



Fifth Session- Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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The Honourable Louise M. Dacquay
Speaker*



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	Lib.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 13, 1999

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the following reports, copies of which have been previously distributed: The Law Reform Commission 27th Annual Report, 1998; the Manitoba Law Foundation 12th Annual Report, 1997 to 1998; the Public Trustee Annual Report, 1997-1998; Criminal Injuries Compensation Board Annual Report, 1997-1998; Human Rights Commission Annual Report, 1997; Legal Aid Services Annual Report, 1998; Law Enforcement Review Agency Annual Report, 1997; Justice Initiatives Annual Report, 1997-1998.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): I am pleased to table reports today which have already been distributed: the Annual Report, 1997-98, for the Status of Women; and the report of the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council 1997-98.

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the Annual Report of the Special Operating Agencies Financial Authority, 1997-98; and the Annual Report of the Provincial Auditor, Audit of the Public Accounts, 1998.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 4—The Law Fees Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Gilleshammer), that leave be given to introduce Bill 4, The Law Fees Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi modifiant

la Loi sur les frais judiciaires et modifications corrélatives), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, having been advised of the contents of this bill, recommends it to the House, and I table the message of the Lieutenant Governor as well.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 13—The University of Manitoba Amendment Act

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Environment (Mrs. McIntosh), that leave be given to introduce Bill 13, The University of Manitoba Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Université du Manitoba), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 11—The Statute Law Amendment (Nunavut) Act, 1999

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), that leave be given to introduce Bill 11, The Statute Law Amendment (Nunavut) Act, 1999 (Loi de 1999 modifiant diverses dispositions législatives (Nunavut), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

* (1335)

Bill 6—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Madam Speaker, I would move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Stefanson), that leave be given to

introduce Bill 6, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act; Loi modifiant le Code de la route, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, having been advised of the contents of this bill, recommends it to the House, and at this time I would like to table the message of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

Motion agreed to.

**Bill 201—The Protection for
Persons in Care Act**

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), that leave be given to introduce Bill 201, The Protection for Persons in Care Act; Loi sur la protection des personnes recevant des soins, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, just briefly, this is the third occasion that I believe we have had a chance to introduce this bill. I hope members will have an opportunity to review the contents. It basically arose out of the Holiday Haven incident. This bill might be dubbed the Holiday Haven bill because it deals with the ability of employees and others to register complaints about potential abuses and makes it mandatory that such be reported, and protects those individuals who are employees and others from any kind of recriminations with respect to their reporting of these incidents. It is only one small component of a major change and some major initiatives that have to take place in the personal care home field to make them the safe and caring places that they have been in the past.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us today His Excellency Volodymyr Khandogiy, Ambassador of Ukraine

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

Also, seated in the public gallery this afternoon, we have twenty-six Grades 7 to 9 students from John Pritchard School under the direction of Ms. Joan Duerksen. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson).

And, 65 élèves [students] from Kelvin High School, École Kelvin, sous la direction de [under the direction of] Ms. Katherine Abra. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale).

And additionally, we have thirty-seven Grade 9 students from West Kildonan Collegiate under the direction of Mr. Loren Reichert and Ms. Barbara Tascona. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

**Health Care Facilities
Food Services**

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) has received a copy of a letter from the Royal Canadian Legion president, talking about the lack of quality of the food at Deer Lodge hospital, and he states to the Premier: we condemn the mistreatment of our veterans with this frozen food introduced by the members opposite into our urban hospitals.

Comments of the president of the legion are very consistent with other comments we have received over a number of months from our constituents and members of the community. Madam Speaker, can the Premier advise this Chamber whether he still thinks this frozen food is a good idea for Manitoba, and will he table the contract and the business plan which has not been tabled in this Chamber in the past?

* (1340)

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition knows, there is an organization called the Urban Shared Services Corporation which is made up of the nine hospitals here in the city of Winnipeg which is the corporation responsible for the delivery of the food services. Certainly the objective throughout all of this is to provide quality food to people in our health care facilities. To date there are seven facilities that have made the shift to the new food service system which basically precludes the need to invest capital dollars in many of the hospitals. Obviously, through economies of scale, by preparing the food at one site, you can prepare it more efficiently, leaving more resources for other health care needs in the system.

So certainly the objective is an appropriate one. There continually have been improvements made in terms of accessing more and more and more of that food right here in Manitoba. A hundred percent of the food is accessed through companies located in Manitoba; I believe 50 percent to 60 percent is actually produced in Manitoba. But certainly the objective throughout all of that is to work to provide quality food to people in our health care facilities.

In terms of the specific final part of his question about the contracts and the business plans, I will certainly look into that issue and get back to the member.

Food Services—Cost of Privatization

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, we have been promised the business plan and the contracts a number of times past, and obviously the government has something to hide by not producing those to the people of this province. Obviously the Premier (Mr. Filmon) is not very confident of this new program he has introduced because he refuses to defend it in this Chamber today. I cannot blame him, because the legion goes on to say that it is time that this government and this Premier admit that they made a mistake, and I agree with the president of the Royal Canadian Legion.

Madam Speaker, the government says they are going to get economies of scale in their

answer, yet in Freedom of Information documents that we have received, we understand that the Department of Health has no way of estimating the cost per meal of the new frozen food plan versus the existing health care kitchen cost for food.

So, Madam Speaker, how are we going to know that the government is telling us the truth when we have had misinformation in the past about the cost of privatization when this minister was the minister responsible for Treasury Board dealing with home care?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I did indicate to the member I am prepared to look into the issue of the business plan and the contracts that he has referred to. Certainly it is easy to quantify the issue of capital costs, and I think the member should be somewhat familiar with some of our health care facilities, hoping he has had an opportunity to be in some on occasion in the last weeks and months to hear from people in the system. He could see that some of our facilities would need capital investments to provide food services. Obviously, this reduces the need for those capital investments by doing it at one facility instead of at nine facilities throughout Winnipeg. That makes pretty basic financial sense that I am sure even the Leader of the Opposition could understand. Again, by providing the services at one central location, there can be some economies of scale through doing it in that kind of a fashion.

I have indicated a willingness to the Leader to review the issue of the ability to provide the business plans and other information on this issue, but certainly the concepts of what is being done with the objective of providing quality food is the right thing to do, that we can free up resources to leave them in the health care system to provide other services to patients here in Manitoba.

Food Services—Nonparticipation

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): That is the priority of the Conservative government, to spend \$20 million to give war veterans food that they are asking the government to change and without any business

plan, without any tabling of contracts, without any information on per cost of meals. The quality of the food on this plan is terrible, according to the war veterans, Madam Speaker, and the government cannot justify again another ideological decision on the basis of facts.

Madam Speaker, are there any hospitals presently in Winnipeg paying money for this frozen food without receiving any meals?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): First of all, Madam Speaker, on the issue of the quality that the member refers to and refers to again in this final question, there continues to be surveys with people in our facilities and again, the response to those continues to show more and more approval of the kind of food that is being provided. That is a fundamental objective of the USSC and certainly supported by our government, is to provide food that has appropriate nutrition and is of a reasonable quality in our health care facilities. So that is a very important part of the whole change to one consolidated food services system.

In terms of the final part of the member's question, I will again undertake to provide him with that information. There are two facilities that are not participating in the Urban Shared Services Corporation at this particular point in time. Those are St. Boniface and the Health Sciences Centre. I understand that the primary reason is there are some minor improvements that need to be done in those facilities to deal with the adjustments. Certainly the other fundamental point is the one that the member himself is raising, that before Urban Shared Services takes another step, they want to be absolutely certain that the quality of food continues to be acceptable and of appropriate nutrition.

I should point out for the benefit of the member opposite that in light of some of the concerns at Deer Lodge, there have been some changes there. In the case of Deer Lodge, they now provide a full dining service of which 190 residents began receiving. So again, the concerns of residents are being addressed in an appropriate fashion to continue to provide quality food.

* (1345)

Urban Shared Services Corporation Request to Table Contract

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, one of the questions Manitobans are asking is how many Tory ministers are being asked for information before one of them gives us the straight goods. A simple question: will he table the contract and will he confirm that Joe Sheil, his appointed manager in Toronto, last week confirmed that two hospitals in Winnipeg are paying for services they do not receive in the amount of at least \$50,000 per month, that this has been going on since last August? Will he simply table the contract as he, his predecessor and his Premier (Mr. Filmon) should do?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): Again, I think what members opposite miss here is this Urban Shared Services Corporation is an organization of the nine hospitals themselves. The members of the corporation are the CEOs of those nine hospitals, and as I have indicated to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), there are two facilities that are not on the new food system as yet. There are some issues that need to be addressed relative to that, and I think everybody wants to be absolutely certain that the quality of food is absolutely appropriate when those two facilities become a part of the system.

I have indicated to the Leader of the Opposition an undertaking to look at the issue of the contracts and the business plan as to whether or not there are any reasons that that information cannot be provided. I have outlined for him the nature of the corporation, the nature of the structure. I have also indicated a willingness to look into that issue in terms of the ability to provide him with the information he asked for here today.

Health Care Facilities Food Services—Access

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, will the minister simply confirm that St. Boniface Hospital and Health Sciences Centre between them have paid more than a million dollars already for access to a system they cannot get access to because the

renovations were not done, they were not planned, they are far more costly than were ever thought of when they first started this nonsense plan, and will he simply tell us why Manitobans should be paying for access to a facility that they cannot get access to? Would he build a house and undertake to pay a mortgage before the house was ready?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): Well, Madam Speaker, the member for Crescentwood does what he always does. He asks a question, and he does not listen to the answer.

I have indicated to him very clearly that the USSC is an organization. It is not some mysterious organization. It is owned by the nine hospitals themselves. It is obviously in their best interest both to utilize that facility and to make sure that that facility provides quality food and provides it in as efficient and effective fashion as it can. They support the objective of investing in one capital facility instead of in nine facilities. They support the objectives of the economy of scale of doing food preparation in one location, as opposed to nine locations.

They support the key and important point of providing quality, nutritional food for Manitobans, and they continue to work to improve that. The surveys of patients continue to show that the response continues to improve in terms of the patient response to the quality of food, Madam Speaker.

Urban Shared Services Request to Table Contract

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, will the minister explain to the House why a nonprofit corporation owned by eight nonprofit corporations directly under the management of the WHA, full of Tory appointees but publicly appointed at least, can he explain why he would not table that contract today, why he will not tell us what a meal costs from that facility? What is so secret about the cost of meals?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): Well, Madam Speaker, again, I guess the question must have been prepared in advance,

which was something indicated by one of their colleagues that that is how everything is done in Question Period for them. He is asking the same question that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) asked, and I said to the Leader of the Opposition that I am prepared to review that issue in terms of the release of the contract and the release of the business plan. So he is asking the same question for the second or third time, and he is getting the same answer.

* (1350)

Aboriginal Children Adoption Process

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupert's Land): Madam Speaker, I have some questions for the Premier.

On the 17th of February the Supreme Court of Canada awarded custody of a four-year-old First Nations child from Swan Lake in Manitoba to adoptive grandparents in Connecticut on the basis of wealth. This was a case that was based entirely on economics. Despite this child being raised by his biological grandfather, who is from the Sagkeeng First Nation—and this boy has been with his grandfather since he was eight months old—Madam Speaker, through you, I would like to ask the Premier—I have written him two letters on the 26th of February and also on March 26 which I would like to table—what he is prepared to do about this very serious issue.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I understand the concerns of the member opposite. In the investigations that I have done and the questions that I have raised, I am informed that there is no appeal to a Supreme Court decision.

With respect to our own policies here, it appears as though, as well, that the process here was followed as is laid out. Mind you, the individual who was, of course, the one adopted, that process took place many, many years ago prior to our government. We are now dealing with the child of the adoptee, but I am told, among other things, that no child can be adopted out of province or to out-of-province parents without the approval of the cabinet. In our 11 years in government, there has been no such

approval given, so that we have taken steps to address this in response to the Kimelman Report.

Secondly, even adopting out of province would require the approval of the director. In the case of the child that had been adopted, I believe it was probably under the aegis of several governments previously. That child was adopted within the province and the parents moved subsequently to Montreal and then subsequently down to the United States, so that matter would not, once the child was adopted, have been able to be stopped by even our present rules because of the mobility requirements under our Constitution. At the moment I am seeking any advice as to anything further that could be done by our government, but if the member opposite has any advice on that, I note from the resolution that was passed at his party's annual meeting that they did not suggest anything could be done with respect to the Supreme Court decision, so I am open to his suggestions.

Mr. Robinson: I thank the Premier. He seems to be well aware of the issue.

Aboriginal Children—Adoption Government Support

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupertsland): Under Rule 51 of the Supreme Court rules, currently there is probably, and it is a long shot, there will be a re-hearing of this case. Since the Sagkeeng First Nation has taken this on almost singlehandedly, I would like to ask the Premier to join in this fight to bring this child back, who is correctly an Ojibway Indian from a Manitoba First Nation and bring him back to the people that he belongs with.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, although I am very, very sympathetic to the issue that he is raising, I could not advocate that we break the law. I believe that anything that we are doing and can do has to be within the process of the laws of our nation and our province, so I do not think that I can commit to taking actions that would not result in the things that the member opposite wants without breaking the law, and that is why I cannot make that commitment at the present time.

Mr. Robinson: Madam Speaker, the Premier correctly pointed out that the Kimelman Report, the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples pointed out that this was not the correct thing to do, to send children out of the province and out of the country except in extreme circumstances. Now what is happening here is that in the B.C. courts they are already using the Supreme Court ruling as a precedent and other aboriginal children are being placed in nonaboriginal homes, which is a form of genocide. Simply what I want to ask the Premier is if he will add his voice to this practice, something that we thought we left behind in this province and in other provinces across this country.

* (1355)

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, what I wanted to do and I thought that I did in the initial response was to assure the member opposite that I am assured that we are not pursuing that practice. In fact, we have such restrictive rules that in order to send a child out of country it would require the approval of the cabinet. That has not been done in the 11 years that we have been in office and it is not intended to be done, so it is not a practice that we are going to change. We believe we are following the proper practice. Similarly, even to have a child sent out of province would require the approval of the director and I am informed that the director has no reason to give such approval and would not support such a matter. So I am suggesting to him that Supreme Court decision or B.C. decision has not impacted or affected our policies and our practices here and that I believe that the policies and practices that we are pursuing are ones that he is advocating.

Swan River Hospital Closure

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, this government over the years has had delays and cutbacks in repairs to health care facilities, and we are seeing the consequences of this in the Swan River facility where repairs in 1992 were cancelled, and now the Swan River Hospital is being closed down because of a serious mould problem.

Madam Speaker, this is going to result in a lot of inconvenience for residents of the area for a long period of time. I would like to ask the Minister of Health: given that this government was part of creating the problem, will they ensure that families are not going to be put through serious hardship and inconvenience of many costs because of the transportation that they are going to face because of this situation?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): Well, Madam Speaker, I do not agree with most of the preamble from the member for Swan River. Having said that, I mean she is well aware of what has caused the problem with the Swan River Hospital. It is mould, and in fact the member for Swan River and I discussed this issue a few weeks ago on a Saturday, the day after the announcement was made that the facility would have to be closed.

