and they have a commitment, a picture. They are all lined up like a class picture at the future site of the Oakbank-Springfield personal care home: Glen Findlay, MLA; Jim McCrae, Minister of Health; Gary Filmon, Premier. This sign has gone through some even more, the sign in front of the personal care home has been tortured by weather year after year after year. It has gone through—how many winters has that sign gone through? That poor, lonely sign has been battered by four Manitoba winters, and what did they do—take down the sign and build a personal care home? The sign faded from the sunshine and from the hail and from the snow and the wind. It faded so much it is like a comparison of the Tory health care promises in 1995. There is no more ink left on the sign. It is like the invisible ink of this budget. That is why we cannot trust the Premier opposite. The invisible ink government when it comes to health care and education.

* (1220)

Here it is four years after the government campaigned on building the personal care home. Is this false advertising? It is certainly not true advertising, so if it is not true advertising, is it false advertising? What shall I call this, the truth? No.

Madam Speaker, this is a symbol of this government's arrogance, their cynicism, their absolute disconnect from the people of Manitoba. When I go to Oakbank on Tuesday night, I will remind people of this broken promise, but you know what? They do not have to be reminded. They know, they saw the sign. They go by the sign for three and a half years,

and you know what they have done? They have taken the sign down. It is a pre-election period. You know what is there instead of a sign? An empty field. An empty field. The personal care home is not there.

Now does the government use the issue of these newfangled community contributions? I believe it was the Kiwanis—or the Kinsmen, I better make sure, I will check my facts over the weekend. Well, the member for LaVerendrye (Mr. Sveinson) chatters in his seat. I wonder if he stood up in the caucus—he is not far away from that community. I wonder if he stood up in his caucus for the personal care home, or did he just sit there like a trained seal doing whatever the government wanted?

Madam Speaker, we know how the member for La Verendrye stands up for the flood victims in his community. We know how he failed to stand up for them. Sometimes silence is nice, but sometimes silence when people are drowning is not very helpful, and the member for La Verendrye has a record that people know about in his own constituency. He need not heckle in this Chamber. He can continue to read speeches that the Premier's staff writes for him and regurgitate them in this Chamber.

Madam Speaker, I digress. I apologize. I had to deal with the heckle from the member opposite.

So this Oakbank personal care home, well, is it built in 1995?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Doer: Is it built in 1996?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Doer: Is it built in 1997?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Doer: What did the Minister of Health say about it in 1998? Now, I do not know whether Jules Benson wrote this in your budget speech or whether the minister did. Did Jules Benson write your budget speech? [interjection] Oh, you do not like Jules Benson, do you? How many

times did you golf with him last summer? I know you did. [interjection] As many as I did? I know you and the Premier went out golfing with him.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I remind all honourable members there is one person who is debating.

Mr. Doer: I suppose Jules is now saying, et tu, Eric, after he is now distancing himself from writing his promises and being involved in all his budgets. Et tu, Eric, along with the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and his comments: Oh, they did not tell me the truth; that is why I knew nothing; I knew nothing when my best friends were involved in this campaign; nobody told me anything,

Madam Speaker, I want to go back to the 1998 election promise. This is on the Oakbank centre. [interjection] Oh, we can find it. In fact, it is on pages 25 and 26 of Volume 136-S4, Volume 112, 98/06, March '98, and it is the Minister of Health (Mr. Stefanson), the former Minister of Finance, saying: Our government is moving to address the infrastructure requirements of our evolving health—it is evolving every year, this health care system—I am pleased to announce a total of \$63 million. This program provides for 26 priority projects, including the construction of a 40-bed personal care home in Oakbank.

That is what you said in this Chamber. Those are your words and, like the Premier's, they are written with invisible ink because there is no Oakbank personal care home in the community of Oakbank after seven long years of deceit from members opposite. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the volunteers of that community who have raised the money, the only way they are going to get the personal care home is by changing the people who broke their word and bring in people who will keep their word in the next campaign.

Madam Speaker, let me also talk about the minister—now the Minister of Health was going to recreate a new image, like the former, former Minister of Health, on health care. He had his opportunity. He had his chance. We wanted a new regime in health and a new regime for

Manitobans. The first challenge we put out to the Minister of Health, the former Minister of Finance, the Deputy Premier (Mr. Stefanson), the person who is now a heartbeat away from the seat of premiership beside the Premier of Tuxedo the first chance he had, the first challenge we made was we said: cancel the ads. Cancel the Tory propaganda ads. Take that \$500,000 and show you are different than the Premier and you are different than the former Minister of Health and the former, former Minister of Health, and the former, former, former Minister of Health. We gave you a golden opportunity. The member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) said: I am going to give him a chance. I am going to give the new Minister of Health a chance, because Manitobans need a new face and a new honesty in health care. So he had a choice. He could have put more nurses back in the hospitals, or he could put more propaganda out for the Tories.

He said in 1993 that he would bring down guidelines on political ads for partisan purposes. You know, how could a person who sounds so sincere act so insincerely? It is a contradiction. It is the conservative in the Progressive Conservative. Madam Speaker, we gave him a chance for a new dawn, for a new tomorrow, in health, for a new opening up of the priorities of Manitobans. He could have repeated the old cynical ways of the member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon), the old cynical ways of using taxpayers' money for the political gain of the Conservative Party. He had a choice. There were two forks in the road, the old fork going backwards on cynical patronage ads, and the new road to cancel the ads. If the ads are going to be taken, let the Conservative Party pay for it. Let not the taxpayers pay for ads for the health of the Tory party.

What fork in the road did he choose? What path did he take? He took the well-worn path of the member for Tuxedo. He took the old path of the minister from Lac du Bonnet. He took the old-fashioned Mulroney way and he went back to the old ways of cynicism, of patronage, of taxpayers paying for ads. The only people who are willing to take a new path and go into the new century with cancelling ads being paid for by the taxpayers and rehiring nurses is this party, this group of men and women, who will say no to the old ways, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The motion will remain standing in the name of the honourable Leader of the official opposition.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, April 30, 1999

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS		Members' Statements	
Oral Questions		Budget—Economic Growth	
		L. Evans	797
Budget		University of Winnipeg—Funding	
Doer; Filmon; Stefanson	789	M. Driedger	798
L. Evans; Gilleshammer	793	Fiscal Stabilization Fund	
Chomiak, Stefanson	794	Sale	798
Lamoureux; Gilleshammer	796	Manitoba Agriculture Hall of Fame	
Ashton; Gilleshammer	796	Dyck	800
Oakbank Personal Care Home		Winnipeg Police Service—Graduation	
Doer; Stefanson	792	Kowalski	800
Balanced Budget			
L. Evans; Gilleshammer	794		
Manitoba Hydro			
Ashton; Gilleshammer	797		

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Budget Debate

(Second Day of Debate)

Doer 801