



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. 34A - 10 a.m., Thursday, May 27, 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

Thursday, May 27, 1999

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. Darren Praznik (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, by discussions with the opposition, I understand what we will be doing today is private members'. We will be doing two hours of private members', an hour for each of the resolutions.

I understand, as well, that there will be leave to waive private members' hour later on today to conduct the business of the Legislature. I will be asking for that leave later this afternoon.

So, Madam Speaker, if you could please--

An Honourable Member: Why do you not get it now?

Mr. Praznik: Well, I could do it now. Is there leave to waive private members' hour this afternoon?

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House to waive private members' which regularly commences at 5 p.m. this afternoon? [agreed]

Mr. Praznik: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Then if you could please call the two resolutions, Resolution 9 and Resolution 10, in order, one for each of the assigned hours, as they appear on the Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 9—Jobs and the Economy

Madam Speaker: It is the understanding of the House that we will do two private members' resolutions this morning, one hour each.

Mr. David Faurschou (Portage la Prairie): Madam Speaker, if there is leave of the House, I would like to make an amendment to the proposed resolution.

In the second WHEREAS, it should read "youth unemployment" rather than "youth employment."

I would like to have the unanimous consent of the House to make that amendment.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to asking for leave, I apologize to the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk).

We have a group of students in the gallery that I would like to take the opportunity to introduce this morning. We have eighteen Grade 6 students from Heyes Elementary School under the direction of Mr. Don Goltz. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Swan River.

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

* * *

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House to permit the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurschou) to propose an amendment to Resolution 9? [agreed]

Have you seen the amendment? I will do it right from here. It is just to change the one word in the second WHEREAS: "WHEREAS this province's youth unemployment rate is tied for lowest in Canada;" as opposed to it reading: "WHEREAS this province's youth employment."

Is there leave? [agreed]

Mr. Faurschou: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck),

"WHEREAS Manitoba's unemployment rate averaged 5.7 percent in 1998, the lowest since 1980; and

"WHEREAS this province's youth unemployment rate is tied for lowest in Canada; and

"WHEREAS all of Manitoba's 1998 job growth has been in the private sector, where employment has increased by 10,000 full-time jobs; and

"WHEREAS over the last two years employment rose by 24,700, third largest increase in the country and above the national gain; and

"WHEREAS Manitoba's private sector is coming off seven consecutive years of steady growth in new capital investment, a record of achievement only matched by Alberta; and

"WHEREAS Manitoba's credit rating rose to AA ranking in 1998.

"THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba support the government in its continued effort to create a competitive and healthy business climate."

Motion presented.

Mr. Faurschou: Madam Speaker, it is truly an honour once again to rise in this Chamber to speak on a specific resolution which, in fact, divides the foundation for prosperity, that being jobs, employment and how it relates to our economy.

In regard to this particular resolution, I would hope all members opposite support this resolution because it, in fact, is, as I stated, the foundation for prosperity. In Portage la Prairie, Madam Speaker, I am very proud to say that we have an economic climate which, in fact, is providing such a foundation for people of Portage la Prairie. I am very pleased to say that in recent months, our particular unemployment rate in Portage la Prairie is 4.6 percent, well below even that of Manitoba's average. It is truly a testament to the long-term viability of jobs and employment, career opportunities,

something which is a climate that I personally as a resident of Portage la Prairie am very proud of. The employers of Portage la Prairie have shown fit to offer employment to virtually every person who is looking for a job in Portage la Prairie. As one can appreciate when you get below 5 percent, it is something that is truly approaching full employment.

I am very happy to say that the government is one that has provided the opportunity by providing through its policies an unencumbrance of employment opportunities. It was something that I have to point out too because when the government tries to provide for jobs, it is not as long lasting and wholehearted as that in private sector because one's actual prosperity and continued support of one's own self and family comes from those employment opportunities, whereas when government provides for that it is more or less for perhaps political expediency more than anything else. So this is why I am very pleased to say that the expansion of the jobs and employment opportunities has come in the private sector.

* (1010)

In the private sector, Portage la Prairie has been led by a nationally known company, McCain Foods Limited, and they have had an expansion in Portage la Prairie over the past two years that has provided for over 150 new job opportunities. In fact, Madam Speaker, of those job opportunities, more than 50 of those have been of a managerial or career-building and training opportunity. That has allowed young people and others of not so young in years the opportunity to enter into a worldwide operational company and have the opportunity to train for those management positions which afford them the opportunity not only to be employed in Portage la Prairie but throughout the world, as McCain's has facilities that are worldwide.

Also, too, I might mention that the climate of opportunity and optimism is shown by many other existing businesses that survive in Portage la Prairie. The Craig Dunn General Motors dealership in Portage la Prairie undertook a major expansion and is now well known as the largest retail sales outlet for General Motors

outside that of Winnipeg. That truly shows the commitment because Mr. Craig Dunn had invested his life savings in this undertaking, and that shows that he has confidence in the future of Manitoba which is truly inspiring not only to myself but to others who are also contemplating expansion of their businesses.

Also, too, looking to the future and providing for that future, another gentleman, Mr. Jim Hayes also invested his life savings in providing for a life-lease building which can afford a number of seniors in Portage la Prairie the opportunity to live in accommodations that provide for their needs and also allow for the flexibility in lifestyle in retirement, as well.

But this prosperity, Madam Speaker, is not one that comes easily insofar as we all must be trained and must have that foundation of knowledge in which to pursue the goals that we all have in life, and that comes with the opportunity to provide for one's education and training. I am very, very pleased to say that this government has that goal in mind and through the Council on Post-Secondary Education has been looking to provide for additional training outside that of Winnipeg and afford the opportunity to those residents without them having to leave the familiar surroundings of their home.

I am very, very pleased to say that come Monday next, May 31, there will be a launch of the Campus Manitoba concept in Portage la Prairie at the Southport Aerospace facilities that will afford the opportunity for young people to attend university, the first- and second-year courses, right in Portage la Prairie. This is an opportunity where it makes post-secondary education more affordable as the young people of Portage la Prairie and surrounding area do not have to take on a second residence by moving to either Brandon or Winnipeg, and this allows, I believe, for many, many more young people to affordably take on that post-secondary educational training.

In addition to the Campus Manitoba at the Southport Aerospace facilities, I must draw attention, as well, to Stevenson Aviation, a government-sponsored aerospace training facility that moved to Portage some five years

ago and started out with less than 20 students. Today, Madam Speaker, more than 120 students are now obtaining skills in varying aerospace training curriculums, and that, in itself, is a testament to the economy and how persons are garnering the training that our province is in so dire need of.

Madam Speaker, the recent report that was published by KPMG made a statement that I believe flies in the face of one of the members opposite commentary that this government is not focused on post-secondary education. One of their findings was, in fact, that Manitoba far exceeds per capita—more Manitobans are receiving post-secondary education than in any other province in Canada. That truly speaks for itself in making testament to what this government is trying to achieve.

Once this further training is achieved, one can look for job opportunities that abound. There is not a young person in this province that is looking or requiring employment that is going wanting. I really truly believe that we will have almost virtually full employment for our young people that are still of a student degree. That also plays into the most recent statistics that were recently announced in the resolution, which states that we are tied with Alberta as far as young people's unemployment rate. In fact, we are the lowest in all of Canada for the first three months of 1999, which truly describes what is taking place in our employment in this province when our young people are having the opportunity to stay right here in the province and build their careers.

Madam Speaker, we also have as a government an economy and jobs that are affording those in our population in the province that have had tough times and have experienced the social assistance. I speak specifically of Portage la Prairie that through a unique and novel undertaking between the Manitoba Developmental Centre and Child and Family Services, we have afforded three long-term income assistance recipients the opportunity to train as nurses' assistants at the Manitoba Developmental Centre while still benefiting from some social assistance. Once they complete their basic skills training, they will have the opportunity for full employment at the Manitoba

Developmental Centre and indeed will be breaking the cycle of social assistance, whereas they will then be gainfully employed and being able to provide for themselves and their families.