I have also had officials from the Department of Health sit down with her and with their health care critic, the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), to discuss the kinds of things we are doing in the Swan River area. I can definitely assure her and the people of Swan River and the patients in those health care facilities that, yes, if there are additional costs to move those patients to another facility and so on, those patients, those families will not be incurring those costs.

We are taking all steps to deal appropriately with the people of the Swan River area to deal with patients in the facility and to make sure that they are not negatively or financially impacted by what is going to be a disruption for many individuals and many families. So temporary accommodations are being put in place. The ability to move patients to required facilities is being done. All of that is being done without passing on any of those costs to the individuals affected, Madam Speaker.

Construction Costs

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Given that the minister's staff has indicated that it will be very likely that we will have to have a new facility, can the minister assure the people of the Swan River area that they will not have to pick up the 20 percent cost of constructing a new

building as is implemented in their legislation? Can he assure us that since this is not their fault, they did not ask for a new hospital, they will not have to pay this 20 percent cost?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): Well, first of all, Madam Speaker, on the issue of a community contribution, that is nothing new in Manitoba. We have had a community contribution towards health care facilities in place, of one form or another, for many, many decades in Manitoba. In one case, you go back, at one point in time it was a 50 percent contribution. If you go back 10, 15 years ago, facilities had to contribute their land, and they had to make other contributions to facilities. So what this program has done is it has formalized a community contribution policy which amounts to 20 percent if the organization does it over 10 years. It is 10 percent if the organization could do it in one year. Provinces like British Columbia, I believe even Saskatchewan, other provinces, have community contribution policies as well. So across Canada it is a fairly common pattern.

In terms of Swan River, Madam Speaker, again I do not think we would be waiving the community contribution policy, but the issue that the member raises in terms of the timing is an important one because this has obviously happened suddenly and without an opportunity for advanced planning and so on. So I am certainly prepared to work with the community, to work with the facility to look at reasonable adjustments that can be made to allow for the issue that she raises, which is a legitimate one, and that is the fact that this has happened suddenly. So we will certainly be reasonable in terms of working with the organization and with the facility in terms of its potential redevelopment, which will either be a completely new facility which is the most likely case or maybe some renovation to the existing facility.

* (1400)

Construction Costs/Penalties

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, I want to ask the minister: if I understand it correctly, the people of Swan River

are going to have to pay the 20 percent penalty that has been imposed by this government to get a new facility, through no fault of their own. I want to also ask him if he is going to use this as an excuse to downgrade the services in Swan River rather than enhance services to a hospital that serves a very large region.

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health): First of all, it is not a penalty by any means, Madam Speaker, and as I have already indicated, community contribution has been in place in Manitoba for 40 or 50 years, but I think what is more important is this is an opportunity for the community, for the region, for the people in those communities to work with the local health care authority, to work with our provincial government and to assess the appropriate kind of facility that can best meet the needs of the people in Swan River and Swan River area not only today but in the years to come. We are certainly prepared to do just that to make sure that we build the most appropriate facility for that community and for that region. That is what is important; that is what we are prepared to get on with.

Centra Gas—Purchase Acquisition Price

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for Hydro. This government authorizes the expenditure of \$545 million, yet it fails to mention any reference to it in the throne speech. I am wondering if the minister of Hydro can give any sort of indication in terms of the confidence of that \$545 million. For example, would the additional one-time tax of \$90 million on assets be included in the figure that the minister provided yesterday?

Hon. David Newman (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): Yes, Madam Speaker.

Independent Evaluation

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Can the minister responsible indicate to this House did the government do any sort of independent evaluation on this particular purchase, so that he

can assure that Manitobans were not soaked in the purchasing of Centra Gas?

Hon. David Newman (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): Madam Speaker, Nesbitt Burns and KPMG both evaluated the price of this particular transaction and gave parameters.

Accountability

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Will the minister responsible for Hydro then commit to have KPMG and government representatives come before a Standing Committee on Public Utilities so Manitobans can be assured of the deal or the agreement that has been reached between Manitoba Hydro and Centra Gas? We are talking a half a billion dollars. Will the minister take responsibility and ensure that sort of accountability is done here at the Manitoba Legislature?

Hon. David Newman (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): Madam Speaker, the deal is not completed yet, and I would be very interested in knowing whether the Liberal Party of the province of Manitoba does support the deal in principle and just what—

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

Point of Order

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): The minister should know that Question Period is not a time for debate, and when someone answers the question by invoking another question, he is soliciting debate, so he is out of order in his answer.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Thompson, on the same point of order.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, I do believe the member for The Maples is correct. I think the minister was engaging in debate, and as much as we would at times like to know the position of the Liberals or

any other party, he should stick to answering the question raised by the member for Inkster.

Madam Speaker: Do you wish to speak to the point of order?

Mr. Newman: Madam Speaker, on the same point of order, I am not even going to solicit counsel from the House leader on that one.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised by the honourable member for The Maples, I basically just heard the minister mention the word "Liberals," but I did not hear the full statement if indeed he made one, so I will take it under advisement to read Hansard and consult with the authorities and report back to the House.

* * *

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister, to complete your response.

Mr. Newman: I have taken under advisement your request for that information, and in due course, when the deal is concluded, that is the appropriate kind of information to be made available to the public.

Centra Gas Purchase Public Hearings

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Energy and Mines and concerns Hydro's purchase of Centra Gas.

I would like to ask the minister: why did James Foran, the lawyer for West Coast Energy Incorporated and Manitoba Hydro, request that the PUB, the Public Utilities Board, review the sale in private, a move which would be precedent setting, as the Public Utilities Board has always held its hearings in public? Why is he asking for the hearings in private?

Hon. David Newman (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): Madam Speaker, the letter in question is a letter under the letterhead of Aikins, MacAulay and Thorvaldson, the legal counsel, as I understand it, for Centra and West Coast, and I

have no idea why he chose to mention Hydro in that letter and suggest the letter was from them. I do not know that, but I do know that the government of the province of Manitoba has not taken any position but left it entirely up to the Public Utilities Board to determine the appropriate way to interpret the statute and also to determine the appropriate process to be followed if they deem that there is a jurisdiction by them in this particular matter. I can say this, that there is a great desire on the part of this government to make the particulars of this transaction available to the public to judge its quality at an appropriate time.

Public Hearings—Government Position

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the minister then: why will he not now take the position that the Public Utilities Board should have public hearings on this issue, and why is he hiding behind the lawyer for Manitoba Hydro who is saying and requesting that the hearings be in private?

Hon. Shirley Render (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, in answer to the member's question, a Public Utilities Board has three approaches that it can take: ex parte, and as the sentence implies, without either party; orally, which means full public hearing; or written hearing. The Public Utilities Board will take under consideration the request and make its determination, and this government does not interfere and tell PUB how to make its judgment.

*(1410)

Centra Gas Co-managed Environment

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Madam Speaker, my final question to the Minister of Energy and Mines is this: at present Centra Gas is in a co-managed environment. I would like to know, if that is the case, whether it is in a co-managed environment at this time, and if not, when will it be so.

Hon. David Newman (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): Madam Speaker, until a deal is consummated, the responsibility for Centra Gas,

through its owners, West Coast, is entirely managed by them. To suggest the co-management position is terminology describing something that I have no knowledge of.

In terms of the closure of the deal, they are negotiating toward a final agreement. My understanding is that the expectation was that this would be concluded by the end of April, but business deals have a life of their own. We do not interfere, and Hydro and Centra, I am sure, are making the best efforts to conclude this as soon as possible.

Seniors Housing Cost Comparison

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Speaker, in its most recent brief to MLAs, the Manitoba Society for Seniors said that there are many construction projects underway for 55-plus population in condominiums and life-lease housing throughout the province. Unfortunately, much of this available construction is out of the reach financially for many seniors. At the same time, existing nonprofit housing like the Veterans Manor and Jack's Place has found it impossible to operate and provide housing, meals, and care for seniors.

I want to ask the Minister of Housing to explain why his government has chosen to spend \$2.1 million on 204 units where the affordable rent there is \$1,975 monthly at The Waverley, and why places like Jack's Place where they pay \$500 a month has no support for health care and other needs.

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Housing): Madam Speaker, I should point out to the member that Jack's Place, the accommodation on Main Street, was run not by Manitoba Housing but was managed by, I believe it was SAM.

But on a serious note, the matter of having proper accommodations for seniors is very, very important. This is one of the reasons why, with the Veterans Manor that the member has mentioned, we are working very, very closely with that organization to ensure that the residents are accommodated. We have been asked to give some sort of direction to Jack's Place to see whether that can be accommodated in some sort

of housing accommodations for the people downstairs, downtown, pardon me, but Manitoba Housing is working very, very closely with those areas in trying to accommodate the people that are deserving of accommodations.

Support Strategies

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Speaker, does the minister understand that low-income Manitobans also need a strategy for supported housing, that this will keep them out of the hospital, will improve their quality of life? I want to ask the minister: how is he responding to the Manitoba Society of Seniors that has asked for a strategy for supported housing for low-income Manitobans as well?

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Housing): Madam Speaker, we have been working very, very closely with the long-term care facilities here in Winnipeg in looking at trying to accommodate supportive housing on a pilot basis in a few of our places. We are looking at working with the Health department very seriously in the utilization of some of our space for the elderly. This is an ongoing process. This is not something that is new.

The member seems to feel that there is nothing being done other than the fact of what she is reporting in the House here. We are very, very closely monitoring, trying to accommodate seniors with additional seniors' homes—beds being built that have been committed by this government. What we have outlined to work with the seniors has been very, very positive, and we will continue to try to accommodate the seniors in our housing.

For Profit/Not for Profit

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Speaker, Manitobans want to know why this government has chosen to spend \$2.1 million on services for seniors that are in for-profit residence when the not-for-profit sector in Manitoba is starving for funds and they are being forced to hand over their keys to this government because they cannot operate. Why have you made that choice, and what kind of a plan is that for seniors in Manitoba?

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Housing): Madam Speaker, the member is talking about developments that are—there are life-lease associations that are building accommodations throughout Winnipeg and indeed throughout Manitoba to try to address some of the needs in that area. These are all operated under a nonprofit association in regard to the building of these life-lease associations. As was mentioned the other day in questions that were asked, some of them do have a EIPH licence which is under review, but a lot of them do not have. There are over 260 units, including units in her constituency, that operate under those licences. So these are things that we are addressing, but we are, as I say, looking at various ways to accommodate seniors in various areas of our province.

Mining Industry Claims Inspectors

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Madam Speaker, during the 1980s the government of Manitoba had two claims inspectors. During the Filmon watch, we have now gone down to one, and in fact now have no claims inspectors in Manitoba at all.

Will the government commit now to replacing the two claims inspectors for Manitoba so that we are able to regulate and enforce Manitoba laws?

Hon. David Newman (Minister of Energy and Mines): Madam Speaker, the function that is being addressed, of course, is a supervisory function. It is a credit to the explorationists, the prospectors and the people who stake claims that a minimal amount of interference is necessary because of the honour and quality of the people who do that kind of work, as my friend opposite well knows, but from time to time there is a need for supervision to make sure that unscrupulous people do not take advantage of the honour system. So there are inspectors, and indeed we have had a retirement. There is a process being put in place to hire a replacement person. In the meantime, other staff, and not Geological Services people, are engaged in performing that occasional supervisory role on a random basis.

Government Role

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Can the minister explain why the claimants whose matters come before the Mining Board are required to serve papers on the accused like a prosecutor and why the department does not take an administrative role in serving the papers and ensuring that the hearing is going to go along smoothly like other government review boards?

Hon. David Newman (Minister of Energy and Mines): Madam Speaker, that is the first time I have heard that complaint raised by anybody. No member of the industry, no member of the staff, no stakeholder has ever raised that issue before. The member opposite, having raised that statement, I can say this, that my experience was with the Small Claims Court, that self-service was a methodology employed. All of this is in the interests of saving taxpayers money. It makes perfectly good sense. Those feeling aggrieved can perform that kind of service.

If the honourable member for St. James wishes to advocate that taxpayers should pay for that, I would be very pleased to hear that and perhaps do a costing out of it and see whether that makes any sense at all.

* (1420)

Claims Inspector—The Pas

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Madam Speaker, can the minister explain how the government's plan to have one mines inspector in The Pas, as has been the case for the past few years, could possibly do the mines inspections in the Bissett area, and would the minister tell us how many times or how many inspections have occurred on the east side of Manitoba in the last year?

An Honourable Member: Thousands.

Ms. Mihychuk: None.

Hon. David Newman (Minister of Energy and Mines): Madam Speaker, I do not have that

information at my fingertips, but that is the kind of detail which can be accessed with considerable research by departmental staff who would probably prefer to be out supervising and inspecting where necessary. However, if the honourable member for St. James is really serious about that, and I assume she is, and unless she says otherwise I will have a briefing note brought to my attention and share that information with the former member of the department, the honourable member for St. James.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Elmwood, for one very short question.

Centra Gas Purchase Date of Agreement

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister of Energy and Mines a question regarding the purchase of Centra Gas. I would like to ask him: what date will the definitive agreement be ready for filing with the PUB? Give us a date.

Hon. David Newman (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): Madam Speaker, that would, of course, be an impossible thing to do because this is a free negotiation between two parties that are engaging in an effort to achieve the conclusion of a business deal. I do not have the answer to that question, and the honourable member for Elmwood knows full well it would be irresponsible for me to even speculate about it.

Madam Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Green Team Youth Employment Program

Mr. Ben Sveinson (La Verendrye): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak today about the Green Team youth employment program offered by the departments of Rural Development and Natural Resources. The Green Team program creates a winning situation for all involved. The program provides youth with on-the-job experience while they perform a variety of

services in our provincial parks and also support community projects.

The rural youth employment program for 1999 is expected to provide up to 750 Manitoba youth with summer jobs in rural communities and provincial parks. Employment will be in one of two Green Team programs. The Natural Resources Green Team employs youth in provincial parks for general maintenance and other duties. The Hometown Green Team employs youth for outdoor jobs on behalf of municipalities, conservation districts, private tourist operators, service clubs, local Chambers of Commerce and other nonprofit natural resource organizations.

Youth in the La Verendrye constituency have found work on Green Team projects in places such as the Whiteshell Provincial Park, the town of Ste. Anne, the R.M. of Tache, among others. I would encourage potential employers to consider this worthwhile program.

Madam Speaker, I applaud the Green Team program for the benefits it provides to our parks, our communities, and most importantly to our young people. Since the program's inception in 1992, the Manitoba Green Team has provided summer jobs for close to 9,000 youth. The Green Team program demonstrates this government's commitment to maintaining our parks and communities and to fostering the development of our young people. I give my support to the Green Team for its continued success. Thank you.

Swan River Hospital

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, as I indicated in Question Period, we have a very serious situation in Swan River where our hospital is going to have to be rebuilt because of a mould problem, a problem I believe created by neglect by this government when they put on hold renovations and repairs to the building in 1992 which I believe could have prevented some of this problem. However, the mould is there, and the hospital will have to be closed.

I want to, first of all, commend the staff on the board of the Swan River Hospital facility and

the expedient way they have handled this very challenging situation. However, there are many issues that have to be addressed and resolved, and I would like to raise several of them. First of all, I wanted assurances from this government and was disappointed when I did not get them from the Minister of Health (Mr. Stefanson) that the Swan River people and the people of the area would not have to raise 20 percent of the cost for a new facility, as is required by this government's current policy. They could have upgraded the facility in 1992; they did not. I do not believe that local people should be penalized by government policy when this kind of situation arises and a new facility has to be built.

I also, on behalf of the people of the valley, want the assurances of this government that they will not use this as an excuse to downgrade the facility and in fact will look at this as an opportunity and look at bringing new services to the Swan River Valley and the Swan River facility which serves a very large area, but unfortunately I do not think we have that assurance from this minister.

I also want, as I raised with the minister this afternoon, assurances that families are not put through undue hardship because of additional costs that they will have to pay as they are transported around the valley. This is a very serious challenge and one that I will continue to raise on behalf of the people of Swan River Valley who deserve the very best possible health care that we can, and we are not getting it from this government. Thank you.

Festival of Vaisakhi

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Madam Speaker, I ask the members of the House today to join me in offering our congratulations and warmest wishes to all Sikhs in Manitoba who are celebrating the Festival of the Vaisakhi. Today's festival marks the 300th anniversary of the Khalsa, the Order of Pure Beings. In April of 1699, the Tenth Master Guru Gobind Singh established the Khalsa, and its principles became the guides by which Sikh men and women live. The Khalsa's principles of sacrifice, responsibility, accountability, truth, beauty, goodness, and acting for the good of others have guided Sikh men and women for 300 years.

Today is a very special occasion for the Sikhs here and around the world, and we wish them well as they gather and celebrate their spiritual and cultural heritage. We, as a province built on immigration, celebrate today with the many cultures, and today's day is for the Sikhs.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I stand today to acknowledge the birth of Khalsa which is celebrated by Sikhs everywhere by Vaisakhi day on April 14. Indeed, tomorrow is a very special day, for it was on April 14, 1699, the Tenth Master Guru Gobind Singh established Khalsa, the Order of Pure Beings.

We acknowledge that it is indeed a tricentennial anniversary which is most significant. I have had the privilege over the last 11 years of representing a community in which many members of the Sikh community have been overwhelming in their hospitality in making not only me but my family and friends feel welcome at the different temples throughout Winnipeg. I extend to members of the Sikh community my personal congratulations along with family, my colleague from The Maples and in fact the Liberal Party.

Congratulations on this very auspicious occasion, and I thank you for the opportunity to say a few words.

* (1430)

Consolidated Growers and Processors

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Madam Speaker, Friday, April 9, Friday of last week, was a big day for the community of Dauphin. Consolidated Growers and Processors announced on that day the construction of the world's largest hemp facility—and that is industrial hemp—a plant which I believe has a huge potential for farmers and for people in communities in Manitoba. I also want to point out as well that I was joined that day by my colleague from the Interlake to help our community celebrate what is a good news announcement.

It was only 13 months ago that the federal government approved the use of industrial hemp

as a product. In that time a lot has happened in our community of Dauphin. A lot of people have done a lot of very good work in attracting CGP to our area. I have to start by giving congratulations to former mayor Virginia Jamieson, along with the current mayor, Bill Nicholson, and current reeve, George Richardson, for the role they played in convincing CGP to locate their plant near our community.

I also want to save a lot of the thanks and congratulations to those farmers who are members of the hemp growers association, in particular Joe Federowich [phonetic], Jim Mulligan and Jim Pavlin who really spearheaded the drive to get as many farmers as possible to seed hemp, take that risk and diversify their crop operations in order to provide a supply of hemp for CGP and help in their deciding where they were going to build their plant.

The spinoff in related activities with hemp I think are going to be tremendous, and I think the community of Dauphin and the province of Manitoba are well positioned to take advantage of the hemp benefit. So congratulations to my constituents in Dauphin who had a lot of work to do in attracting this company to our area. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

(Fifth Day of Debate)

Madam Speaker: To resume adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) and the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer) in amendment thereto and the proposed motion of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) in further amendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable member for Osborne, who has 15 minutes remaining.

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, if you recall yesterday when the House adjourned I was explaining to members opposite why the people of Osborne have lost confidence in this government, or perhaps I should change it because I am sure that they never did have

confidence, and that is why they elected a New Democrat in Osborne.

I was talking about the work I have been doing door to door, and I cited first of all the concerns my constituents have with health care, and I had secondly begun speaking about education and had talked about concerns to do with class size, with the lack of resources. I know that my constituents are also concerned that their children are frequently raising funds for the school. I know I have a raft of boxes of chocolate-covered almonds in my kitchen, which I do not really need, believe me. Although I enjoy eating them, I do not need them, but, of course, one wants to help the school out when people come to the door, and so we do it.

I think one of the most disturbing things, Madam Speaker, that I heard from my constituents was a number of people said to me they feel they need to consider sending their children to private schools. This is not because they do not believe in public education. They do believe in public education, and, furthermore, they have confidence in our teachers, the teachers of Manitoba. Their concern is the large classrooms, the paucity of textbooks and, again, a lack of leadership at the government level when it comes to public education in this province. So, certainly, my constituents have lost confidence in the ability of this government to deliver a sound public education program.

Just a quick word about university students. I think university tuition has increased by something like 150 percent under this government. Madam Speaker, I remember when I began university. I think it was in 1970 that I was first a university student. I paid \$325 tuition fees, and my daughter who recently began her first year of university paid something like \$3,000. That is incredible.

As I speak more and more to students and there are many university students, especially in the Osborne Village area, I am becoming convinced that education is really only open to the moneyed and the elite and those very talented students who happen to win significant scholarships, but there are many students who should be there who fit into neither category.

If this government has a commitment to learning, to knowledge, to an educated workforce, they simply have to do something for our university students, but they have not, and this is once again an issue that constituents of Osborne have spoken to me about and one of their reasons for losing confidence in this government.

There are many other issues that constituents brought up, but I know that many of my colleagues want to speak. Let me just quickly mention in passing their concern with property taxes. I know other people will and have gone into this in detail.

My constituents are also concerned about child poverty and note that we do not really have poor children unless we have poor custodial parents. I note there is particularly a problem among single-parent families and that 85 percent of single-parent families are headed by women and that 59 percent of those families live in poverty. I also note that 26 percent of Manitoba's children live in poverty and that we are the child poverty capital of Canada for I do not know how many years in a row. This is not a statistic that this government usually brags about. I would not brag about it either. They should be thoroughly ashamed, but it is time to do something.

Madam Speaker, I am going to reserve my final comments for the Minister of Health (Mr. Stefanson) because so often the government members opposite pose as friends to women in this province. I noticed when the Minister of Health, our new Minister of Health, our third or is it fourth Minister of Health since 1995—third Minister of Health. I noticed that when he was making his speech, he talked about the services that his government provided for women.

* (1440)

Madam Speaker, he bragged about the Breast Clinic. I would like to point out that the Breast Clinic in Misericordia Hospital is closing on May 15 and that this will create a serious problem for Manitoba women. I want to point out that this breast care clinic has been built up over the course of five years by a very distinguished physician, Virginia Fraser. She is

a leader in her field. All her hard work, I am assuming since it is closing, will come for naught. So I do not think this minister should be bragging about his friendship for women and the things that his health care program is doing for women.

The other thing, when it comes to women, that I want to indicate is the refusal of this government apparently to create a screening program for cervical cancer. There was a promise in the 1994 throne speech to create a screening program for cervical cancer. Nothing was done. We had a promise again in 1997. Nothing materialized. The same in 1998. Now in this meanspirited, mealy shadow of a throne speech, the notion of cervical cancer has evaporated entirely. It is not even mentioned. They are not even making false promises. It just dropped from the record.

Madam Speaker, the other serious health issues that affect Manitoba women are not mentioned either. For example, let me cite eating disorders. There are simply no proper programs for eating disorders in this province, and this is particularly true for adolescent girls. The overwhelming proportion of people suffering from eating disorders are adolescent girls. I believe that at the Women's Health Clinic there is one paid counsellor, and there is one counsellor who provides services. I believe the service fee is quite low.

Madam Speaker, I know that these counsellors both provide excellent services, but I also know that they have very large and long waiting lists and that they simply cannot provide the service that is required. What happens is that because this kind of service, a counselling service, is not available to these young women when they first begin to suffer from these disorders that nothing is done and no treatment is administered until very critical stages when these young women are hospitalized, and then the only treatment, of course, is I.V. feeding in order to keep them alive.

So, Madam Speaker, I think that the Minister of Health has failed Manitoba women when it comes to the kinds of programs that we see him committing himself to in this throne speech.

The very last thing I want to talk about, Madam Speaker, and very quickly, is to say a word about AIDS, because I noticed that the Minister of Health in his throne speech claimed that his government had given, and I do not know what the time range was, a million dollars for AIDS treatment, but this so-called million dollars for AIDS is given in medical services. We have a commitment to supply medical services to people who are ill in this province. This is nothing special. What this government has never done is provide any special funding for AIDS services organizations, those organizations which provide services on an ongoing basis for the people living with AIDS and for the families of those people living with AIDS.

I note that the AIDS Strategy is still on the shelf. As pathetic as the AIDS Strategy developed by this government was, I suppose half a loaf of bread is worth, is better than nothing at all. I also want to, while I am on my feet, recall to the House the former Minister of Health, who on International AIDS Day, on the steps of this Legislature, no doubt annoyed because he had received a failing grade when it came to his response to the AIDS pandemic in this province, anyway, on the steps of this Legislature, the former Minister of Health talked about how AIDS was often and largely a lifestyle choice. Absolutely shameful and disgraceful.

Can you imagine, Madam Speaker, the effects of his words on people who are living with AIDS, on the families of people who are living with AIDS, on people who contracted AIDS through contaminated blood? I guess hemophilia is a lifestyle choice according to this minister. Anyway, the only conclusion one can draw from his remarks is that if you have AIDS it is probably your own fault. That is absolutely disgraceful.

Madam Speaker, I think I have taken my time. Clearly I am on the record as suggesting that the people for Osborne have lost confidence, have no confidence in this government, and consequently I have no confidence in this government either.

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I welcome this opportunity

to put some comments on the record in respect of the throne speech presented by the new Lieutenant Governor, Mr. Liba. I want to thank the former Lieutenant Governor, Yvon Dumont, and Mrs. Dumont, and certainly welcome the new Lieutenant Governor, Mr. Peter Liba, and Mrs. Liba to this very important task.

I also want to welcome our new pages and as well the Sergeant-at-Arms, although we speak with some regret about losing the old Sergeant-at-Arms, or the former Sergeant-at-Arms. Certainly we welcome the new Sergeant-at-Arms to his task and wish him all the best.

Madam Speaker, we also wish you and the Deputy Speaker good fortune and skill to manage the House. Certainly you have a very challenging task to do that. Most of my comments will focus on justice issues, but I will also make certain preliminary comments about northeast Winnipeg and specifically my constituency of Rossmere.

I think, Madam Speaker, the throne speech reflects a vision for the future of the province of Manitoba as a place for young people to raise families, educate their children, and find meaningful employment. There are many opportunities that are arising in my constituency. Thousands of jobs have been created in my constituency over the past number of years. I attribute much of that to the progressive policies of our government working in partnership with business and with community members.

I want to speak about some of the things that are happening in my constituency of Rossmere. I want to talk about some of the initiatives in health care. The new 140-bed Concordia Personal Care Centre will be completed in March of the year 2000. The total cost of the project is \$17.2 million, with a contribution of \$3.2 million from the Concordia Hospital and the remaining \$14 million funded by Manitoba Health. The Personal Care Centre will feature a private room with an attached washroom for each resident. Each resident area will have its own dining room, lounge, activity area, food server and bathing area. An adult daycare centre is also included. It will accommodate 15 elderly from the community in a program held Monday to Friday. This new centre will free up

60 interim personal care beds currently in the hospital, allowing Concordia to proceed with its plans to develop eight palliative care beds, 20 medical/surgical beds, 20 orthopedic rehab beds, and 12 mental health beds.

I would also point out that seniors at Kingsford House in my constituency received funding from Manitoba Health under the Support Services to Seniors. A grant of \$6,500 supports the salary and benefits of the new meals program co-ordinator position for three days per week. I am very encouraged that my constituents also see the need to develop services that allow our seniors to remain in their homes and independent as long as possible.

Ensuring long-term viability of Donwood Manor PCH through recent renovations funded by Manitoba Housing and Manitoba Health have resulted in power-assisted doors and a covered walkway to the parking, an increased parking lot for caregivers and visitors, an increased walkway to the personal care home, and improved garbage bin removal from the extended personal care. Also, they have taken steps to do things as mundane and yet as important as carpet replacement.

In my own constituency, I have hosted at two Justice forums, the East and North Kildonan forum on youth violence and crime and the East and North Kildonan forum on justice solutions. Constituents have also taken the opportunity to share their concerns regarding proposed changes to the federal Young Offenders Act during the Valley Gardens public consultation meeting, the first of several meetings held throughout the province.

Organizations, such as the Good Neighbours Retirement Centre, have focused on crime prevention, conducting meetings with officials in my department in an effort to design a support program aimed at seniors. Last Thursday I was pleased to present Good Neighbours with a \$5,000 cheque from Manitoba Justice in support of their efforts.

* (1450)

The throne speech indicated new policies and programs my department will be introducing

to help communities, particularly schools, safe for our children and families. Parent councils in my constituency have been working hard to ensure that positive alternatives are being offered to local school children. For instance, it was my pleasure as Justice minister to provide funds to Springfield Heights School in support of a new play structure that will keep local children active both during and after the school day.

The throne speech indicates that our government will continue to work with the private sector to forge stronger links with our schools. Students from my constituency have demonstrated an enthusiasm for these kinds of efforts. For instance, students enrolled in the Career Internship Program at River East Collegiate work at businesses throughout the city as a part of their curriculum developing real world skills that prepare them for the everyday challenges presented by fast-paced work environments.

I have also visited students at Kildonan East Collegiate, who are preparing graphic arts projects at a level exceeding post-secondary expectations. Students selected to participate in Miles Macdonell's music program Prodigy have recorded and produced a CD that has been played on radio stations as far away as Mexico.

As our government continues to foster an expanding and diversified economy, local businesses are growing significantly as they consistently offer excellent products in terms of design and value. Recently it was my pleasure to join our Premier (Mr. Filmon) at the grand opening of Palliser Furniture's Delta Division, a 100,000 square foot leather furniture manufacturing facility located in the constituency of Rossmere. Of Palliser's six leather plants, three are located in Winnipeg. As the largest producer of leather furniture in Canada and one of the top three producers in North America, Palliser supplies retailers around the world with a full line of home furnishings. In business since 1944, Palliser is headquartered in Winnipeg and employs 3,600 people and will generate annual revenue of \$400 million in 1999.

The new Delta Division alone brings 300 jobs to Rossmere. I want to just say how much I

appreciate the work of all my constituents, not only the owners of the businesses but the workers who have made these businesses such a tremendous success, and who have created wonderful employment opportunities and wonderful products that people want to buy. These people, many of whose names will never be heard in this Legislature, in fact contribute so much to the well-being of our province.

New immigrants, people who have been here a long time and younger people, all are contributing to make my constituency a very strong constituency, and one that contributes in every way to the strong province that Manitoba is. Small business in my constituency has also received support from our government. For example, Windflower Communications, a local publisher, dedicated to the production and distribution of faith-based books and material, has received \$7,500 through the Manitoba publisher marketing assistance program. I am pleased that our government is able to help Manitoba publishers increase the sales of Manitoba books and improve the financial health of their company.