Madam Speaker, I might just say that families are key to all of us here in the Chamber, and we recognize that through jobs and gainful employment and careers that are fulfilling that the job holders are able to provide for their family what we all want, and that is prosperity. From this prosperity, we are able to build our futures which, in fact, are reflected in our own personal attitudes. If we have the attitude of optimism and one that we look to the future of greater prosperity, we are able to undertake even the most insurmountable problems in our day-to-day lives. Indeed, some of our lives are very stressful at times.

* (1020)

I know certainly in this political career which I have undertaken there is a high degree of stress.

An Honourable Member: Like farming in the southwest corner this year.

Mr. Faurschou: Well, I know we are attempting to undertake all problems that we see, coming from a background of farming which the honourable member opposite says is indeed challenging, not only in and around the capital of Winnipeg here but to a greater degree down in the southwest corner of our province with the excess water that the farmers are experiencing, but I truly believe that with the sunshine that we are experiencing today and the drying winds, even that situation will hopefully be able to be alleviated.

Madam Speaker, I am very, very pleased and very appreciative of the fact that I am able to stand in this Legislature and say how proud I am that I am a Manitoban. When I drove in from Portage la Prairie this morning, to see the horizon on the west and in the east and not a cloud in the sky, it really is, in fact, a place to be cherished, and I can think of no finer place than Manitoba for myself to live and to work and to raise a family. I would like to ask all members opposite to share my optimism and vision of the

future prosperity here in Manitoba and encourage them, please, to place this resolution on the books of this Manitoba Legislature in passing this resolution. Thank you.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, I want to tell the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurschou) that we on this side of the House do agree that Manitoba is a wonderful place to live in and there are opportunities here, but the message that is being put forward in this resolution is one that is not completely accurate.

When we talk about the province's low unemployment rate, that usually speaks of a healthy economy in a province, but in this case, in this province, this is a clear indication of a province that is starving for adequate support and competent administration. In fact, the situation for the unemployed in this province is much different than the picture that the member for Portage la Prairie has just painted. When we look at it, over the past several years while Manitoba's unemployment rate has been declining, the Conservative government has been caught up in self-congratulation so much that they have forgotten all about the need to forecast the kind of skilled labour that we need in this province, and their funding for apprenticeship programs has not kept pace with other provinces and has not kept pace with what is needed to improve our economy.

I had the opportunity yesterday to speak to a couple of people who are involved in post-secondary education and involved in training people for the workforce, and one person, in particular, told me that Manitoba has the worst record of all other provinces, and that is an issue that was raised in the House yesterday. This government's commitment in this province to post-secondary education is quite disgraceful. We are at the bottom of the list and we are not training the people who are needed to take the jobs that are coming forward, new jobs that are coming forward. We cannot fill those positions, and in many places we have young people who have no hope in this province and are leaving. In fact, we have many young skilled workers who have left this province in search of work and in search of better wages.

Throughout this administration, out-migration has consistently outweighed in-migration. The Manitoba Bureau of Statistics reported that last year we lost 2,617 Manitobans to other provinces, and, Madam Speaker, that is not a good situation, to be having this many young people leaving our province because the present administration is not recognizing that there is a need to train people for the jobs that are there.

The member talked about the wonderful numbers that we have in this province, about the number of people who are employed, but I think what this government has to remember that the province of Manitoba goes beyond the city of Winnipeg and that it goes beyond the Perimeter Highway. When you look at the statistics of this province, you have to take into account the people that live in rural Manitoba and the people that live in northern Manitoba. If you take those numbers into account, our unemployment rates are much, much higher than this government will admit. But, of course, this government in many ways has ignored the North and in many ways has ignored parts of rural Manitoba when it comes to supporting and offering and training for jobs.

Unemployment in the North and among aboriginal populations continues to be a very, very serious problem. As I say, this government tends to forget that these people exist. When we look at northern Manitoba, the unemployment rates tend to be well over 12 percent and often as high as 19 percent. Average unemployment levels on First Nations communities can be as high as 75 percent. I have to say, it is not because these people do not want to work; it is because there are no jobs for them. That is something that this government has to take very seriously.

The member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) shakes his head at me when I say that there are no jobs. I would invite this man to come out to visit the North and visit some of the First Nations communities where there is very high unemployment and start to address those issues because it is a very serious challenge, and you cannot put out figures that say our unemployment rates are good. I congratulate the member that he says that things are going so

well in Portage la Prairie, but I would ask him whether in those numbers he has considered the First Nations communities around Portage la Prairie and whether the unemployment rates in those First Nations communities are the same as in Portage la Prairie or whether efforts are being made to include those communities so that they have the opportunity, as he spoke about, to provide for their families. We cannot take a very narrow focus to say that, yes, our unemployment numbers are very good, but ignore a very large section of the population where it is not good, where there is very high unemployment, where there is very little opportunity for training. [interjection]

The member says that has been addressed, but I know, and statistics show us, that if you take in the numbers of First Nations people, the rate of unemployment in this province is much, much higher. Efforts have to be made. Governments cannot pat themselves on the back for the good job that they are doing without taking that into consideration. You cannot put blinders on and think about a very narrow, smaller group of people, and ignore the fact that people are not being trained.

We do not have the skills to meet the needs of many of the requirements in the province. There was just an article just recently in the paper where we were looking for people to come in from other areas because we do not have the people trained in the right area. We have to think about that. You have to invest in education. You have to be prepared to work with colleges and work with the workforce to see what courses are needed and be prepared to invest in it. Manitoba is not doing that. In comparison to other provinces, Manitoba's investment in employment and training programs is the lowest in Canada. The lowest in Canada. That is what your government's commitment is to employment and training programs. That is something that you have to— [interjection]

The member seems to have to focus on lowest unemployment. He does not think about the people who are leaving this province, and you do not think about the kinds of jobs that are coming in and you are forgetting to invest. To have a healthy economy, you have to have jobs

that are skilled jobs. You have to have people trained in those areas so that business looks at the skill level of people in a province and they recognize that there is a healthy workforce there and they are prepared to come into this province.

When you have out-migration of people that exceeds the in-migration, that tells you that that is not the healthy economy that this government would like to think that they have.

* (1030)

The member also talked about people who are on social assistance and who are getting training and getting off the welfare roll, I believe is what he said. I just want to speak a bit about people in my constituency, people who are single mothers who have been encouraged to take training. I always encourage people to get as much education as they can. I think it is very good if you get an education.

In these particular cases, these people were from the community of Camperville. They were told, you know, you are on social assistance, you have to take some training, you have to go away to take the training. What the government has done in this move, it has taken away the family supports that are very important to many people, particularly single mothers. I refer to the community of Camperville, where there were a couple of single mothers who had families, but their family network was very important to them.

But the government, under policy, insisted that they go away. If they did not go away to get their training, they were not going to get their support. So what are you going to do? You force the family out of the community where they have a network of support into a strange community and you hope to have them succeed. I hope they will succeed too, but statistics have shown us that in many cases that is just too much pressure on a family to survive.

We have to look at ways that we can help people get some training but also not to break those family ties that they have. We have to look outside the communities, outside the major centres to look at ways that people can get

training and have the opportunities to work without breaking those family ties.

I think the government has to look more at schools in rural Manitoba where training can be offered. There is the whole concept of distance education that is working now and must be expanded. We have to look at schools like the Swan Valley Regional School, for example, which is a very good school, but they have had to cut many of the courses that they were offering in the community, that people could get training and have some skills, but because of government cutbacks in funding, you have also reduced the opportunity for people to take courses closer to home.

I am surprised at this government, that has quite a rural base to it, that they do not recognize that it is very expensive for people who live in rural Manitoba to come into the city or to larger centres to take training, and very difficult. So you have to look at ways to provide more training within the rural community.

When I look at the community of Swan River and the Swan Valley Regional and the courses that they were able to offer there compared to what they were offering 10 years ago, in comparison to what they are offering now, there has been a decrease in what they are able to offer, a much narrower focus and much narrower availability of opportunity.