I want to move then from my constituency, which I am very proud of and the people in it, to the broader issues raised in the throne speech. As the Minister of Education and Training (Mr. McCrae) said in his response to the throne speech, our comments should focus on substance rather than rhetoric, and that is what I would like to do in discussing the many positive advances being made in the area of justice, both within government and within our community. There are concrete programs and changes occurring every day in our systems of justice, whether they are in the area of policing, courts, correctional services, crime prevention, victim services, or a myriad of other programs.

I have heard comments that expenditures made in one area are somehow misconstrued as being a decision of government not to support services in other equally important areas of justice management. I think it bears repeating that the Justice portfolio has many competing areas, financially, philosophically, interest-based, and constitutionally. The balance is a delicate one, and it is never possible to please all interest groups on a particular subject. When

there has been a horrific crime, we are all outraged about man's inhumanity to one another. Yet in the Department of Justice and in our province when such a crime occurs, we need to ensure that the rights of all people are met to ensure a fair, impartial system. As Minister of Justice, I will always speak out as an advocate for victims. I will always speak out for offenders to be held fully accountable for their action. I will always advocate for reform in the law when it is in the interest of the public we all serve and in the interest of public safety.

Yet, if I do not at the same time as Minister of Justice support a strong system to defend an accused's ability to make a full and forceful defence and do not accept the ultimate independence of the judiciary to make rulings within the law, even when I disagree with them, our society will not have one of the most basic principles, which, I am sure, we will all acknowledge, is essential to a healthy community and province.

In Justice we are focusing our efforts on making our community safer for all Manitobans. We have taken a three-pronged approach: suppression and intervention; secondly, prevention; and thirdly, partnerships. This will result in a balanced approach to respond to the many very complex issues facing our often competing systems and services of justice in our province.

I would like to talk of some of the many exciting programs and services that are being offered in our province which have made it a safer place for people to live, which have contributed to reductions in rates of crime, not only in Winnipeg but in the rest of Manitoba, and which have increased the public's confidence in our system of justice.

From the perspective of suppression and intervention, the government has taken an aggressive approach to the prosecution of individuals accused of breaking federal and provincial laws. We have put more Crown attorneys in place to carry out this important work. They are following a policy of vigorously opposing bail where there has been violence or gang-related crimes. This means that while

awaiting trial these people are kept in jail rather than being free to live in our communities; or, if they are granted bail by the court, the Crown attorneys will argue for strict conditions to restrict the actions of the accused to ensure that the victims' and the public safety is paramount.

If a court finds a person guilty of an offence, our prosecutors will make an aggressive submission at the sentencing hearing within the parameters set by law. They will speak for the victims of crime. In addition, as a part of our new Victims' Rights Act, all victims can be heard through the new Victim Impact Statement Program. All victims will be kept informed about the progress of the case through the court process and will be dealt with respectfully and with compassion by all who work in the justice system.

I want to say that I was reading a newspaper article about a case in Ontario where our Victims' Rights Act was noted as being the only act in Canada that in fact has an effective complaint mechanism. No other act in Canada, it was noted, had the effective complaint mechanism that our act has. The pendulum has swung back from the early 1980s and the introduction of the Charter when there was a public perception that only the accused mattered in a trial. Now the victims, those people who have been violated, are front and centre as a part of the process. The dynamic has changed.

The police across Manitoba are recognized for their professionalism and protection of the public. Consistently in public opinion polls the police rank as one of the highest institutions that the people of Manitoba and indeed of Canada respect. This government has provided \$2 million a year over and above any funding that we provide to the City of Winnipeg to the Winnipeg Police Service in its efforts to increase the number of police on the streets to respond to the policing needs of all of our citizens. Those who choose to break our laws are therefore more likely to be apprehended, and our law-abiding citizens know that they are being well served by the members of the police forces in all of our communities.

* (1500)

We have introduced new laws in areas where there has been a need defined. We now have the toughest impaired driving legislation in Canada. By our being aggressive on a preventable form of crime such as this, our streets are made safer for all. We have taken an aggressive approach to prostitution and have taken it off the streets. Our province is taking the lead, and other provinces, including British Columbia, are now following us and looking at the programs we have put in place.

Manitoba has for years had the most aggressive policy against domestic violence in the country. We have taken this secret crime and made it a public issue that, in combination with some of the highest per capita presence of police officers, for a time resulted in higher crime statistics. However, even the reporting of statistics in this area now notes that the effect of our policies has a considerable impact on the numbers, but for Manitobans higher numbers, at least in the area of domestic violence, mean that victims of domestic violence are being protected and supported.

I note that other provinces that do not have this aggressive policy against domestic violence may have lower figures in terms of violence, but, as Statistics Canada has noted for the first time, our higher violent crime statistics are directly attributable to the aggressive approach we take to domestic violence and the fact that this secret crime is no longer tolerated not only by citizens but institutions of government and the courts.

Although I know the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) will give a more detailed commentary on the many enhancements that have been made to respond to the recommendations of Mr. Justice Shulman's report on the inquiry into the deaths of Rhonda and Roy Lavoie, I would like to comment that virtually all recommendations affecting Prosecutions, Corrections, Women's Advocacy and court systems, where in our control, have, in fact, been acted upon. This has required the dedication of government and community partners in approaching new ways of serving victims of domestic violence. There has been an unprecedented level of negotiation and collaboration to achieve the significant results outlined in the report of the implementation

committee released last November. In addition, the government has committed over \$2 million on an annual basis to the area of domestic violence. The Domestic Violence and Stalking Prevention, Protection and Compensation Act has been introduced and passed and will be proclaimed when the training and regulatory development processes are complete.

Manitoba has one of the most extensive justice committee programs in Canada. Over 70 committees of dedicated volunteers, numbering some 700 people, throughout the province deal with many cases that would otherwise be brought to court. They ensure that where there has been an acknowledgement by the accused that an offence has been committed that the harm done can be repaired in some way. I have heard that the dispositions in these committees have resulted in very few of these individuals coming into contact with the justice system again once they have successfully completed those dispositions.

Justice committees have traditionally dealt with only young offenders, but they are now starting to deal with some adult offences, and I would encourage that development. Here is a living example of how communities can take back control of their streets by giving offenders clear messages about their conduct and what they must do to restore public confidence.

Our government will intervene by advocating for changes in laws that are established by the Parliament of Canada. I spend some time at Justice minister meetings advocating for change. The law is not static and we must respond to the changing criminal elements in our communities.

One example of the need for change is the area of young offenders. The federal government has been promising changes to the 15-year-old outdated Young Offenders Act for some time. I have taken positions forward which reflect what Manitobans have been saying. I want the law to be aggressive with respect to youth crime and especially violent youth crime, for if we can ensure that young people learn there is no easy ride when you get involved with the justice system, then they will

reconsider some of the choices that they are making.

Recently, I conducted, along with the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) who was sitting as the chair, a series of public consultations on this legislation. I heard overwhelmingly that we must get aggressive with young criminals, but at the same time we must give our young people positive alternatives to the criminal lifestyle. This is where we must seek an appropriate balance, and I will be taking such a message forward to the federal Minister of Justice, for not only has Manitoba not been listened to with respect to the need to strengthen the laws, our efforts to support young people through programming has also been eroded for many years by continued federal reductions of funds for such creative programs.

We must suppress crime wherever it appears, even if it means having to build more institutions to accommodate accused and sentenced offenders. Our government has also taken many positive steps to prevent crime and its root causes. This is where our long-term solutions are to be found. Innovative services are being developed all across the province, many initiated by the community, some by government and more and more by partnerships of community and government organizations.

The Citizens on Patrol program is one example of how a group of volunteers can provide support to local police forces by being present and watching for signals of crime. Their presence in neighbourhoods has been found to be responsible for reductions of up to 70 percent in criminal activity in some communities. Our citizens are saying to us: it is our community; let us do the job of making it a great place to live. They are not asking government to pay for their time. They are saying that what they are doing is a necessary part of being a member of a community. Over 30 such programs are in place, and with some financial support from the provincial government for some basic equipment, the volunteers are able to do their best to support the crime prevention activities of the police.

More programs are in development, and they represent a new way of taking control rather

than sitting back and saying that government is the only one who can do something.

I was presented with a copy of the Minnedosa Tribune from my colleague the Minister of Finance (Mr. Gilleshammer), who takes great pride in his community and his constituency, as we all do, and I am reading from the Minnedosa Tribune, which I might note for the information of the Speaker, is the oldest weekly newspaper in the Canadian West, from 1883 to 1999, and again what a wonderful tribute to small business and what a tribune paper and what a weekly newspaper is doing in some of these communities. What positive stories they tell about what is happening in our province. These are the people who want to ensure that the public is told what is exactly going on in their communities.

So here is an article that a Ms. Nancy Johnson wrote, and it indicates the Minnedosa RCMP record a drop in crime for the first quarter of 1999. I will just quote parts of this, what it states: In Minnedosa property crimes have seen a dramatic decrease, dropping from 15 during the first quarter to two in 1999, a dramatic decrease in that category. Specifically break and enters have dropped, not only into business premises but also into residences, and break and enters into other structures such as sheds or garages have decreased to zero.

* (1510)

Total assaults saw a decrease in that first quarter, and total thefts less than \$5,000 measured some decrease as well, and although these are preliminary statistics for the year 1999, my colleague the Minister of Finance, the member for Minnedosa, indicates that in great part these kinds of crime reduction statistics can be attributed to the actions of our citizens and specifically those who participate in Citizens on Patrol activities.

I want to say, Madam Speaker, that these types of stories are not unique in Manitoba. We are seeing similar results all over rural Manitoba, and indeed we are seeing the importation of this idea into the city of Winnipeg, particularly into the northwest corner

of Winnipeg, resulting in lower crime statistics in those areas as well.

When I was at a particular meeting in northwest Winnipeg perhaps a few months ago I was advised that in a particular pod, I believe it is spelled p-o-d, a crime statistic area, that the calls for assistance had decreased in an area where the Citizens on Patrol now actively patrol their community, had dropped from 700 calls for assistance in a yearly period to a little over a hundred calls, a great tribute not only to community policing but importantly to the input of citizens who have said: these are our communities and we will take these communities back and make these places better places to live, and each and every one of those community volunteers needs to be commended for what they are doing to make our province a better place to live.

Justice has entered the technological era in crime prevention as well. The Crime Watch pager program links police with businesses by providing information about potential criminal activity. With the co-operation of police, Chambers of Commerce, and telephone service providers, a new set of eyes is at work. New phone systems in our jails now allow the interception and recording of calls, which limits the threatening and harassing phone calls to witnesses and victims that have been made in the past by residents of the jail.

Cell phones for victims of domestic violence are now available in a number of communities. The simple pressing of one number will alert police to the need to respond to a victim of domestic violence right away.

Every year, a number of crime prevention awards are presented to individuals and community organizations who have taken steps to prevent criminal activity in innovative ways. The creativity and leadership from our communities always impresses me. This is where solutions to many of our problems can be found, and these organizations are to be commended for their proactive approaches.

In order to be effective in fighting crime, we know we must prevent it, yet the causes are diverse. Through interdepartmental co-operation,

a number of initiatives have been undertaken which have had the effect of improving family life and giving children a good start in healthy families. BabyFirst, Stop FAS—that is fetal alcohol syndrome—and EarlyStart, which the Minister of Health (Mr. Stefanson) spoke about last week, are now also seen as a Justice response.

Young people need alternatives and positive lifestyle choices. The earlier in life these opportunities are provided for high-risk children and families, the greater the likelihood of success in families and society and the less likely there will be a criminal lifestyle chosen. That is also why the Urban Sports Camps have been so successful, as well as some of the urban safety initiatives such as the Circus and Magic Partnership, the Kildonan Youth Activity Centre, the Salvation Army Kid Zones, to name only a few, are also now a very important part of the justice response.

Finally, we are able to make the changes we have in our province because of the recognition of the need for partnerships among members of neighbourhoods and communities, partnerships among various levels of government and with a wide cross-section of community, business and voluntary organizations. There are thousands of individuals volunteering in their communities in small and large ways that make a difference, and there are hundreds of committees and organizations, each with different mandates, but all focusing on making Manitoba a safer place to live and to work.

Even within the government, there are a number of partnerships growing to provide the best services to our citizens. In different work environments, such as Correctional Services, staff are working collaboratively with management to ensure that new facilities, programs and services meet the needs of offenders, yet are respectful and mindful of the risks and challenges staff face in their work environments every day. The staff of Corrections are to be commended for their active and positive participation in planning for the future.

A safe, just province takes the work of many people. In justice, there may always be a small

element of our society who choose a lifestyle that is built on victimizing others and who choose violence as an alternative to a peaceful, respectful and just society. We must remember that this group is a very small minority and that those of us who respect one another and the laws put in place to protect us all will be the ones who have the power to take control and shape the future.

The future of Manitoba is great. All the indicators are there. You have heard about positive changes in health care, in education and certainly in economic forecasts. Manitoba is a strong province, well positioned to enter the next millennium with optimism. Yet there is no doubt that we will continue to be challenged in new ways, in new areas we have not yet experienced even when we have been well prepared and provided a solid foundation for our young people and our communities.

However, as Winston Churchill said, a pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty. I hope that as Manitobans, as a government and as a Legislature, we will all be optimists as we continue to address the difficulties which may be presented to us in our communities and neighbourhoods.

I certainly extend an invitation to work with the members across the way. I know that sometimes our adversarial system of government does not seem to allow for the very good ideas that from time to time do arise from the opposition benches. I know I have had an opportunity of working with the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) who has come forward with a number of good ideas, and I specifically want to thank him for his very, very proactive and positive approach to making this province a better place to live. I also want to commend the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), and I must say that I with some regret see that member leave. I think he obviously added a strong voice, a voice of reason in this House that in fact contributed greatly to the debate here and the development of sound policies.

Now, I also want to pay my respects to the former member for St. Boniface, Mr. Neil Gaudry, who was I think indeed a friend to us

all, who worked continuously on a positive vein to work for the betterment of not only the people of St. Boniface but for the province of Manitoba generally.

I also do not want to ignore the members of the New Democratic Party. I know that from time to time they too have contributions to make, and although their contributions sometimes are a little misguided, the debate that I think those ideas engender help us as a government to form solid, strong policies that work then for the best interests of the people of Manitoba.

* (1520)

I wanted to take one opportunity to speak just in closing. How much time do I have, Madam Speaker? I wanted to speak about a particular program that the former Minister of Justice, the member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey) who has also decided not to seek re-election, created, the CNAC system, the citizens notification advisory committee, and what the article from the Free Press—and I believe this was yesterday's Free Press—indicates, that "Manitoba's system for 'outing' worst sex offenders a model for other provinces."

The former Minister of Justice, the member for Fort Garry, needs to be commended for the vision and the courage that she took in establishing this program. I recall the cynics and the pessimists and the naysayers saying that this would not be a workable solution to protect the people of Manitoba, and I note here with some interest the comment: "Defence lawyer Jeff Gindin was one of the more vocal critics of the program when it was announced, saying ex-cons would be branded for life and ostracized in the community." Now what does he say: "he applauds the police and CNAC officials for the job that they have done. 'They've been quite selective, not doing a lot of them. They really take their time to pick the right cases, and it's hard to argue with what they've done,' he said." Although he spoke out against it initially, he is now very supportive of that, and again, shows I think the maturity of that particular individual in recognizing a good idea even when initially he opposed it.

One of the comments, though, that bothered me that I was a little concerned about was the

description of the program and the participants in that program, and perhaps the comment was made inadvertently. I want to just spend a moment to talk about that. The comment is the "Winnipeg police, Brandon police and RCMP regularly sift through dozens of cases sent to them by Manitoba prison officials who are concerned about the coming release of a convicted sex offender." Going on, it states: "To date, Winnipeg police have reviewed 174 files and sent 45 of them to an 11-member board of directors— which include police officers, justice officials, mental health workers and even an elderly woman representing the general public."

I thought to myself, it was as though this elderly woman, it was sort of an afterthought. I can tell you that this elderly woman, I met her yesterday and she mentioned the article to me. I know this elderly woman. She was my Grade 1 teacher. She was my wife's Grade 9 teacher. She has contributed in significant ways to this community, to my community of Rossmere. She has never stopped giving of herself throughout the entire career, not only as a professional teacher but also as a volunteer. She has worked in prisons. She has worked in any number of volunteer capacities, in church capacities and other capacities. I thought to myself, because a person is elderly does not mean to suggest here that they have nothing to contribute. In fact, I would say that because they are elderly they have experience that we can all learn from and that we can profit from. We as government, we as legislators should never forget the contribution that these people have made to our community and continue to make to our community.

So, Madam Speaker, I thought I would just mention the efforts of Ms. Agnes Dyck and her tremendous work that she has been making in our community. So I look forward to continuing to work with the House and the people of our province in building a safe and just province for all of us to live and work. Thank you very much.

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to the debate on the throne speech put forward by this government.

I was just thinking about where we were a year ago. I was thinking about listening to the Minister of Justice and thinking about how long this government has been in power, eleven long years pretty much, and thinking how long it's been since we have been in this House. Nine long months we have been away. Nine long months is a significant time. I am reminded that where I was a year ago on this day was, I was coming home from Victoria Hospital with our new baby daughter.

It is fitting that I can have a chance to talk about some of that firsthand experience of being in a hospital for a few days, a few days longer than I had hoped, but a few days, and talk about what I think is the priority issue for Manitobans after 11 years of the Filmon Tories, which is health care. Over and over again we keep hearing that health care has hit an all-time low in this province, and I am going to I think take the opportunity to read some of the comments on surveys from my constituents with respect to health care.

People, I think, are appalled. They are galled. They are upset. They are annoyed that three-quarters of a million dollars has been spent by this government on propaganda and advertising to try and convince them that health care is not all that bad. I am going to start off with one of the comments made by a resident in Radisson that says: I have personal experience with our health care system. No matter how much the government says they are improving it, the health care system stinks. That is from one resident in Radisson.

I have a stack of surveys here where the message is the same message over and over again. When asked what the most important health care issues are in terms of their family, there is a very consistent theme. They talk about the shortage of nurses, the shortage of doctors, the problems with user fees, the problems with waiting lists. They talk about the fact that we need to get back to a system where you know your doctor and your doctor knows you.

Some of the comments, when asked what their concerns are, are getting care when needed, getting more nurses in the profession. They are concerned about staffing and wages for nurses,

the need for 24-hour health assistance information resources to be established. That is an idea that has been talked about a lot. They want to have access to the hospital when they need it, preserve our medicare system. They want preventative care. I notice the government's propaganda talks about the need for prevention. People in the community are wanting more information about nutrition and healthy living to prevent high costs of care in the future.

People in Radisson are concerned about the gradual privatization of health care and the inability of this government to keep health care providers in Manitoba, and they are concerned about waiting lists. They want a reduced waiting list time for surgery and increase the number of hospital beds, particularly for acute care. They are, I think, very knowledgeable in Manitoba about the terminology, the lack of services for things like palliative care and home care services for palliative care. They want adequate emergency provided immediately; again, hospital beds being provided, more public, not private—that is specified in this survey—public not private care homes with qualified nurses and LPNs, availability immediate and a short time for tests. They are concerned about hospital treatment and cancer care, hospital beds availability. The general theme is over and over and over again the availability of hospital care—

* (1530)

Point of Order

Mr. David Faurischou (Portage la Prairie): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order in regard to the documents to which the honourable member for Radisson is reading from. I do not believe those have been tabled in this House. She is reading verbatim, and I believe the correct procedure in this House is to table the documents to which one refers in this House.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Crescentwood, on the same point of order.

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Are you still receiving advice, Madam Speaker, as I believe my colleague would like to offer advice? It appeared that you were about to rule on the

point. I am wondering if you are still receiving advice.

Madam Speaker: Yes, I will accept advice from the honourable member for Radisson.

Ms. Cerilli: Madam Speaker, on the point of order raised by the member opposite, these surveys were sent to me, and some of them have actually put on there that their names are to be kept confidential. So the information that I am reading is generic in the sense of having people's names attached to it is a separate issue.

So I would expect that you would consider that in your ruling. If the members opposite wish to see the comments, I would be quite happy to have those provided. I would like a chance to make sure that the constituents' names are not part of what I would table and enter into the record of the House.

Madam Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Portage la Prairie, I would indeed concur that the honourable member has a legitimate point of order.

Rule 34 states, and I will read it: "Where in a debate a Member quotes from a private letter, any other Member may require the member who quoted from the letter to table the letter from which the Member quoted but this rule does not alter any rule or practice of the House relating to the tabling of documents other than private letters."

Point of Order

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I guess just more so on a point of order. I think that the Chamber needs to be sensitive to the fact that as an MLA one would not want to infringe upon a privilege of confidence that an MLA has with their constituents. I would concur that there is a need to table the document, but the member should be allowed to black out the name of the constituent, at the very least.

I would ask for co-operation from the member of Portage to at least acknowledge that fact, so that in fact there is no confidential information such as the member's constituent's name released.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Inkster does not have a new point of order. I think he was offering advice to the House, and it is not a legitimate point of order. However, if the member requesting that the rule be applied in this instance wishes to make a concession, I would suggest that he and the member perhaps have a discussion. I have made a ruling that indeed it is a point of order and the rule is very clear and very succinct. Perhaps I would suggest that the honourable member for Radisson exercise caution in reading comments from private letters. It is a rule of the House.

* * *

Ms. Cerilli: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will continue on with my debate and make it clear to you and to the House that what I am reading are surveys that were sent to me. They are surveys that were sent to me as part of the frank that we all have the opportunity to send to our constituents, and I think that there are—

Point of Order

Hon. David Newman (Deputy Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, on the same point of order, the member for Radisson—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On a new point of order.

Mr. Newman: A new point of order. The member for Radisson continues to read from the letter. Are you making a ruling or are you postponing the ruling? Because otherwise the letter should be tabled. In the meantime, I expect that she would not be reading from the letter pending a decision by the Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Because I have not seen the document, I wonder if the honourable member for Radisson can clarify. Is it a private letter or is it not a private letter? At the beginning of her debate I thought she made reference to letters received from constituents.

The honourable member for Radisson, for clarification.

Ms. Cerilli: Madam Speaker, what I am reading from are private surveys. They are confidential.

The names on them are confidential to me as their MLA. They have not given me permission to give their names into the record into this House. I never use a name in this House that goes onto the public record without first asking those people. I think what they have said to me, because especially what I have said is there is a theme; the point I am making is they are all making the same general comments, but I will not table the names and addresses of the constituents that have responded to my survey, especially because some of them have put right on it that their name is to be kept confidential.

So, Madam Speaker, I will await your ruling. I have made the decision. I am not going to table these documents. If your ruling means that I have to disagree or challenge your ruling, I guess I will have to do that because, I am sorry, the ministers have their briefing books, the ministers have certain things they do not table. This is advice to me. The advice and the contents of that advice I believe I can use in the public debate. The names and addresses of those people who have provided me with that information, I am not prepared to disclose to the public record.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised by the honourable deputy House leader—[interjection] Order, please. The House has asked for clarification, and I sought to receive clarification. The member reminding everyone in the Chamber that all members are honourable members, and when I asked the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) as to clarification as to whether it was a private letter, she said: not a private letter but a private response to a survey. So, in my opinion, Rule 34 then does not apply because it is not a private letter, but let us review the rule very clearly. If it indeed is a private letter and a request comes from any member of the Chamber on any side of the House, that member, according to Rule 34, is indeed obliged to table that document.

* * *

* (1540)

Ms. Cerilli: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just want to clarify one more thing before I proceed, if you are going to be deducting the time that we

just spent on those points of order from my time for my debate.

Madam Speaker: No, points of order are timed individually, and they are not deducted in Question Period or debate from the time allotted to the member.

Ms. Cerilli: Thank you, Madam Speaker. One more question, then. How much time do I have remaining in my debate?

Madam Speaker: I will just await advice from the table officer. My clock indicates 24 minutes, but I suspect it was two and a half to three minutes consumed in the point of order.

The honourable member has 28 minutes remaining.

Ms. Cerilli: Thank you, Madam Speaker. To summarize, then, in the advice, in the words of my constituents, this government has put health care on the critical list. I know that this government is now trying to backtrack and they are going to backfill and they are trying to make up for the neglect and the misguided policies over the last number of years, but I think Manitobans are telling them loud and clear, this time it is not going to work.

The throne speech talks about Tory health reform. Tory health reform has amounted to the longest waiting lists in the country, increases in user fees and the deinsurance of medications, people dying in hallways, nurses cut back and overworked to the point where care is being compromised and money for banks in terms of the SmartHealth card, American consultants, and frozen food. That is the legacy of health care reform under the Conservatives.

The NDP has a different vision. We have a vision to do what sometimes the government gives lip service to. They have had 11 years to develop community clinics, and they have conducted some consultations. I went to the consultations in the Transcona area, but I know that it is not going to be within the mandate of this government before we actually see some of those community clinics. But we do want to make that commitment.

We also have a commitment to preventative health, and, as the Fitness critic for our party, I am particularly interested in seeing a true preventative health strategy that would incorporate a wider variety of health care professionals into these community clinics and actually try and integrate more closely provisions for a healthy lifestyle and wellness into our health care system.

We want to see a freeze put on the user fees that have plagued people, the backsliding in Pharmacare, where drugs and medications have been deinsured. We want to expand the continuum of care in terms of home care. We have done it before in this province, where we were the first province in Canada to develop a comprehensive home care strategy. I think that Manitobans trust us and realize that it is the NDP that can fix the home care system that we have now.

An Honourable Member: Oh, yeah, right.

Ms. Cerilli: The minister opposite, Minister for Education (Mr. McCrae), says, "yeah, right." I can tell the minister, I visited a family recently in my constituency. This family—and again I have talked to this family, and I am not going to use their name here, but they have given me permission to raise this in the Legislature. This is a family with a 78-year-old mother/grandmother who has had a stroke and has been paralyzed from the neck down. Her tongue is paralyzed. Feeding her is a hazard. She has a choking hazard. This family has applied to have an additional six hours of home care. This is a long-term home care placement. The woman requires turning in her bed every hour. She requires support in terms of feeding. She requires being changed frequently, and Home Care is relying on her son-in-law to provide care throughout the day. Her son-in-law also has some impairments and some disabilities. What they were supposed to get was a review, because when Home Care came and did an in-home assessment there were more family members at home that were not working that were available. Now some of those people have moved or have employment, and I was concerned to find out that so far home care has refused to give them more hours in this case.

So the minister opposite can talk about their record on home care, but people in the communities have seen the difference. People in the community realize that with an aging population our home care services must be public, they must be comprehensive, they must be responsive, and they must be expanded. It can be a service that will save dollars, but we cannot scrimp on the dollars so that the care of patients in their homes is compromised. I would suggest that it is being compromised in this situation. This family has basically turned their living room into a hospital room. It was quite shocking to see the amount of equipment, the hoist, the wheelchair, the tray, everything that had been moved into their home, and realizing, with children at home, the disruption that this is causing for this family.

It leads me into the other part of I think the comprehensive health strategy related to the issue I was raising in Question Period today, and that is this government has no strategy for linking health care with housing, particularly for seniors or others who need long-term care and developing a comprehensive supported housing program, a comprehensive program that would meet the needs of lower-income Manitobans in particular. We know that in this province there has not been any social housing constructed since 1994. This government has the availability now with some housing that can be transferred. They have done a very poor job of trying to take the assets that they have and work them into a whole range of services for seniors and others who require supported housing.

We have got some ideas for that. It would be linked with a strategy for personal care homes. Not what this government has done where they have tried to suggest that they are expanding the services, but on the one hand they are closing a hospital like Misericordia, getting rid of those hospital beds and changing that into a long-term care facility. That is not going to help the situation that personal care homes and supported housing and home care could which is trying to ease up the pressure on our health care system in the hospitals and on acute care. The other area that I think has to be improved is the Pharmacare program. That is all part of the direction that we want to see health care move in.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

The other area, and I am going to continue speaking a little bit about some of these issues as they relate to my own constituency, is child care. Over and over again, constituents tell me that in the East K-Transcona area child care is a serious problem, that there is not enough affordable child care; there is not enough before- and after-school child care; there is not enough flexible child care for shift workers and evening workers. There are a lot of families in Radisson who have jobs that are at odd hours. I am pleased to see that the NDP caucus held a forum and that forum resulted in a variety of recommendations for child care. Some of these would, I think, go a long way, and I am hoping that the government has taken those recommendations—those are public; we have made that public—and they will act on some of those recommendations.

* (1550)

I am very concerned when situations arise as have recently in the Transcona-Springfield School Division where, because of this government's cutbacks in education, school divisions who have had the difficult choice of either continuing to increase property taxes, which they have had to do, or to cut back on services and teachers and programs and school busing, that now the school division in Transcona-Springfield is actually looking at charging nonprofit child care centres for rent. They have not had to do this in the past. We should have a system in Manitoba, like when the NDP were in power, where there were plans to try and integrate child care into schools. Now what we have under the Tories is maybe some announcements on this policy, but in practice, because of the underfunding in education, now school divisions are looking wherever they can to make up their budget shortfall.

On the school division side, it is going to be \$8,000 in rent that they can make as profit from these nonprofit child care centres. The school division is yet to make a final decision. I have written to the ministers about this, both Family Services and Education. But it is a sorry state in our schools and in the child care system when

education costs and the cutbacks are trying to be recuperated from nonprofit child care. I do not think that that is acceptable.

Some of the other issues in my constituency that I hear a lot about is the decline in the infrastructure in the roads in the city of Winnipeg. Transportation issues are a big issue in the Transcona-East Kildonan area. There have been a couple of studies by the University of Manitoba that I have been able to work with students on. There has to be attention, I think, by this government to issues around urban sprawl and how that is affecting the city of Winnipeg and our older neighbourhoods.

One of the other programs that I have recently become aware of that is an initiative in the Transcona area is the Transcona Employment Network. This is a program generated by parents. The member for Springfield (Mr. Findlay) is familiar with this. They recently opened an office at Regent Park School in Transcona, and they basically want to try and expand the options and opportunities for children with developmental disabilities beyond what is existing now in the sheltered workshops. They want to have supports, so young people can find employment in the general community and not spend the rest of their lives working in a sheltered workshop.

I am pleased to see that this program is going ahead. I will look forward to seeing the support of the provincial government for that new and ingenious kind of approach to providing services for people that in the past have not been fully integrated in the community.