When you talk about this low unemployment rate, that is just a very small thing to be thinking about. Why is there a low unemployment rate? Not because there are so many jobs available, but also because many people are leaving the community. But, getting beyond that, you have to look at how you can improve the situation throughout Manitoba. How can you improve the situation? When are you going to start to realize that people in First Nations are facing very high unemployment, people in First Nations want to work, and people in First Nations want to have the opportunity to work, and not only in areas where you need skilled labour, but the opportunities have been taken away from these people in many of the actions this government has taken over the past 10 years, and it is time for the government to realize they have to broaden their scope. They have to think

about what opportunities are out there, and put out a real number of what the unemployment rate in this province is.

If you look at the real numbers, if you take into consideration the North, if you take into consideration First Nations communities, who are also Manitobans, who want the opportunity to work in their own community, to work in the resource areas of our province, if you look at all of those, the picture in Manitoba is not as rosy as this government would think.

I would encourage the government members to get out to rural Manitoba, to get out to the North, and talk to some of those people who really want to work, people who want to work in forestry but do not have the opportunity, people who want to work with fisheries, but, because of neglect by this government, the fishing stocks are really down, and the fishermen cannot make a living.

You know, Madam Speaker, there is a broad, broad range of things we have to think about. We really have to seriously look at the farming community and look at the number of farmers that we have lost over the past years. I believe over the last three years we have lost about 1,200 farmers in this province. Now those farmers are going to go someplace else to work. Those are the things this government has to address. You cannot take a very narrow focus and say: Manitoba's unemployment is at 5.7 percent, and we have to pat ourselves on the back. What we have to say is: we have a large province, we have serious problems, and let us address them.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): I appreciate the opportunity to put a few remarks on the record on this very important resolution.

As the resolution clearly shows, the province of Manitoba today is an economic success story. We boast the lowest unemployment and youth unemployment rate in all of Canada. More Manitobans are working today than ever before, and some 80 percent of those have full-time jobs, which is one of the highest percentages in over a decade.

This growth is fuelled partly by a very strong export sector here in Manitoba. Exports

to the United States, as an example, have outpaced the national average for the fifth straight year. We have seen seven straight years of double-digit economic growth.

The member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) said there were no jobs. Well, there is virtually no unemployment in rural Manitoba.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Helwer: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As a matter of fact, when she talks about exports and jobs, she said that, in rural Manitoba, agriculture is not growing, or not expanding. Well, let me tell you that in our area, in the Interlake, as an example, I know that farmers are some of the most innovative business people going, and very good business people. I mean, you look at what they are doing, expanding in the production of timothy, new crops such as beans, strawberries, saskatoons. All these things add to the strong agricultural sector of our province today. They create jobs in rural Manitoba.

The member for Swan River also criticized our fishermen, said there are no fish. That is wrong. Fishing has never been better. Most of our fishermen have had the best year ever on Lake Winnipeg.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Helwer: Actually, the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) did put wrong information on the record. She said our fishing industry is in the tank, and that is wrong. Our fishermen had the best winter ever and by all the reports coming out this spring will have the best summer ever. We have more people fishing than ever before. The price of whitefish is higher than it has ever been in the last 10 years, and we know that our fishermen are going to have a very successful year. How can she say that? When we look at what we have done to help the fishermen, we have a loan program, we have many programs to help the fishermen so that they can succeed and make this an industry.

I also want to talk about some of the trade issues, just in today's paper, even where Iceland is going to have a consulate in Winnipeg. This is also to enhance trade and cultural ties with Manitoba, very, very important. The consulate, which is the first in Winnipeg, is indicative of Manitoba's emerging presence in the international and global marketplace, just another example of how strong Manitoba is actually.

* (1040)

Last year, we led the country in the growth of manufacturing shipments, topping off an outstanding decade of manufacturing expansion in Manitoba. The people of my constituency have been sharing in this economic success. In Teulon, as an example, there is a private development group looking at a new industrial park. In Gimli, we are going to have a new shopping centre, a new Days Inn. These are all to take advantage of the strong and booming tourism industry in the area, and strong local growth has meant that residents of the whole Interlake will be enjoying an excellent year and also enjoying a freeze in local taxes this year. Municipalities like the R.M. of Rockwood, the town of Teulon, the R.M. of Gimli, they are all freezing municipal taxes this year. That is just an example of how strong the Interlake really is.

Just last week there was a story in the Winnipeg Free Press talking about Canada shipping more goods, just another example of the strong export businesses and the strong manufacturing businesses here in Manitoba. The reason that our business climate is so dynamic is the prudent fiscal and economic policies brought in by this government. From the time that we took office back in 1988, our government began implementing a strategy focused on increasing private-sector wealth and encouraging private-sector job creation. The high tax environment that we inherited from the NDP and from the members opposite was discouraging new growth and investment in the provincial economy so we immediately implemented a freeze on all major taxes in Manitoba which we have maintained for 11 years.

The tax freeze has just been one part of our plan to create a healthy business climate here in Manitoba, and many additional tax measures

have been introduced by our government that support the new investment and business opportunities. For example, in 1992 we introduced a manufacturing tax credit. In the following years, manufacturing investment in Manitoba has tripled and more than 10,000 new manufacturing jobs have been created. The film and the video production tax credit introduced by our government has helped to promote Manitoba as a centre for making films and videos. Between 1997-98 and 1998-99 alone, production budgets for film projects in Manitoba nearly tripled to over \$50 million. In this year's budget, we have introduced further initiatives that will take advantage or will encourage new investment and development in Manitoba's economy.

Small business personal income tax will be lowered from 9 percent to 5 percent by 2002 starting with a 1 percent decrease on July 1. Small businesses in Manitoba are a major source of job creation, and this measure will help them to expand and create even more jobs for Manitobans across this province. Madam Speaker, these are real jobs, not short-term government-funded jobs that the opposition thinks that are so important or that the opposition thinks that the government has to do everything. These are private-sector jobs.

The Manitoba equity tax credit is being introduced to encourage the local investors to purchase shares of small- and medium-size Manitoba companies on the Winnipeg Stock Exchange, which is part of our plan to expand the local capital market. Our government recognizes that access to capital often is the key ingredient to launching a new business idea or expanding an existing business. We have introduced several programs that provide a local capital pool for Manitobans to tap into in order to turn the innovative ideas into successful business ventures.

One of those is the Community Works Loan Program operated in partnership with community development corporations; it is just one such initiative. To date, there are some 184 loans that have been approved through this program with a total value of \$1.4 million, and the result of these loans has been the creation and maintenance of some 469 jobs. So each of

these initiatives has encouraged the private sector to be the growth engine for our province and have contributed to the competitive and healthy business climate that we have today here in Manitoba.

So Manitoba is on the right track fiscally and economically, but we must stay on that track to ensure that we pass this prosperity onto the next generation of Manitobans. For that reason, I would like to urge all members of this Legislature to support this resolution and to support continuing job creation and economic growth in Manitoba. Thank you.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I, too, want to put a few words on the record on Resolution No. 9. I am not quite as enthusiastically supportive as the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) is on the resolution.

I think that there is no doubt a number of areas where the government has met some success in providing additional jobs, but there are other areas where I would argue that the government has been negligent and has, in fact, lost jobs. I can recall, and I will expand on that point, a number of years ago, as an example, there were certain industries in the province of Manitoba that were in need of employment or of getting some more employees, trained, skilled individuals. The government has been aware of that situation for a number of years. A good example of that would be either with the trucking industry or the garment industry. If we take a look at the garment industry, by not ensuring that you have the workforce that is necessary in order to fill those jobs, quite often what will end up happening is that those jobs will eventually just disappear because the employer is not able to meet the market demands of its product. As a result, quite often those companies, those manufacturing companies, will lose contracts both short term and long term.

Now, if a government is told today that, look, we need X number of workers in a particular industry, Madam Speaker, it is not fair to expect the government to materialize overnight those required skill sets for individuals who are on unemployment or wanting to enter the workforce. In industries where the government is aware that there is a high need or a high

demand for workers, then there is more that the government can do to ensure that the supply of a skilled workforce is there to ensure that those jobs are being filled, because, ultimately, if those jobs are not being filled, more often than not you will find that those jobs will be filled in other places where there is competition for the Manitoba employers.