One of the ongoing issues in Transcona as well, in the Radisson area, is the contaminated site by Domtar. We have a meeting set up for this Thursday. Unfortunately, this government has had a number of stops and starts on this issue, and I hope to see this resolved within the next year or so, that people have both their neighbouring properties and their own property cleaned up, and that this is not going to continue to be a problem for their neighbourhood.

One of the other issues that I wanted to bring up, related to the Radisson constituency, has to do with Club Regent. We have often

made the point that there are no line-ups at the casino. This government has found \$50 million to expand, and you should see this expansion. It is huge. You go down Regent, and you have to do a double take when you see how long the building for Club Regent has become.

There was a tragedy, though, that took place a year ago this May. I have just had before me the Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) speak, and it is unfortunate he is not here now to hear, even though he went on about how great the justice system is in Manitoba. When you talk to people that are having personal experiences with the justice system, like the McEvoy family in Radisson, where their daughter was killed by speeding vehicles on Regent Avenue in front of Club Regent, and they have been waiting for justice for a year. The case, which was a very serious case, involving drivers who were exceeding the speed limit on Regent Avenue, has been remanded six times. Eleven months. Again, the hardships on this family—how it has affected the other children in this family, how it has affected their sense of justice—have taken a toll. This government has done nothing to relieve the backlogs in the courts. They have done nothing to deal with the delays that have really compromised the confidence that Manitobans have in our justice system. Those are some of the issues that we have been facing in the Transcona-East Kildonan area that I represent.

I want to turn now to some of the issues in the throne speech related to my critic areas. It was amazing that after almost 11 years in government to read a throne speech—and it is interesting. Each throne speech that comes up, it seems like this government finally realizes a different problem in Manitoba. There were other years where there has been throne speech after throne speech, and there would not be any mention of sustainable development. All of a sudden, it was like sustainable development was the flavour of the month. There was all this rhetoric about sustainable development in the throne speech.

Then years and years would go by, and there was nothing in the budget about poverty. Here again this year there is nothing in the budget about poverty. I remember the throne speech

from the last session and the session before that; all of a sudden the government had realized that there is a problem with poverty in Manitoba. There was some rhetoric in the throne speech about poverty. This throne speech, it is gone.

In other years, there has been a lot of talk in the throne speech about aboriginal people. There will be years and years of neglect. Those problems are not solved, but then the next year there has been no real action. They promise a number of times an urban aboriginal strategy. Just this morning I was reading the report by the Sustainable Development Unit on an urban aboriginal strategy, and that is one reason why a lot of the rhetoric in the throne speech rings hollow when it comes to aboriginal people. But I think this particular throne speech rang particularly hollow because of the treatment of aboriginal people on the grounds of the Legislature during this very throne speech.

This time we have a throne speech and the issue that the government has all of a sudden discovered after 11 years, the flavour of the month for this throne speech, is urban renewal. They finally realized, hey, I guess we have a city of Winnipeg, we have been neglecting it for 11 years. Their policies of subsidizing water to Headingley, of allowing landfills in every R.M. around the city, their policies of letting development go helter skelter, laissez-faire all over the capital region—it is finally unable to be denied even by them, and they are realizing that there is a problem with the property value decline in the city of Winnipeg, with the crime making people feel unsafe and that they would rather not live in some older neighbourhoods.

You cannot, I would say to this government, do anything about urban decline unless you also at the same time deal with urban sprawl. The two go hand in hand, and I do not know if, in adopting urban decline as the flavour of the month for this throne speech, they have got the whole equation yet, and they realize that they have to do something about urban sprawl at the same time or all of the strategies they come up with—they have got one proposal now for \$14 million over five years by three levels of government. If you start investing that money into the inner city or into older neighbourhoods without dealing with the other problem of urban

sprawl and the sprawl of the Capital Region, then the impact of that money is not going to be felt. The problem will just continue, and the hole in the doughnut, as the image that is used, will just continue to grow.

* (1600)

So I look forward to seeing a little bit more detail from this government. The minister has gone to some of the same meetings that those of us on this side of the House have, listening to the community, and, yes, the community wants to see a new approach to housing. We know that building complexes like the large public housing at Gilbert Park or Lord Selkirk Park—that was the model that was used in the '50s and '60s and '70s—that that is not what people want to see now. People want to see smaller scale; they want to see it integrated in the community. They want to see more of the decision making to be locally made, but that does not mean that the government does not have a responsibility for leadership. What the community is also saying is they need funding into renovation programs, into smaller scale social housing, particularly for the elderly, particularly for people who have high health needs.

They want to see a partnership. They do want to see a partnership with government at the table, and if you look at what each partner would bring to the table, I think what you would find is we do not have to reinvent the wheel, that there are some existing programs.

I was reading a report recently from 1984 when the NDP was in government, the list of programs that were available, the infill housing program, the Emergency Home Repair Program. There were millions more dollars into the RRAP program. All of these programs are the kinds of things that the community is now asking for to support them in their partnerships to try and take back neighbourhoods or take back the streets, as the government used the phrase in their throne speech.

Yes, those programs for housing have to be combined with other initiatives around community safety and opportunities for youth and other social programs in recreation and that, but the government in their throne speech does

not give any specific detail on how they would deal with the housing component for their urban renewal strategy. I have a concern that basically it is just some big rhetoric to try and get them up and beyond the election so they can make it sound like they have not neglected that issue when, in fact, they actually have for 11 years.

The other issue that is striking from the throne speech is in the area of youth services. This government, it seems, in their effort to finally find a direction for the Children and Youth Secretariat, it has taken them four years. They have gone through many stops and starts. They have gone through many incarnations at the Youth Secretariat. They have mugs, they have T-shirts, they have videos, they have posters, they have pamphlets. One of the things that they do not have, though, is real direction for comprehensive, broad-based programs.

We have lots of programs, pilot projects. What I want to impress upon this government when it comes to children and youth services, now the direction that they have taken is early childhood. I am concerned that at the same time they have completely forgotten about all the recommendations that were for older children, children who are in the justice system, children who are in our schools and in care of Child and Family Services. All the recommendations around juvenile prostitution and drug addiction and teen pregnancy that deal with the actual young people who are now confronted with those problems, I do not know what has happened to those recommendations.

The other problem this government has had because there has been these 10 lost years, the children who were born at the time in 1988 when they took office, even though now there is \$1.1 million more into the speech and language programs, those kids who have gone through the system for those 10 years of having two- to four-year waiting lists are never going to get back their childhood. Those children have lost their childhood under this government, under the first 10 years of the Filmon government.

So the infusion into early childhood of \$1.1 million is not going to deal with the problems that those kids now have in schools, the delays they have suffered in terms of language

development in reading and literacy, in social skills, and this government has not been able to make the connections in a policy-and-program sense. They have had 11 years to do it. They have failed, and I would suggest to them that the kids who have experienced the larger class sizes and the waiting lists under your government are now the kids who are going to be lining up for your so-called tougher stance on the Young Offenders Act and juvenile crime.

We are making commitments. We have made commitments in our early childhood policies, in our Healthy Child program, that there will no longer be any lost kids in Manitoba.

In education, we want every school to be a good choice. We want every child to have the kind of resources they need in our schools so that they are not waiting for services and that they do not lose those very important first years. At the same time, we want to make sure that young people, when they do encounter problems in their older youth and in their teenage years, in their adolescence, that they are not forgotten by the government. This government, I am concerned, has basically written off the needs of older youth who have been waiting for programs under the Children and Youth Secretariat that would do what the Children and Youth Secretariat was intended to do, which is to better co-ordinate services, which is to try and deal with the lack of communication between agencies and government and try and meet the needs of those kids in a less bureaucratic and a more community-based way.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to end my debate by continuing on with offering some alternative to the vision that this government has had for youth. I am concerned that more and more young people are encouraged to choose their career or work or life choices based on economic considerations and what is available. I am concerned that more and more young people are forced to leave the province in order to find employment or education opportunities.

I am going to end with the comments made recently by a professor at the University of Manitoba who lamented that he had to do a reference letter on behalf of a student who was

going to be doing their masters in the United States, and he felt very badly and regretted that there were no opportunities in Canada for a student of that calibre. This was a student in engineering. I hope that that could be reversed. We recognize that Manitoba universities cannot be providing programs for all students at the masters level, but certainly we have to stop the brain drain in this province, and there has to be a reinvestment into lifelong learning to deal with the fact that the costs for post-secondary education have gotten way out of line for the availability of most Manitobans. That is another issue that keeps coming up over and over again in my constituency.

So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you for your attention and look forward to continuing debate on the throne speech.

Mr. Denis Rocan (Gladstone): I am honoured to rise in the House today and speak in response to my government's Speech from the Throne. I would first like to welcome all members back to the House, and I look forward to time we will spend together in the Chamber representing views of our constituents.

May I just take a moment, I just thank members opposite, because I often hear from the honourable member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), we have a government in waiting. What happens in the course of time over a long period of time, you form certain friendships. As I look across, I see the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes), the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli). But most of all I pay special tribute to the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk). I do this because, as she knows, she and I have a very special working relationship. When the Monnin inquiry was first set up and starting its work, that was the first I had ever heard about this, let us use the terminology, vote rigging. I will never forget the afternoon that I went and spent a few moments with the member for Swan River, looked her straight in the eye, and I said to the member, I said, Rosann, if it is true, I apologize, and I wanted to apologize straight to your face, because you and your brothers, as you know, have a dear and special place in my heart. To this day, now I say to you, the member for Swan

River, I apologize, because neither I nor any of my members on this side of the House had any involvement, to my knowledge, of the scenario. So in my heart I apologize to you.

* (1610)

I would also like to welcome our seven new pages. Nicole is here right now bringing me a glass of water. I would like to thank them in advance for all the hard work that they will put in while we are in session.

[French]

À ce moment, je voudrais dire quelques mots à propos de notre ancien collègue, M. Neil Gaudry. Neil était exceptionnel comme législateur et comme être humain. Il était la personnification du service public, car sa priorité était toujours ses électeurs. Neil était un représentant dévoué pour les gens de Saint-Boniface et pour la communauté franco-manitobaine.

Chaque année, j'avais toujours hâte au Festival du Voyageur, car cela me donnait l'opportunité de visiter avec Neil et de le regarder agir réciproquement avec les gens de la communauté française. Quand je regarde son siège qui est maintenant vide, ça me donne un sentiment de tristesse et de malheur. Il n'y aura jamais un autre individu comme Neil.

À la famille Gaudry, sachez que vous occupez une place dans nos cœurs pendant votre période de douleur et que Neil reste pour toujours dans nos mémoires.

[Translation]

At this time, I would like to say a few words about our former colleague, Mr. Neil Gaudry. Neil was exceptional as a legislator and as a human being. He was the personification of public service because his priority was always his electors. Neil was a devoted representative of the people of St. Boniface and of the Franco-Manitoban community.

Every year, I always looked forward to the Festival du Voyageur because that gave me the opportunity to visit with Neil and to watch him

interact with the people of the French community. When I look at his chair, which is now empty, it gives me a feeling of sorrow and unhappiness. There will never be another individual like Neil.

To the Gaudry family, know that you hold a place in our hearts during your period of mourning and that Neil will always live on in our memories.

[English]

I am also extremely proud this afternoon of the fact that I have had the opportunity to assemble with certain individuals, and I take this opportunity to name them. I say this, not with the rules of the book, but to name them very specifically: the member for Arthur-Virden, one Jim Downey; the member for Steinbach, one Albert Driedger; the member for Springfield, one Glen Findlay; and also, now, the member for Fort Garry, Rosemary Vodrey. Each and every one of these individuals—

An Honourable Member: How long is that list?

Mr. Rocan: Well, the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), and I do not think we really want to get into how long this list is, because in our heart each and every one of us has one goal, and that is to get ourselves re-elected, as the member is quite aware. Each and every one of us that are here this afternoon have one goal. Many of us in this Chamber have one responsibility. That is to our constituents.

Like the cliché "we live by the sword, we die by the sword," we are elected by the people for the people. The people will decide which of us will sit on one side of the House and indeed which will sit on the other side—indeed, the cliché "live by the sword, you die by the sword." Eventually in this year, we have been told, and it is no secret to any of us, we will be campaigning, caballing, as we would say in française. We will be campaigning to try and secure our support from each and every one of the constituents in this beautiful province of Manitoba.

Our responses to the throne speech give us the opportunity to look back on all that we have achieved as representatives of Manitoba communities and as members of this government while at the same time laying out our vision for the future. What struck me about the speech were the consistencies I could see between our past accomplishments and our path for the future. What I mean by this is the commitment to evolution and progress that this government has demonstrated. We realize that we must continually move forward to achieve success. Regressing, moving backwards, or even resting in the same place is an option only for those who wish to fail.

Mr. Ben Sveinson, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

As we made clear in our throne speech, this government is committed to ensuring a viable future for all Manitobans. We will forge ahead in all areas.

I am the representative of a rural and largely agricultural constituency. Were it not for the innovative and generous programs of this government in terms of economic and community development, many rural communities in this province would be facing decline. Rural Manitoba is the backbone, the foundation of this province. We hold a tremendous respect for the rural way of life. That is why we are committed to protecting and enhancing it by helping rural Manitoba move forward into the new millennium.

My government has introduced a wealth of initiatives which solidify and enhance our rural communities. Much of the support is given at the local level and helps strengthen community infrastructure and identity.

The Gladstone constituency has benefited greatly from this government's commitment to its communities. I would like to highlight some of the things we have accomplished together recently. The Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship has been a generous and proud sponsor of many local cultural projects. These include funding for the Altamont Centennial Community Centre to maintain its facility and very generous contributions to our community museums in the form of operating grants. The

Manitoba Agricultural Museum in Austin, the Carberry Plains Museum, and the Treherne Museum, for instance, have all received the financial assistance of this government to continue their operations.

In addition to museums, this government has sponsored various cultural and historical organizations which further enrich our communities. These include the Seton Centre in Carberry; la Société historique et généalogique de Saint-Léon; la Communauté culturelle de Saint-Léon; et la Société historique de Lourdes; and the Tiger Hills Arts Association

All of these centres contribute to the identity and social fabric of our communities, and we take great pride in them.

My government also realizes the pivotal role that sport facilities and other gathering places play in small communities. Events like bonspiels and hockey tournaments allow local residents to gather together and to rekindle community ties.

This past year, the Gladstone Community Curling Club was the recipient of a Community Places grant which enabled them to undertake important repairs. The Altamont Centennial Community Centre and the Somerset Community Hall received similar funding.

Communities in the Gladstone constituency, like many other areas in the province, also reaped the benefits of the Hometown Green Team job program. The young people who participated in these programs gained valuable work experience and made important contributions to several local communities. Our government's Department of Agriculture has also given its support to young people's activities through its generous funding of 4-H programs. All of these organizations, associations, programs and projects help to affirm our way of life. Yet, it is a broader program pursued by this government which will allow small communities to remain viable.

As we identified in our throne speech, we are committed to meeting future challenges head on. This is certainly not a new approach. It is a continuation of something we have always

strived for. Our past initiatives have met with great success, and we will continue on this path. In the throne speech we identified a commitment to continue our work with small communities to help them find ways to make the rural economy in this province flourish. Through the Department of Rural Development, we have already achieved much towards this end.