So it is one thing to be a strong advocate of trying to get jobs created; it is another thing to ensure that we are getting Manitobans and the skill sets that they have enhanced, so that they can fill those jobs. I do not know what the most recent stat is in terms of manufacturing jobs, but I can recall I believe back in '88 when I was first elected, full-time manufacturing jobs were somewhere in the neighbourhood of 61,000, and the member has a document saying how many that are actually there today. Well, I can tell him a couple of years ago the manufacturing jobs were actually fewer than what there was back in '88, and that is, in fact, the case, Madam Speaker.

* (1050)

So no doubt the government has made significant improvements in certain areas, but to say that the government has done the job to the degree to which the resolution implies is kind of, like, pat us on the back; we are doing such a wonderful job. Madam Speaker, I do not believe the government has done what it could have done in order to better equip Manitobans to face or to take the challenge of the many skilled jobs that are there today.

There are examples. I made reference to the garment industry, and, you know, the other day in Health Estimates I was questioning the Minister of Health (Mr. Stefanson) on the shortage of nurses. I believe and we believe from within the Liberal Party that there are many people who would love to be practising nursing in the province at the many different levels of nursing, and one has to look at the situation of why it is today that there is this huge shortage.

Madam Speaker, the government could have been more aggressive in dealing with that shortage. It is not just salary. We are not saying to the government, for example, just deal with the salary component and the problem will disappear. In many areas it is working

conditions. In other areas, it could be—I can recall talking to one nurse and she had indicated that she works X number of hours at one facility and X number of hours at another facility, and between the two she actually has pretty close to a full-time job and how she would dearly love to be full time at one particular facility.

Well, Madam Speaker, here we have a serious shortage, and we have individuals who in some areas have left the province or have left the workforce because the government is not doing what it could be doing in ensuring more stability in certain sectors. Whether it is the garment industry, whether it is in health care, I think that one can look at a number of industries and say the same thing.

The other day I received a letter from the Manitoba Trucking Association, and they talked about the highlights of the truck transportation industry, and I quote right from a document that they provided indicating that nine of Canada's 50 largest for-hire trucking companies are headquartered here in Manitoba. There are approximately 600 for-hire trucking companies headquartered in Manitoba. Ninety-five percent of the goods moved within Manitoba depend on trucks. For-hire trucking directly and indirectly contributes to \$890 million of Manitoba's GDP.

Madam Speaker, I have argued in the past that what government needs to do is really give considerable focus to the industries in which Manitoba excels, and we excel in many different areas. There is no doubt about that, but there are certain areas, whether it is aerospace, whether it is the trucking industry, the garment industry, our busing industry, to do what we can to ensure that we are training, as much as possible, individuals to have the skill sets so that they are going to be able to fill the jobs that are there. If we look at the previous budgets, including this budget, the government has not played anywhere near the type of role that it can play in ensuring that people are, in fact, equipped or better equipped with the skills in the future. It is one of the reasons why we voted against this budget.

We recognize that there is a role for government to play. We have seen in the past and, you know, it is easy to compare or contrast this government to the former government. One could spend a great deal of time talking about

issues like the job creations fund that was created with the previous administration and some of the disasters that came from that.

What is important is that we learn from our experiences in terms of to what degree and how government can participate in ensuring that we have relatively low unemployment and, when we do achieve relatively low unemployment, that we are then striving to meet those employment demands through ensuring that our population has the skill sets in order to fill those jobs.

Madam Speaker, that is where I think the government has been falling short. Many of those skill sets that I am referring to the government has been aware of for a number of years already and, yet, we still see jobs that are being lost as a result of the government's failure in terms of meeting those demands, knowing full well that those demands were going to be there, thereby depriving our economy of jobs, of more jobs. Because we have relatively, compared to other provinces, a reasonable level of unemployment, it does not mean that we should sit back.

One of the trademarks that Manitoba has had over the years is that we have had a very good, well-diversified economy. I think that is something which is important to recognize. Manitobans, as a whole, have a lot more to do with the current rate of unemployment. We have never really experienced the same sort of bust or booms that other provinces had, but we have seen certain areas of our economy at different times do exceptionally well.

With those few words, we are prepared to see further debate before there is any sort of vote on the resolution.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, I am going to take a few minutes to respond to this particular resolution because, had the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Fauschou) been right, had it been that this low unemployment rate was something which was grabbing the imaginations and hearts of Manitobans, there would have been an election this spring, and there was not. If the member for Portage la Prairie was right, that this was a province full of optimism and hope, then there would have been an election this spring, and there was not.

What happened this spring was that this government put its head over the parapet. It looked at the numbers that it had for an election, and it realized that the divided society that it has created over the last 10 years in Manitoba is now coming home to roost, that people recognize that while there may be optimism as you drive in from Portage la Prairie, as you drive down West Broadway, and I know the member does, what he must do is take off those blinkers, look to the left, look to the right, and look at the many, many families who are living in poverty as a result of the policies of this government.

The member wants to talk about full employment. Well, he does not want to talk about full employment. Tories never do. They want to talk about low unemployment. What the member is talking about also, he should remember, is the rising incidence of child poverty. We have and remain during the Tory years the child poverty capital of Canada.

If on the one hand we have a low unemployment rate and we have on the other hand a rising increase in child poverty, what is the answer? The answer is the low wage, low skilled economy that this government has created and people who are living in poverty and who are working and cannot support their families. And what has been the response of the government to that? It has been to take away nutritional allowances for young children so that those children who live in poverty do not have the opportunity for the good nutrition that they should have.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Wolseley will have 13 minutes remaining. As previously agreed, the hour being eleven, we will proceed to the second private member's resolution for consideration this morning, Resolution 10.

* (1100)

Res. 10—Screening Program for Cervical Cancer

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale),

"WHEREAS cancer of the cervix can take many years to develop, but before it does, early changes take place on the cervix which can be easily detected—provided women have regular testing and exams; and

"WHEREAS with early detection, cervical cancer is almost 100 % treatable; and

"WHEREAS many women are not regularly tested; and

"WHEREAS the National Cervical Cancer Coalition recommends that in the middle/upper middle income countries, cervical cancer programs should aim to expand available screening and treatment services with the ultimate goal of screening all women aged 30 and over every 3-5 years; and

"WHEREAS the 1994 Throne Speech pledged a cervical cancer screening program, and the promise was repeated in 1997, and then again in 1998 when the Minister of Health said, 'The tracking system, much like breast screening, would give the ability to put a reminder in place on a regular basis, and I agree that is very important'; and

"WHEREAS by making it be easier for women to know when to go in for their Pap test, a provincial registry would help increase the number of women being screened and thereby decrease the incidence of cervical cancer in the province; and

"WHEREAS in April 1998 Dr. Garry Krepert, Medical Director of Women's Health for the Winnipeg Hospital Authority said, 'If we had a cervical screening program in the province with a registry for patient recall, and all women participated in the program, we could wipe out cancer of the cervix'; and

"WHEREAS at the same time, family practitioner Dr. Dick Smith said, 'I cannot see why the provincial Government won't act on (a registry)'; and

"WHEREAS every year, about 20 women die in Manitoba because this preventable cancer has gone undetected and untreated.

"THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the

Provincial Government to consider finally honouring its commitment to put a Provincial Cervical Cancer Screening Program in place."

Motion presented.

Ms. McGifford: Madam Speaker, I am very pleased today to put forth this resolution urging the provincial government to consider finally honouring its commitment to create a cervical cancer screening program. I did have the opportunity in Health Estimates to talk to the Minister of Health (Mr. Stefanson) about several other women's issues, women's health issues.

Unfortunately, time did not permit me to ask questions about this one or to ask questions about his intentions with regard to this program, or supposed program, because it is not in place.

Most of us know in this House, as the resolution states, that this government opposite promised a cervical cancer screening program in the 1994 throne speech and then in the 1995 election. These commitments were made again in 1997 and 1998. In 1998, the former Minister of Health, the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik), promised us, and I quote from that minister: "The tracking system, much like breast screening, would give us the ability to put a reminder in place on a regular basis."