At this point, I would like to highlight some success stories of rural development. The Rural Economic Development Initiative, or REDI for short, has met with tremendous success. This program has provided support for more than 370 businesses. Through REDI over 2,200 jobs have been created and maintained, and we have witnessed \$107 million in new capital investment. Under REDI, the Rural Development ushered in the Community Works Loan Program which since 1995 has provided loans of up to \$10,000 to approximately 120 small businesses. This has helped to create and maintain 270 jobs and helped generate \$2.5 million in new capital investment.

REDI provides funding for the rural Junior Achievement Program which counts 22,000 rural Manitoban students in 110 rural schools as its membership. This program, which teaches young people about the fundamentals of enterprise, also involves businesses and community leaders. It is a wonderful program that helps inspire young people to look for business opportunities within their own communities.

REDI has also lent its support to the Grow Bonds Program which has created 23 Manitoba firms creating and maintaining roughly 600 jobs with total capital investment of more than \$26 million. The community round tables foster the initiative and drive of rural Manitobans. They facilitate discussion between community members. Rural Manitobans gather and formulate plans for the evolution of their towns and their villages. Rural Development is also responsible for the contribution of approximately \$120 million in provincial-municipal tax-sharing grants since 1994-95. They also help to facilitate the hugely successful Rural Forums which will be held for the seventh year in a row in 1999.

* (1620)

I have only brushed the surface of the numerous endeavours carried out by Rural Development which assists rural Manitobans in a variety of ways. This government's work in rural communities has truly helped turn things around. We made it possible for rural Manitoba to help themselves. In the early '90s, we were experiencing the worst recession to hit this province since the 1930s. These numbers I have cited, both in regards to job creation and investment, are the hallmarks of a true success story. We have done a lot, but there is still much to be done. We are the government which will ensure future success for our rural communities.

When we talk about rural Manitoba, we obviously must talk about agriculture. Here, too, this government has shown its commitment to evolution and progress. Farming is the bedrock of this province, but historical significance is not enough to ensure future success. Government and producers had to work together to usher in a new era in this sector. As was mentioned in the throne speech, one of the successes of this past decade has been our rapid growth in value-added agriculture. We want to see farmers get more return on their products at home in Manitoba. Projects such as a new flour mill in Elie, the phenomenally successful McCain potato plant in Portage la Prairie and the Isobord strawboard plant are all innovative undertakings which bring benefits to our producers and all Manitobans.

In addition to value-added agriculture, one of our foremost priorities has been the diversification of the industry. Relying on a select number of cereal crops left our producers too vulnerable in the face of downsizing in the global market. As some of my colleagues have already mentioned, the combined efforts of this government and producers have led to impressive results in diversification. We are branching out into nontraditional crops like pulses and vegetables. In fact, Manitoba is now the second largest national producer of potatoes.

In spite of our successes, though, this government does realize that some of our producers experienced hardships this past year due to the drop in prices for wheat and hogs. To show our support for farmers suffering because

of this, my Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) has announced a \$25-million contribution to the federal Farm Aid Program for farmers who have been adversely affected, this in addition to a previously announced initiative in which the government directed the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation to defer scheduled payments without penalty for farmers who are suffering because of low commodity prices. While it is true that some producers are going through rough times right now, Manitoba farmers avoided a crisis of further proportions because of our efforts at diversification. We have only to look to our neighbours to the immediate west to know things could have been much worse.

In addition to innovations in agriculture, my constituents will benefit from this government's efforts at modernizing health care. Like agriculture, this is an area of extreme importance to rural Manitobans. My government has the courage and the conviction to ensure the future viability of the health care system by making necessary adjustments now. The introduction of regional health authorities was a bold and important step in ensuring the logical use and local control of health care resources. The implementation of the RHAs has led to the consolidation of resources between rural communities, the sharing of scarce and specialty resources, and has fostered an effective support system for health care providers in rural Manitoba. Our RHAs have worked hard to achieve great results for rural Manitoba.

Late last year the Marquette RHA was authorized to begin planning for an integrated multicare facility in Carberry to replace the outdated Carberry Hospital. This new facility will be attached to the existing personal care home and medical clinic. The design for the facility includes ten multipurpose beds and six additional personal care home beds.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

The design for this new health care facility will serve the needs of my constituents very well. I am pleased with the direction and leadership the RHA is taking on this project and the support it is being given by my government. In fact, the government recently demonstrated

further support to the RHAs in my constituency by giving them an additional \$1.8 million in funding. These funds will help us provide increased home care and relieve pressure on laboratory and diagnostic imaging services.

My government spends \$5 million each and every day on the health of Manitobans. We have increased health care spending by 45 percent over the past 11 years, and our health care expenditures now amount to close to 35 percent of our annual budget. My government has a plan for health care, and we have proved ourselves to be effective stewards of the health care system. The status quo would have doomed the entire system to failure. We continue to make substantial investments to health care in strategic areas. In this way, a high-quality public health care system will be in place for future generations. We are the only team with a sound plan for health care management.

While maintaining the social infrastructure of this province is our foremost priority, my government also voiced its intention to maintain the more basic forms of infrastructure in this province. We will push the federal government to renew the National Infrastructure Program and the National Highways Program. It is time that they show their support for Manitobans' needs. The federal government collects \$146 million annually in gasoline taxes from Manitobans, but they reinvest a measly 3 percent on our roads, none of it on provincial highways. My government reinvests almost every penny we collect in gasoline taxes in maintenance and repair. This disparity is unacceptable. All Manitobans need and deserve a solid, safe and reliable highway system, and the federal government must act as our partner in accomplishing this.

People use the highway system every day. I know producers in my area are especially reliant on the highway system to deliver their goods to market. The highway system and related infrastructure require constant attention and upkeep.

In my many years in public life I have been fortunate to represent a vast area of this fine province. Over the years I have represented a wide expanse of the southwest corner of

Manitoba in both the Turtle Mountain and Gladstone constituencies. I care deeply about the future of this province and its fine people. I want to work to ensure their future needs will be met. We have achieved great things as a government and want to continue this work. We enjoy the lowest unemployment rate in Canada. We borrow at the second lowest rate in Canada. We have introduced numerous tax reductions and will continue to do so, and we are paying down the accumulated debt. In all of these ways and more, my government is improving the quality of life for all Manitobans

We are the only party committed to fortifying the rural way of life. We are the only party which will help rural and urban Manitobans meet with success in the 21st Century. In my government's throne speech we have outlined our commitment and vision for the future of this province. It outlines our promise to Manitobans to work for continued progress and evolution. It also warns that we must not take our past growth and current stability for granted. Our success as a province is not a given. It is the result of the vision, dedication, and hard work of this government and its people.

* (1630)

The strategic decisions that my government makes in promoting diversification and innovation in agriculture are also mirrored in the city of Winnipeg. The diversification of the economy of this province is not limited to the country. We cannot afford to have such a limited vision where urban interests take precedence over rural ones. That is not what this province is all about. That is not what this government is all about. And so every day I thank God I am a country boy, and that is not what I am all about.

I am proud to be a part of a government that has a plan for Manitoba, all of Manitoba. The only special interest that my government has is ensuring that we go forward as a province to realize our full potential. Canada is the best country in the world to live in, and Manitoba is now the best province to live in. That makes us rural and urban Manitobans the luckiest people on the planet, the most fortunate people in the world. We do not take enough time to be

thankful for that. We should be shouting it from the rooftops. This government, my government, has something to shout about. We have a vision for the future that makes this province the best place to live, work and raise a family. This throne speech focuses that vision, and I am proud and thankful that the people of Gladstone constituency saw their way clear to allow me to be a part of it. Howard, I have taken your advice.

So I will conclude my remarks by thanking each and every one of the members for giving me this opportunity to put a few remarks on the record. Thank you very much.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): I rise today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to speak to the amendment to the throne speech as well as, of course, to the general motion of the throne speech itself, and I understand to a subamendment brought by another member of the Legislature.

But I want, first of all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, through you, to congratulate the new Lieutenant Governor, Mr. Peter Liba. The position of Lieutenant Governor is one that is not understood I think by many citizens of Canada in general, but it is an important one in a constitutional monarchy. From Lieutenant Governor Archibald to the Honourable Alexander Morris to more recent lieutenant governors, each has had the opportunity to put their own stamp on the office and to expand our understanding that freedom indeed does wear a crown.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

The previous Lieutenant Governor, Yvon Dumont, and Mrs. Dumont, did so admirably, and both extended the understanding of the office and expanded the boundaries of their role in Manitoba. I say this in reference to their work in youth organizations and to their support for young people who are struggling academically, and perhaps in other ways too.

I would say as well that in Manitoba when the Crown wore the ceinture fléchée, the symbol of Metis identity, its meaning carried a greater weight than that of many of our other symbols of ethnic identity. Madam Speaker, earlier

generations of Manitobans, particularly Metis Manitobans, grew up with a view of Louis Riel that was not as benign as that which our own children know. The Manitoba that Mr. Dumont grew up in considered Riel a traitor. He was hanged at Regina for treason for taking up arms against the Crown. Mr. Dumont and his generation of Metis have worked hard and successfully to change the public perception of Metis history, and to help a new generation of Manitobans understand the complexity, the tragedy, and the heroism of those Metis families and communities who faced the great economic and political transition at the end of the last century.

Mr. Dumont was appointed by Brian Mulroney, not a great friend I would suggest of this side of the House, but he made a good choice at the right time, and in the selection of governor generals and lieutenant governors, that is what counts. I wish the Dumonts well in the next part of their journey and, on behalf of my constituents, thank them for what has been a well-loved and will be a well-remembered contribution to Manitoba and to the office of Lieutenant Governor.

I also wish to pay tribute to the member for St. Boniface who died so suddenly in February. Neil Gaudry also wore the ceinture fléchée at ceremonial occasions, and as member for St. Boniface, had an important and an historic link with earlier generations of Manitobans. As the funeral in the cathedral demonstrated, the member for St. Boniface has a place in his community and in the larger Franco-Manitoban society that is different from that of most MLAs.

[French]

Inévitablement, il est la voix d'une communauté qui est plus grande que la circonscription elle-même. Il parlait une langue qui n'a pas toujours reçu le respect de tous les Manitobains. Ce n'est pas longtemps que les couloirs de cette Législature entendaient les cloches et les voix de haine pour sa langue officielle.

M. Gaudry n'était pas le seul député ayant le français comme langue maternelle, mais il savait qu'il était le premier responsable pour sa

survivance comme une langue quotidienne dans la vie législative du Manitoba.

[Translation]

Inevitably, he is the voice of a community that is greater than the constituency itself. He spoke a language that did not always receive the respect of all Manitobans. It is not long ago that the corridors of this Legislature heard the ringing of bells and voices of hatred toward his official language.

Mr. Gaudry was not the only member having French as his mother tongue, but he knew that he was the person primarily responsible for its survival as a day-to-day language in the legislative life of Manitoba.

[English]

I worked with Neil Gaudry on the committee to select legislative interns for a number of years and know well his fortitude as a member of a small party, and I respected his independent judgment and sense of fairness. On behalf of my constituents, I would like to extend condolences to his family, to his constituents, and to his colleagues in the Liberal Party in this House.

Through you, Madam Speaker, I would like to welcome the new pages, the new interns, and the new Sergeant-at-Arms, who will all be playing a role, as do elected members in this democratic forum. There will be days, I think, when they will go home shaking their heads or worse and despairing of democracy. Certainly, it is not perfect and nor are honourable members, but on the whole it is a system which enables a government to be held accountable, that is, should a government fulfill its democratic obligations and call the House together.

This government, as we know, has lost its nerve and for more than nine months refused to call the House together. It is a sign of weakness when a government cannot face the opposition, and it is an even greater sign of weakness when a government cannot face its own people. Some members of this House, particularly those on the government side, may want to argue that there

was no need to call the House, that the government had no business to transact, that it would be an unnecessary expense, et cetera. I have no idea which forms of rationalization they have used, but I would suggest that this concealment, this hiding from the people, has become a habit for this government. I would suggest that it is a dangerous habit for any government.

Let me give you an example. Part of my riding contains areas of deep poverty, largely people on some form of social assistance, often for medical reasons or on disability or other pensions. Some have been concerned for some time about the implications of the proposed amalgamation of the city and provincial welfare services. They had many questions which neither I nor provincial officials or social workers could answer.

St. Matthews Church invited the government to send someone to a meeting of concerned people to explain what was likely to happen and the impact it could have had in terms of benefits, workers, new locations, new regulations, et cetera. We all recognize that the new system would not emerge pristine overnight, but people sought some assurance that there would be a human face on this, for them, dramatic change. The civil servant agreed to speak. The Minister of Family Services said no. The church appealed. The minister said no. I appealed as member for Wolseley. The minister said no. The member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), as our critic for social services, appealed, and the minister said no.

I find this unworthy of any government, and a government which is afraid to speak to its citizens is unlikely to receive their respect. Would the bank manager have been treated like this? Would the constituents of the member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon) have been treated like this? Would the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) have treated his constituents like this? I think not, and I have no hesitation in saying so. But as a government, they have become afraid to speak to welfare recipients about changes they are implementing which will have serious consequences, possibly even improvements for the lives of my constituents.

This government, Madam Speaker, is fond of using corporate-speak in its dealing with citizens. In fact, rarely do they even use the word "citizens." Welfare recipients are clients, are they not, in the language of this government, but the use of such language, if we even accept those principles, implies that people be treated in a businesslike manner, indeed, as clients. Would you refuse to speak to clients? Would you refuse to listen to their appeals? No. You would, and you should, call a meeting. You should advertise it widely. You should provide a variety of experts to speak to people. You should find ways to answer questions that cannot be dealt with on the spot. You should have the minister there for at least part of the time, so that political responsibility has a public face and so that the minister has a sense of the questions that are on people's minds.

* (1640)

This is not extraordinary. This is what normal and good government should do, particularly in a small province like Manitoba where it is possible to keep government close to the people. What you should not do is slam the door in the face of the agencies who are trying to help. You should not reply as you did, that anybody with any questions can call a hotline number. You should at least have the elemental understanding that many people do not have a phone, that the phone number in any case has yet another answering machine, and you should have been able during the transition, for which I believe you paid thousands of dollars in consultants' fees, to have kept in operation an emergency line. You had an emergency number all right, but not one which was operational.

Madam Speaker, the government believes that it can treat people in this way because it genuinely believes, I think, that they do not have a legitimate voice. Government believes falsely that they are not taxpayers, but I would insist that each is a citizen. Each is entitled to that respect. They have their own voices, and in this Legislature they have my voice too.

The government's tactics, like those of other right-wing governments, have been to delegitimize the voices of the poor. The welfare snitch line, widely advertised on billboards, you

remember, encouraged Manitobans to think of all welfare clients as frauds. The year-by-year reductions in welfare simultaneously led people to believe that welfare clients lived high on the hog, and at the same time reduced the already difficult circumstances of many families. The government refused to pass on the federal child care benefit to families, and at the same time even cut benefits like nutritional allotments for very young children.

Madam Speaker, welfare recipients have been faced with reduced circumstances and a myriad of changing regulations over the past number of years, and they have constant and numerous concerns. Every year in my constituency I have held a meeting and been assisted by someone from Legal Aid to help us understand the changing regulatory scene in welfare. For this, I have been attacked by the member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon) and some of his colleagues. It was an attack which I now see was motivated by fear, but which nevertheless I find contemptible.