He went on to say that this is very important. I agree with him that it is extremely important, and that is why I am urging this government to put this screening program in place.

The former Minister of Health pointed out that the cervical screening program would have much in common, at least in its process and ways of operating, as the Breast Screening Program, and, Madam Speaker, I know from personal experience that the Breast Screening Program is working very well. I have had the opportunity to visit that facility, and I want to take this chance to congratulate Marion Harrison and her extremely competent staff for their thoroughness and professionalism. I was certainly most impressed with that particular program.

What concerns us today, Madam Speaker, is not the Breast Screening Program, but the fact

that, despite repeated promises, we do not have a similar program for cervical cancer. This year, I want to point out that promises of a program were issued neither in the throne speech nor in the budget, so the real questions are, it seems to me: has the program been abandoned and the promise for a registry broken? That is one option. The second option: is the Minister of Health (Mr. Stefanson) waiting for an election to reannounce the program, because that is a common habit of the folks opposite? Three: will he reannounce the program during an election and then break the promise later? That is another habit of members opposite. The fourth option: will he actually, in a nongrand-standing manner, announce and then deliver the program? That certainly is my hope and, I know, the hope of my caucus members.

I must confess to feeling somewhat nervous about the fate of the registry because, despite recent health announcements and the millions of dollars in spending announcements made by this minister this spring—at the time, I might add, when the Premier (Mr. Filmon) still hoped he could, and would, call an election—despite all the health announcements, there was no announcement made about cervical cancer. I think in the throne speech there was an announcement made about prostate disease and its treatment, but that could have been a promise from another year—my memory might be faltering here—but there was no announcement made about cervical cancer.

Madam Speaker, I certainly hope that the silence in the throne speech and the silence in the budget does not mean that this minister has decided that discretion is the better part of valour and he best be quiet about a program he does not intend to advance or to deliver. On the other hand, maybe I should be encouraged. Since he has just finished all kinds of announcements, announcing all kinds of programs, costing millions of dollars, and yet these announcements appear to have failed to give this government the bump in the polls that they would need to get their Premier (Mr. Filmon) and themselves re-elected, perhaps this government will take one more kick at the can and decide to reannounce the promises made in 1994, 1995, 1997 and 1998. That is to say, perhaps the government will decide to reannounce a central cervical

cancer screening registry. Maybe, with nothing else working, they will decide to resort to saving women's lives as a way of getting themselves elected, but I do not know. It is up to the Minister of Health (Mr. Stefanson).

One of the problems with the repeated promise making, followed by promise breaking, is that it leaves most people confused and disheartened, and I certainly count myself among that number. Trust flies out the window. People react with disbelief.

I am not sure that we could trust this minister even if he did make another public announcement. He would be the third Health minister to promise Manitoba women a cervical cancer registry and screening program and, perhaps, Madam Speaker, the third minister to break his word. It is certainly not a wonder that Manitobans do not trust this government to deliver sound health care. The members opposite just do not seem to be able to respect their commitments and stand by their word, and the cervical screening program is another example.

Personally, I am feeling particularly edgy about the cervical cancer promises for an added reason. That is that a couple of weeks ago I had the chance to question the minister during Question Period about his past announcements and past commitments. You might be interested in his response, because it was an interesting one. First he talked for a very long time about his government's commitment to women's health and how he just returned from the Health Sciences Centre, where he had announced several state-of-the-art birthing rooms.

* (1110)

Well, I was at the Health Sciences Centre for his announcement. I saw him there standing with a hard hat in a gutted area. What he did not mention in his answer to me and what he did not mention at that particular press conference was that these birthing rooms were desperately needed because the past, past Health minister had closed down the obstetrical unit at Misericordia, and then the past minister had closed down the obstetrical unit at Grace Hospital, as well, incidentally, as closing down the rest of the poor, old Misericordia Hospital.

I think some really vital, essential information here is that the existing birthing units at the Health Sciences Centre were quite decrepit and disgraceful. I have this on the authority of the member for St. James, who had her last daughter at the Health Sciences Centre. She tells me that the entire unit, to put it mildly, was a depressing eyesore, and those are my words. I do not think that her words would be appropriate for the House.

Obviously, the Health minister either had to create a respectable situation at the Health Sciences Centre, the Women's Pavilion, or else women would refuse to give birth and then there would be no young, new Tories. It is probably self-interest.

Actually, Madam Speaker, I am supposed to be speaking about the cervical cancer registry. I was speaking about the minister's answers to my questions. His first tactic, as I think I have indicated, was a diversionary one, a quick aside to the Health Sciences Centre birthing units, trumpeted sound evidence of his government's commitment to women's health issues.

I do not quite understand why someone in the Tory caucus, a man or woman, I do not care who, informs the Minister of Health (Mr. Stefanson) that women do more than have babies and that they have a wider range of health issues than childbirth.

Maybe the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) would be an ideal person for this assignment. I understand that she is a nurse and that she is the minister's legislative assistant. Perhaps she could broaden his education when it comes to women's health issues and tell him the difference between cervical cancer and giving birth and tell him that just because there are good birthing units, it does not mean women's other health needs are being taken care of in this province. Indeed, they are not.

You will remember that I was talking about the Minister of Health and particularly his answers to my questions asked in the House about two weeks ago. These were questions on the cervical cancer registry. In particular, Madam Speaker, I want to point out that the minister's tactics here are really to dodge, to

deflect, to diffuse, to deflate the whole issue. In other words, this minister will do anything rather than answer the questions because, of course, his strategy is to hide the truth. The truth in this situation seems to be that there is no real plan to institute a cervical cancer screening program.

The promises of years past and ministers past and elections past and throne speeches past and budget speeches past, Madam Speaker, are not really worth the paper that they are written on. They do not mean a thing. In other words, they are Tory promises to be marched out from time to time, put on the record, and then mothballed until they are required for duty again.

What really clarified the picture for me 10 days, two weeks ago, when I questioned the minister in the House and gave me some insight into his modus operandi was, I think, his second answer to my questions in which he first billed himself as the champion of women's health and then advised me to pay close attention to what was happening, to pay close attention, because he would soon be making another announcement. Presumably, this other announcement was once again to be about the cervical cancer registry.

Madam Speaker, I think the irony here is delightful, and I hope that the minister enjoys it as much as I do because here is the theme: I am castigating the minister for his failure to deliver on past promises and his announcements, a failure to deliver on his past announcements, and then the minister in his answer essentially tells me that I do not need to worry because he is going to be making another announcement. Well, this is better than wag the dog, I think.

Well, then, what does the minister do? He goes on to compound the irony of the whole situation by refusing to name dates or timelines. Indeed, with rather an imperious wave of his hand, he dismisses the idea of actually wanting to pin him down as downright ornery and second-rate on my part. He indicates that an announcement will come at an as-of-yet unspecified time, when it is only the goddess herself knows, I suppose.

So, in short, Madam Speaker, I am sure you will understand, and excuse me for saying that I

for one have little faith in this minister and little faith that he has any intention of really actually ever introducing a cervical cancer screening program. Again, about 10 days ago, the same minister had the opportunity to revoke the previous Health minister's position on hepatitis C, and he chose to do nothing. He lost a chance that day to show some heart.

Well, Madam Speaker, today the Minister of Health (Mr. Stefanson) has the opportunity to redeem himself. Today the Minister of Health could support this resolution. He could get on his feet and actually support a resolution that calls for a cervical cancer screening program, a program that would save the lives of 20 women each year. He could redeem himself. I give him the opportunity.

Madam Speaker, we cannot really weigh the loss of life and the grief attendant on the loss of life, although all of us will experience both of these at some time, but I think all of us in this House agree that we have a social and moral responsibility to prevent needless death and needless suffering and needless grief.

I am sure that the Minister of Health knows his social and moral responsibilities. My responsibility today is to nudge him towards that knowledge, hoping that he will listen and consequently that he will support the resolution before the House today. I urge him to do so. I know the women of Manitoba would benefit from this screening program. Lives would be saved. Grief would be lessened. It would be a healthier, happier province for us all.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Madam Speaker, the resolution today provides an opportunity to discuss the actions our government is taking in the area of women's health. I am particularly pleased to address this resolution today, but I am very disappointed to hear the sarcasm and cynicism displayed by the member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford).

Women are designated as one of the population health priorities for Manitoba Health. Women play a unique and significant role in health care as primary caregivers within families, as consumers of health services and as professional service providers.

Our government is continuing to introduce improvements to our health system for the benefit of women and their families. Manitoba is meeting its commitment to women's health in a number of areas. Our plans to introduce a cervical cancer screening program in Manitoba is part of that larger commitment to women's health and a greater emphasis on health promotion and disease prevention. Our government is encouraging healthier pregnancies through programs such as Stop FAS. Fetal alcohol syndrome is recognized as the leading cause of preventable birth defects and developmental delays in Canadian children.

* (1120)

Regulated midwifery as an insured service in the province will provide women with a new choice in delivery. Needs assessments continue in the areas of mental health, addictions and respite services to continue to improve these services to support women at risk. Over the past several years, growing public awareness about osteoporosis has increased the demand for bone density testing. In addition to the one bone density machine located in Winnipeg, a second machine was recently established in Brandon. A third machine has been approved and will be installed in Winnipeg in 1999. These two new machines will add another 8,000 bone density tests each year, for a total of 12,000 tests annually.

The Manitoba Breast Screening Program has been in operation since 1995 and is available to women between the ages of 50 to 69 years who are asymptomatic for breast cancer, according to Canadian guidelines. Since the implementation of the program, over 50,000 women have been screened. The program operates from three sites, including Winnipeg, Brandon and Thompson. With the addition of two mobile units in July and September of 1998, it is anticipated that 33,000 women per year will now be screened.

In August of 1998, our government announced \$5.6 million in funding for the development of a comprehensive Breast Health Program. The two Winnipeg health authorities jointly announced the establishment of the Breast Health Program which will consolidate breast surgery and better co-ordinate breast

cancer treatment across Winnipeg. The WCA is working to develop community components of this project, including public education and wellness, to complement the diagnostic and treatment services offered through the WHA.

Let us take a moment to look at the burden of cancer. According to the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation, the incidence of cancer has been increased by 30 percent in the last 10 years. Recent information from Health Canada states that cancer will be the most important health problem in Canada in the 21st Century. Their information demonstrates that cancer is the most important cause of premature death in Canada. The number of people living with cancer is growing rapidly. Cancer rates are growing rapidly in comparison to other diseases. Canadian cancer rates are much higher than those of other countries, mainly related to tobacco use and diet.

The biggest risk factor for cancer is age. Manitoba, with its high proportion of elderly people, can be expected to experience the full impact of the projected increases of cancer. The five most common tumour sites are breast, colorectal, lung, prostate and gynecologic. Cancer of the cervix ranks 11th among cancer sites in Canadian women, according to Health Canada 1998. Increased cancer incidence translates into increased physician visits, nursing visits, radiation treatments, brachytherapy, and systemic therapy including chemotherapy treatments.

We also know that cancer has a major social and emotional impact on the lives of Manitobans. So let us then take a look at cancer prevention. Cancer prevention opportunities exist and can be achieved through the establishment of primary and secondary prevention programs. First, I would like to address primary prevention. Primary prevention activities include the elimination of smoking, reduction of exposure to the sun, improvement of dietary patterns such as reducing fat intake and increasing fruit and vegetables in one's diet, and inclusion of regular exercise.

When we look at secondary prevention, secondary prevention leads to an early diagnosis of cancer in asymptomatic persons, thereby representing an increasingly important way to

reduce cancer morbidity and/or mortality. Secondary prevention is achieved through the establishment of effective screening programs. Screening is defined by Toplin et al, 1992, as the testing of apparently healthy volunteers from the general population for the purpose of identifying people at increased risk of having a given disorder. Any program may be limited for reasons of efficiency to a higher risk, asymptomatic population as defined by age or other demographic factors, family or personal history, et cetera. Effective population-based screening programs are presently warranted for cancer of the breast for women over 50 years of age and cancer of the cervix.

Cancer of the cervix is potentially preventable. Cervical screening using the cervical cytology smear or Pap smear detects precancerous lesions in asymptomatic women and reduces morbidity and mortality from the disease of abnormalities as they are detected earlier. Precancerous abnormalities occur in 5 percent to 7 percent of women between the ages of 18 and 69. Several large studies have shown that the use of the Pap smear and the subsequent medical interventions for abnormal smears have steadily reduced the mortality rate from cervical cancer.

From some of the American literature, we have seen that data from several large Scandinavian studies show sharp reductions in incidence in mortality following the initiation of organized screening programs. Iceland reduced mortality rates by 80 percent over 20 years, and Finland and Sweden reduced their mortality by 50 percent and 34 percent, respectively. Similar reductions have been found in large populations in the United States and Canada. Case control studies have found that the risk of developing invasive cervical cancer is three to 10 times greater in women who have not been screened. Risk also increases with longer duration following the last normal Pap smear or, similarly, with decreasing frequency of screening. Screening every two to three years, however, has not been found to increase significantly the risk of finding invasive cervical cancer above the risk expected with annual screening.

The analysis of survival data shows that survival appears to be directly related to the

stage of disease and diagnosis. The five-year relative survival rate for cervical cancer is 88 percent for women with an initial diagnosis of localized disease. For those initially diagnosed with distant disease, the survival rate is only 13 percent. Early detection using cervical cytology is currently the only practical means of detecting cervical cancer in localized or premalignant stages. Progress in mortality reduction will be accelerated most significantly by increasing the percentage of cervical neoplasms discovered in the precancerous or localized stages. This can be accomplished most effectively by screening women at greatest risk for cervical cancer, that is, those who have not had a Pap test or those who have not had one for several years.

With a cervical cancer screening program, high-risk groups that are underscreened can be identified, encouraged to obtain the test, and be tracked to ensure appropriate measures are taken to treat any abnormalities detected. The five major organizational elements which need to be put into place for cervical cancer screening programs include: (1) a population-based information system; (2) a supporting laboratory network; (3) a quality assurance program; (4) a monitoring and evaluation methodology; and, (5) health promotion and recruitment. These elements are consistent with the health-promotion, disease-prevention strategy.

Let us address then the cervical cancer screening program. Evidence strongly suggests a decrease in mortality from regular screening with Pap tests in women who are sexually active or who have reached 18 years of age. The upper age limit at which such screening ceases to be effective is unknown. It should be noted however that the Pap test is available already to women, to all women, now as an insurance service in Manitoba and other provinces, and that women can have a Pap test as part of routine primary health care.

On the other hand, organized cervical cancer screening programs across Canada are in various stages of implementation and approval. British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island have cervical cancer screening registries. Several provinces, such as Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario, are in processes for program planning, further program

development and implementation. In Manitoba we are building on the success of the Breast Cancer Screening Program. Our government is committed to reduce the incidence of and mortality from cervical cancer in our province. I am very happy to acknowledge that our government will be announcing details in the near future.

* (1130)

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, our government remains committed to taking steps to support women in improving their health status. Building on the foundation we have already set in place in many areas, our government along with the regional health authorities will continue to introduce the initiatives which respond to the needs of women in our province. We know there will be a greater demand for cancer care services as the general population ages, as the incidence of cancer increases with the general aging of the population. The demand will be for prevention and earlier detection and diagnosis of the disease. We are prepared to meet that demand and do look forward to making further announcements in the near future.

I would like to move an amendment to Resolution No. 10, seconded by the honourable member for Gladstone (Mr. Rocan), that Resolution 10 be amended as follows: (1) that the fourth WHEREAS clause be deleted and replaced with the following: whereas the Canadian Cervical Cancer Prevention Network recommends that all women who have had sexual intercourse and/or are 18 years and over should enter a screening program, and if the first two yearly Pap smears are satisfactory, be advised to be rescreened every three years; and, (2) that all the words after THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED be deleted and replaced with the following: that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba support the provincial government in its commitment to put a provincial cervical cancer screening program in place.

With that, Madam Speaker, I would conclude that we are committed to working on women's health issues. We are very pleased to be addressing the issue of cervical screening for women, and we look forward to some announcements in the future.

Madam Speaker: As in previous practice, I will take this amendment under advisement.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, I want to commend my colleague the member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) for bringing forward this very important resolution on a commitment that this government continues to talk about but fails to deliver on.

The issue of cervical cancer is a very important one, one that we have heard lots of talk about. Cervical cancer is a preventable type of cancer. Work has been done over the years to ensure that it can be prevented, but to be prevented it also has to be detected at a very early stage and women have to be provided with regular tests and examinations.

I listened with interest to the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), who talked about all the things that her government is doing to help address women's issues, but she failed to announce that it was her government that cut back on the screening on Pap tests. Before this government introduced changes, women could have a regular Pap test every year and not have to pay for it. Under the changes made by this government, women now can only have a cancer screening test every two years.

Madam Speaker, that is unfortunate. On one hand, the member appears to recognize that this is an important issue for women and, then, on the other hand, tries to praise her government for the steps that they have taken in prevention of cancer. In actual fact they have cut down the services.

When we look at statistics, only 50 percent of women in Manitoba receive regular Pap tests. It is estimated that 60 Manitobans will be diagnosed with cervical cancer this year and approximately 20 Manitobans will die needlessly of this preventable disease. It is unfortunate that this government would pay lip service to women, saying that they are going to introduce a cervical cancer screening program and then not deliver on it.

The three-phase cancer screening program was first announced by this government in 1994 in the throne speech. At that time, they said

health care for women will be increased with the implementation of regulated midwifery and enhanced breast cancer and cervical cancer screening.

Madam Speaker, I am very pleased with the expansion of the Breast Screening Program that we have expanded to rural Manitoba. I am pleased that the government listened to women across the province, who lobbied very hard. It was because women saw this as an important issue. They went out and raised money so one of the mobile screening units could be purchased and embarrassed the government into finally delivering on that commitment. They announced it in 1994, did not start it until 1998 but, unfortunately, we are still waiting for the cervical cancer screening program.

One of the excuses that was given for not implementing the cervical cancer screening was that in 1998 the associate deputy minister said that the privatization of labs would put the program on hold for another year, one more. That means that more women would die because this government made the decision that they wanted to privatize labs and then use that as an excuse to delay a program that is very important to women.

Madam Speaker, we look at it and we hear the words of various people who are experts in the health care field who tell us that this is a preventable disease with proper testing. This government has made promises in 1995, 1997, and again in 1998 to deliver that program.

Now, we hear, well, just wait for the announcement, we have more announcements coming. Well, I have to wonder: is this one of the announcements that the government is holding for the election? Is this one of the announcements we would have heard last week had the government had the nerve to call the election and not backed off, but now they are trying to save something that they can announce during an election campaign that might persuade people that they have some ideas left?

I encourage the government, if they want to live up to their word, which they gave several times now, that they just put the program forward and start putting in place the services

that women need to ensure that cervical cancer is detected at a very early stage and can be prevented. Do not play politics with this issue and try to save it for an election announcement. You have to also question where the government is going. They tell us that there are going to be further announcements on this one, but when we heard the throne speech there was nothing at all announced in this throne speech about cervical cancer screening or the registry for cervical cancer.

I urge the government, the Conservative government, that is in power now to recognize this as an important issue. Move forward on it. Other provinces have had this in place for some length of time now, and it is something that we need here in Manitoba. Do not play politics with it and try to save it as an announcement, because we do not need to have more people as we have had lose their lives because of improper detection.

I refer to a woman from Wabowden, a 32-year-old woman who died of cervical cancer in 1994, because her gynecologist failed to let her know the results of her Pap smear. If we had a proper registry program, if women were notified properly, these kinds of things would not happen. I urge the government to move forward. This is an issue, as I say. There are many kinds of cancer that people have to deal with. Some of them cannot be detected at an early enough stage where they can be prevented. Breast cancer is one that can be detected early. Cervical cancer is another one, but when we have only half the women in this province having regular Pap tests, when we have a government that cuts back on annual checkups that people can have, that does not help.

* (1140)

Madam Speaker, when we look at what is happening by this government, on one hand they say they are interested in providing services. They announced that there is going to be a cervical cancer screening program over and over again, but failed to deliver on it. They failed to listen to the words of many experts in the province who have said that cervical cancer can be prevented if detected early enough.

The lives of women are as valued as any other life and especially if you can prevent it. When you look at the hardship that families go through when they have to face a death because of a disease that can be prevented, we should be doing everything in our power to ensure these services, and that we do have this registry brought forward. I want to also say that I am disappointed in the member for trying to bring an amendment forward to this resolution that is going to start praising the government for work that they have done.

They have expanded the rural breast screening, which I lobbied very hard for, as did many women in rural Manitoba. Quite frankly, I think that we have to look at how we can expand that program further. I have talked to people who are in the Breast Screening Program, to look at ways that we can get the mobile unit out to northern Manitoba. There are many remote communities where it is very expensive to have women fly out for tests. Why do we not look at using, in the winter season when the winter roads are in, to try to get the mobile unit into some of the remote communities rather than just getting into the larger centres? It is a good step. It has been started, but let us look at how we can expand it further and detect more cancer at an early stage.

On the breast screening, this government has taken one step after it was pressured by women. I guess what it is going to take is women to pressure the government again for the breast screening. It took women to raise money to buy the first unit before the government would move forward on the mobile breast screening unit. I guess it is going to take women to get mobilized and pressure the government to fulfill its commitment that they made for several years now that there is going to be a cervical cancer screening program and a registry for it, Madam Speaker.

I would encourage the government to recognize this as an important issue, one that will not cost very much money, one that will save lives, and I urge them not to play politics with it. Move forward. Do not worry about when the next election is going to be so that you can have an announcement. Really put your politics aside and let us start to listen to the experts in the field who have said, and I quote

one expert, Dr. Krepart, who says, "If we had a cervical screening program in this province with a registry for patient recall, and all women participated in the program, we could wipe out cancer of the cervix."

Why would you hesitate? When you have made that commitment and you have the opportunity to wipe out a disease that takes 20 women each year, why would you hesitate? Why would you make promises as far back as '94 and then ignore it in this year's throne speech and then tell us, oh, wait a minute, we have a few announcements, we are going to be making announcements in a little while. Move on it. You recognize it as an important issue. You have made your commitment to it. Move on it and save the lives of women.

Mr. Denis Rocan (Gladstone): I am pleased to rise in the House today and speak to this resolution. It is a very important subject, and I am pleased to have this opportunity to add to the remarks made by other honourable members in this Chamber.

Women's health is an important priority of this government, as it contributes to the overall health and well-being of all Manitobans. We recognize that as a specific component of the population, women have particular health care needs which bear special consideration. Women's health care needs have, regrettably, often been neglected in the past both in terms of research and service options.

As a government, we not only recognize the need to pay attention to women's health care needs, we are also focused on prevention, early detection, and wellness. Indeed, we have undertaken a number of measures which put these principles into practice.

It is common sense to engage in preventative interventions like screening. This helps us detect disease when it is in its earliest stages and thereby helps us prevent its progress. Detection in the earliest stages of disease allows treatment at a time when the course of the disease can be altered significantly.

When I was doing my research on this resolution, I came across a couple of paragraphs

that I want to take a few moments just to read into the record.

New, more sensitive screening tests for cervical cancer are catching abnormal cell activity earlier than ever before. However, research at the University of Toronto suggests that many of the millions of women who receive an annual Pap test and are found to have abnormal cells or dysplasia may undergo unnecessary diagnostic or premature treatment procedures. The study found that most cases of mild to modern dysplasia do not turn cancerous. For this research, approximately 18,000 women were followed for 10 years. Of those with mild dysplasia, more than 60 percent experienced a return to normal cell activity without treatment. For 29 percent, the abnormality either stayed the same or continued to progress. Only 1 percent of these women developed severe dysplasia or cervical cancer.

When dysplasia is discovered, physicians usually investigate further by either viewing the cervix with a lit instrument or taking a sample of the tissue to see if it is cancerous. Though neither procedure involves hospitalization or general anesthesia, this involves more time, expense, and discomfort for you, perhaps unnecessarily. Dysplasia refers to any changes in the size, shape or organization of the cells. It is estimated that one in eight young women in the United States will have cervical dysplasia by the time they are 20 years old. In most cases, it is due to infection by the human papilloma virus, HPV.

Cervical cancer is considered a sexually transmitted disease, and it is the second leading cause of cancer in women worldwide. These researchers recommend that, if your Pap test results show mild dysplasia, you should have a repeat Pap test in six months, not necessarily an immediate colposcopy or biopsy. If moderate dysplasia is found, the odds are great that your cells will return to normal. However, the chance for progression to severe disease increases by 16 percent. This progression will usually occur within two years of diagnosis. At present, both moderate and severe dysplasia require immediate further investigation. Screening also reduces the cost of treating disease, as less vigorous interventions can be used. The toll on

the patient and the health care system is made less strenuous.

Having made these comments, I am proud to speak of the initiatives that my government has pursued which embody the importance of women's health and preventative medicine. We are committed to spending health care resources in the most efficient and effective ways possible for the best health care outcomes of all Manitobans. As part of our recognition of the importance of regular screening, early detection, and effective treatment, this government is committed to developing a cervical cancer screening program in this province.

As my honourable colleague has mentioned, we can look forward to further developments in this area in the near future. We are also proud of the success of the Manitoba Breast Screening Program, which has been in operation for approximately four years, and which has sites in Winnipeg, Brandon and Thompson. In 1998, two mobile mammography units were added to the program to serve women who live in rural and northern Manitoba. The combination of these three stationary sites and the three mobile units will screen 33,000 Manitoba women each year for breast abnormalities. My government feels strongly about the importance of regular examinations for early detection.

* (1150)

We know that catching a lump early significantly improves the chance of successful treatment. We urge all Manitoba women in the appropriate age categories to consult their physicians for examinations and to make use of the services put in place by this government. In addition to the Breast Screening Program, this government has allocated substantial sums to the Breast Health Program. This comprehensive program allows for more rapid diagnosis of irregularities and consolidates surgery sites, again providing better service and representing more logical and effective use of our health care resources.

Another goal of this program is to develop more resources at a community level to promote public education and wellness. Breast cancer is a very real concern to Manitobans, and we are

committed to work to promote knowledge about the disease, as well as prevention, early detection, and successful treatment.

Osteoporosis, by the way, is another real concern for Manitoba women. Here again we see the importance of screening. Our bone density machines in Winnipeg and Brandon allow for approximately 8,000 tests per year, and another machine will be added to the system this year. Manitoba is the first province in Canada to have a formalized protocol developed for the referral of patients for bone density scanning. This has garnered international interest from the medical community.

Our commitment to women's health issues does not end here. We realize, for instance, that mature women have particular health care needs aside from breast health and bone density. In recognition of this fact, the Mature Women's Health Program operates out of the Health Sciences Centre. This program provides a comprehensive approach to care for women over 35 who are looking ahead with interest in improving their health. We realize that the concept of health means more than just an absence of illness. It encompasses a healthy lifestyle and a range of other factors.

Two professors, if I will name them, Stern [phonetic] and Nealy [phonetic], examined some of the early research on this subject, cervical cancer, and I will quote, this is interesting. Every year in the United States approximately 15,000 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer and 5,000 women die of the disease. Worldwide, cervical cancer affects 500,000 women annually, and after breast cancer, it is the second most common malignancy found in women. Clinical studies have confirmed that the human papilloma virus or HPV is a primary cause of cervical cancer. HPV is one of the most common sexually transmitted diseases in the United States. However, the majority of women are unaware of this fact. In a recent survey, 70 percent of women were unable to name the cause of cervical cancer and 76 percent had never heard of HPV.

When speaking of women's health care issues, childbearing and delivery obviously bear mention. At the beginning of this month, the

honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Stefanson) announced a commitment of over \$1 million for up to 20 midwives who are expected to be ready to practise in the province by the end of the year. This group will provide another option to expectant mothers, giving them the choice of delivering their children in a home setting, if they choose. Our commitment to regulated midwife services acknowledges our recognition of the ever involving range of options when it comes to women's health services.

This government has also given its support to a broad spectrum of programs related to the overall health and well being of Manitoba women. The Stop FAS program, for instance, is run through the Children and Youth Secretariat in partnership with the Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre and the Nor'West Co-op Community Health Centre in Winnipeg. Stop FAS is one part of an overall strategy by Manitoba and other prairie provinces to address the impacts of fetal alcohol syndrome and reduce the number of women and children being affected. The Stop FAS program provides an advocate to work with women who have an FAS child and are at risk of having another FAS child.

We also provide funds for the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba for gender specific residential treatment program for women, River House in Winnipeg, and provide co-ed services at other residential programs throughout the province. We also provide support to women with partners in treatment in terms of crisis counselling, family conferences, structured intervention and referral to community resources. This government also provides funding to other agencies such as Laurel Centre which provides treatment to women who have been traumatized by sexual abuse and have developed an addiction.

I appreciate the opportunity to have put a few words on the record about this very important subject. Thank you.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): I think this is a very important resolution on the part of the member for Osborne and I want to put a few comments on the record on it. In so doing, I want to recognize the contribution in Manitoba

of Dr. Abe Earn who was instrumental in bringing the Pap test to Manitoba and in developing its use through his work at the Misericordia Hospital in the 1960s. The Pap test is an internationally known test. It is one that has worked in many countries since the Second World War to prevent cervical cancer. The rates of prevention are increasing every year as this test becomes more widely available to many populations of women.

I think one of the most important things we can learn from this resolution is that cervical cancer is preventable, that a registry such as that of the breast screening registry would work. It would help Manitoba women both in rural areas and in the city, and it is a most important resolution which I hope the government will agree to pass.

Madam Speaker, it is astounding that 50 percent of Manitoba women are not screened for cervical cancer. The fact that 50 percent of our women are not aware, are perhaps in some cases not able to afford the annual Pap test which is recommended in so many parts of the world as the best means to prevention.

Indeed, the research cited by the member for Gladstone (Mr. Rocan) of the Toronto study indicates to me that it is the annual Pap test, the annual test, which builds up the picture of what a woman's normal conditions are which enables that intervention to take place six months later. On a regular basis for those who have abnormal tests, I think that is most important, Madam Speaker. I certainly hope the government will

give greater attention than it has in the past to this particular proposal.

In spite of the fine words and the self-congratulatory notes of the two members of the government party who have spoken so far, the actual facts in Manitoba are that the government has reduced the availability of Pap screen testing to women. It used to be that one was able to have a Pap screen test if one knew about it and if one asked for it on an annual basis. That is no longer the case. If you want to have an annual test, you must pay for it, I believe, yourself, except for every other year when it does become a registered service.

My sense is that this is not serving Manitoba women well. The regular nature of it, the annual nature, the ability also to speak to your doctor about other issues of health I think is a very important one, one of the things that actually for women in their 20s and 30s is the one thing that does bring them back to the doctor on a regular basis. From the overall aspects of women's health, I think it is very important to have that annual test and to make it available and to make it known to women.

I also want to say something about the promises of—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) will have 12 minutes remaining. The hour being 12 p.m., I am leaving the Chair with the understanding that this House will reconvene at 1:30 p.m. this afternoon.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 27, 1999

CONTENTS

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|------|--|------|
| ORDERS OF THE DAY | | Lamoureux | 1847 |
| | | Friesen | 1848 |
| Private Members' Business | | | |
| Proposed Resolutions | | Res. 10—Screening Program for Cervical Cancer | |
| Res. 9—Jobs And The Economy | | McGifford | 1849 |
| | | M. Driedger | 1852 |
| Faurschou | 1839 | Wowchuk | 1855 |
| Wowchuk | 1842 | Rocan | 1857 |
| Helwer | 1845 | Friesen | 1859 |