Madam Speaker, my constituents want to make the best life for the families that they can in the circumstances in which they find themselves. They want to work or learn to enable them to work. Any decent government, worthy of the respect of all its citizens, would acknowledge a responsibility to help those who can to work and to support and to have compassion for those who cannot work.

Madam Speaker, let me also acknowledge that we have yet another Minister of Education (Mr. McCrae), the fifth in my nine years in this House. I wish him well in his attempts to repair the damage left by his predecessors, who managed to alienate many of the partners in education. I look forward to debating the new minister, perhaps in an election to be called soon, but public debate has not been a characteristic of the Department of Education.

In five years of being Education critic, I have only once had the opportunity outside this House to debate a minister. I have had lots of opportunities to listen to civil servants or to debate Mr. Carlyle. Only once did the minister ever accept one of many invitations to a platform where she would have faced any opposition and

even recently, in the case of the River East Teachers Association, several MLAs were invited to speak. They were given a long time to consider the invitation, and at the last minute they all refused. It was only when the River East parents and teachers association, I believe, went to the Premier (Mr. Filmon), that one, the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson), and to her credit this time, took on that public debate on the issues of education.

You see, Madam Speaker, there are many precedents for this government's reluctance to face the public. They do not call the Legislature. They back out of commitments to speak and commonly send civil servants to do a minister's job. It was no surprise to me that cabinet ministers could not distinguish between Julian Benson of the Tory Party and Julian Benson of the Treasury Board. They see nothing wrong with having a deputy minister, Mr. Carlyle, sit on the Render-Dyck inquiry. He should have been there in a staff capacity. He should not have been there with two politicians as part of a commission of inquiry.

They see nothing wrong with having the Speaker at cabinet committees, nor would the Speaker, who chose not to see the Leader of the Opposition rise to speak on the sale of Manitoba Telephones. There is a pattern. It is of a government which is increasingly beleaguered, speaks only unto itself, and has so long dismissed alternative perspectives that I believe it can no longer hear them.

Madam Speaker, everyone makes mistakes. We all understand that, but this government, have you noticed, rarely acknowledges a mistake. That is, of course, why the Premier's recent apologies—frequent apologies, in fact—stand out so much. It is why I found the new Minister of Education's (Mr. McCrae) response to the complaint that parents were selling chocolates for books so entirely predictable. First of all, he denied it; it could not be true. It is the basic approach of most Tories in Question Period. First of all, deny it. Then he actually went and talked to some parents, and for that I commended him. After he had done that and found out that it was true, was there an apology, was there an acknowledgement? No. He turns

to blame. Then he blamed the trustees. It is not an attitude, I believe, Madam Speaker, that will win friends, but perhaps I should say, in the case of this government, win back friends.

Much has happened in Manitoba and in my constituency in the long absence of the Legislature. Everyone notices that their property taxes are up. Property taxes as a whole under this government have risen steeply, and they have done so consistently by the same mechanism year after year. What this has meant is that there has been a real opportunity for people to recognize the source of such increases. Trustees have had many opportunities to explain the impact of the provincial cuts. Teachers have had many opportunities to explain to parents the impact of fewer resources in the classroom, and parents have had several years now of fundraising for the basics and of observing the loss of support in guidance, in industrial arts, and in languages that the funding crisis has brought.

There can be few Manitobans who are prepared to believe the Premier's protestations that it is the trustees who have raised taxes, not the provincial government. What is clear, and what has been put well in his speech last week by the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale), is that the government has also consistently reduced the actual dollars, not to adjust the dollars taking into account inflation, but it has actually reduced the amount of money going to schools over the last number of years. This has had an impact.

Parents whose property taxes have gone up have seen their children's educational opportunities diminished and have themselves been pushed into ever more fundraising. Over 11 years, essentially one education generation, this has not gone unnoticed, even in Tory ridings. In my riding, it has meant cuts to the nursery school programs so that this excellent program, long invested in by Winnipeg No. 1, now runs for fewer months of the year. This was the program the previous Minister of Education referred to as an expensive frill, so we should not expect the government to shed any tears over its loss. But, Madam Speaker, my constituents do, and rightly so.

Many of us benefited by nursery school. In my case I began at two years old. There was a war on, and it was necessary. In the case of my sons, they benefited from maternelle [kindergarten] in immersion, an excellent introduction to French Immersion for Sacre-Coeur. Winnipeg No. 1 is proud of its nursery school classes, and it must have been heartbreaking for the trustees to have to cut the months that students may attend. And now the government wants us to believe that it is in favour of early childhood supports. Rattles off in the throne speech a litany of pilot projects in this area.

But, Madam Speaker, actions will always speak louder than words, and the Filmon government will always appear to my constituents as the government which cut the funds to schools, which believes that nursery schools and nutrition programs in schools are expensive frills, which has taken away the child tax benefit from families on assistance, which cut the parent-child centres in my riding on first coming into office, which cut the recreation workers at the friendship centres, which reduced the nutrition allowance for very young children. I suspect that the government is simply not believable on this issue in many other areas of the province.

* (1650)

Similarly, on the city of Winnipeg, the government record will always speak louder than words. Over and over again in speeches like this, I and my colleagues have spoken about the changes in this city. I wondered how long the Tories could continue to turn a blind eye to the deterioration of housing stocks and to the increased fear of violence on the street. How could they for so long leave the city, three-quarters of the population of the province, to economic decline? Well, it seemed just long enough to get them to the next election and to the growing realization that, if they are to keep some of their suburban seats, they must convince a section of the province that they are dealing with the issues of the inner city.

So we see in the throne speech references to millions of dollars for the gray area, the ring just outside the inner city, and we see hollow

references to the wonders of West Broadway in my constituency. That particularly struck me and I expect it was intended to, since this government has contributed so little to West Broadway until this penultimate election year.

It was the federal government which put the money into the Sherbrook Pool and the federal government which has supported the Little Red Spirit nursery school. The city community police in West Broadway long before this government embraced the idea. After countless false announcements, the urban sports camp opened this past summer, and finally, and I congratulate them for this, the Manitoba Department of Education and Training has committed some direct money to a new training initiative for computer skills. It is a small replacement, and it is a temporary replacement for the New Careers Program, which they cut a number of years ago, but certainly it is a necessary part of what should be happening in West Broadway.

Madam Speaker, what has worked in West Broadway is a combination of a number of things. It is first of all a diverse community leadership and it is one which has been coupled with public sector support, particularly from the city and the federal government, and it has required perseverance and hope over a long period of time.

I would note first the role that the universities have played. The faculties of Nursing, of Social Work, of Human Ecology, and of City Planning at the University of Manitoba, and the Department of Criminology and now of Education at the University of Winnipeg have played a direct part in providing research, in creating forums for community debate, in providing student assistance and in being responsible for returning to the communities the fruits of their research. And this did not begin just last year when the government finally found West Broadway on the map. This was there 10 years ago and in fact even longer in the case of the Faculty of Social Work.

Madam Speaker, the churches of the community too play a very important part and not just in the last year before an election. Take

away Crossways, take away All Saints', take away Westminster United Church, the Chinese Baptist Church, the First Baptist Church, the First Presbyterian Church and Elim Chapel and you would have a very different kind of community.

This community, one minister told me a couple of weeks ago, runs on food, on breakfasts at All Saints', on the food banks and the numerous services of community kitchens both at St. Matthews-Maryland and elsewhere that operate to serve the people of this community.

The churches too provide assistance in youth work and in seniors services. These are churches whose congregations have usually moved away, but the church council and often the ministers continue to recognize a responsibility to the inner city that is consistent, that is patient, that is long term, and that really makes an enormous difference in the lives of many families.

Thirdly, Madam Speaker, our schools, our public schools, Mulvey, Gordon Bell, Sister MacNamara, all have activist principals and teachers who recognize the importance of the school in the community as well as the value of working to improve the community which shelters their students. So Mulvey works with Little Red Spirit to ensure that the little ones are welcomed every year in a graduation transition ceremony at Mulvey School.

Adult education continues at Mulvey School with parents. Parents are made especially welcome in a parents room and in a parents council which predates the interest of this government in such organizations. At Gordon Bell a volunteer pow-wow group makes an important contribution in linking the community and the school. An outreach worker has worked with Klinik to set up a program to restore a boarded up house which may become a resource for the whole community. Gordon Bell has also established an off-campus centre, the Broadway Neighbourhood Centre.

Finally, we have volunteer groups such as the Friends of Sherbrook Pool who have continued for more than a decade patiently and consistently the hard work of maintaining public

support for an important inner city recreation facility. To do this they have organized swimming lessons for hundreds of children over the past seven or eight years. They have built a competitive swim team from those children, the Sherbrook Sharks, and with some support from the city in the reduction of fees for the swim team, they have been able to maintain an important initiative which has made a difference for many young people.

In other areas of youth recreation, the United Way supports the West Broadway youth outreach for evening and holiday activities for young children, while the city supports with continuous programming and intensive staffing both Magnus Eliason Centre and the West Broadway centre as neighbourhood community centres.

Madam Speaker, we also used to have a hospital with outreach into the community, and the Misericordia is still trying to maintain that role. One of its more interesting and recent initiatives is the Wolseley Family Place, which serves families in both West Broadway and Wolseley. The Misericordia itself funded this service until eventually some support came from the federal government and from the Winnipeg Development Agreement.

Our community Clinic, Clinic with a K, has long been active in the West Broadway area from the time it was located at the corner of Broadway and Colony. They still provide teen programs with WDA money. They visit and care for seniors and provide programs at the neighbourhood centre to try to serve the many health needs of a very diverse community.

Madam Speaker, I wonder if government ministers are beginning to get a sense of what I am trying to portray here. There is no quick fix for this city. There is no quick fix before an election. There are very few believable government promises for a city which they have let rot over the last decade. You cannot simply use the name of West Broadway and portray it as an instant solution to the problems faced in many other parts of the inner city. Yes, some solutions will be transferable, but they will not be instant. The government would do well to acknowledge that their neglect of the inner city,

its people, its institutions, and its housing, over the last nine years in particular, has taken its toll. It will not be reborn overnight. In some areas the housing has deteriorated so dramatically that it will take many new approaches, much patience, and much time to recreate livable and viable neighbourhoods. The solutions of West Broadway were not born overnight. They are dependent on a long-term perspective, upon consistency, upon patience, and upon, in the past, core area funding, and presently, on its successor, a less effective successor I would argue, but nonetheless trilevel funding that consistently needs to be there for the neighbourhoods of the inner city.

We also need, Madam Speaker, and other neighbourhoods will find that they will need the neighbourhood non-profit programs that have been established for a long time in West Broadway. The Westminster Housing society showed the way with co-operative housing on Maryland Street and with row housing further down. That took many years and much commitment by the church and local people, but what a difference it and its companion row housing down the block have made in that particular part of West Broadway.

In this context I remember Christine McKee, someone whom I have known since girlhood. We actually went to the same school in England many, many years ago, and she played a significant role in the development of that housing co-operative. This was long before and during her time as the deputy mayor of the City of Winnipeg.

At Crossways, the church community, both United and Mennonite have created a mix of daycare and housing for people living with AIDS. The city's Winnipeg Housing and Renewal has renovated several area blocks throughout the neighbourhood, while an earlier government built significant public housing, for example, at 25 Furby, built with a daycare, or at Riverview Mansions on the river at Spence Street. Good housing and a sense of community pride go hand in hand, and this is one of the major elements in the maintenance of a solid community in West Broadway. You do not achieve that overnight. You do not achieve it in the last year before an election.

* (1700)

Madam Speaker, there are so many other elements to this story. I cannot mention them all, but let me just take one or two. Art City, with funding initially from local businesses, and with trilevel funding, more recently, is offering new kinds of recreational opportunities to local families. I know of families working together on art projects, of youngsters for whom sport was not the drawing card, but who have been drawn to this innovative storefront operation. Like many aspects of the revitalization of West Broadway, it was the inspiration of one of the long-time committed residents, Wanda Koop, and it is staffed by local people, by students, and by young aboriginal university graduates, as indeed is the Little Red Spirit headstart program.

Secondly, businesses are part of the maintenance of this community. This is not a place where the big-box stores will locate, nor is it a place for national chains. It is a community where business is locally owned and committed to the community. The West Broadway-South Sherbrook BIZ, supported by the city, has, for more than a decade, been part of this story. On West Broadway itself, there are few boarded-up shops, although Sherbrook Street, Portage Avenue, and some of the other commercial areas are indeed very worrying.

Edward Carriere's corner, Larry Leroux's pharmacy, and Bud and Betty Shagnapi, the aboriginal art gallery, and the Hoekstras at the Fork and Cork are all people and businesses who over the years—and I stress that, Madam Speaker—over a long period of time have remained committed to this neighbourhood.

Finally, there have been individuals, residents, community policemen, long-time workers in the area, such as Linda Williams, Colin Muir, Paul Chorney, directors of the neighbourhood centres, such as Vince Sansregret, the many youth workers, the ministers and church councils, the Wolseley Residents' Association, the Armstrong's Point Association and Pat Thomson, powwow committees at Magnus Eliason and at West Broadway and at Gordon Bell who have all played important long-term roles in this community.

Last but by no means least has been the Lions organization that, in the last few years, under the leadership of Al Davies, has recognized the importance of maintaining a strong, viable neighbourhood around Lions Place and Lions Manor. The Lions provided the additional leadership and central resources that enabled the formation of the West Broadway development council and the co-ordination of the many groups and individuals who had worked for so long in the neighbourhood. They also initiated the rehabilitation of a number of houses in the area in conjunction with Winnipeg's public schools.

Madam Speaker, I expect that this organization, too, will evolve and change. I do not know that it is the kind of organization that will serve every neighbourhood, but I do know that it was the right move at the right time for West Broadway. It is part of a number of changes which have helped to build a sense of hope and community in this part of my riding. Is it a transferable experience as some people would hope? Well, I think parts of it maybe are, but I will repeat, it will need to be done over a long period of time, and you will need strong community-based leadership which represents all parts of the community, including aboriginal people. You will need strong public-sector supports, schools and health facilities and universities with a strong sense of social responsibility.

You will need neighbourhood associations that will work together, as Armstrong's Point and West Broadway have done—practical support, not just platitudes of partnership. You will need good recreation facilities that are staffed and serve all parts of the community. You will benefit from supportive and active business communities rooted in their neighbourhoods, and you will want support for families with daycares, adequate nutrition, and opportunities for fellowship. You must have good schools in which all people feel welcome and in which they have confidence. You will need churches whose congregation see God's kingdom on their doorstep.

The government should understand that steadiness and consistency are the main keys to the urban change that is required in Winnipeg.

The government should understand clearly that you cannot cut parent-child centres and nursery programs and then, just before an election, find money and tears for children. You cannot cut your support for housing and then find money before an election for the next ring of urban deterioration. You cannot cut Access programs and think that you will get an aboriginal leadership equipped to face all the issues in their and our communities. You cannot spend a decade with no plan for an urban aboriginal strategy and think that you will have the city we all want. You cannot have 10 years with no attention to aboriginal education from the department and think that you have the strong education system that you need in the inner city. You cannot cut friendship centres for five years and think that two recreation programs called Urban Sports Camps will fill the growing need. You cannot cut children's nutrition and have us believe that our neighbours have the chance to raise healthy families. You cannot refuse to speak to your citizens or call the Legislature into session and think that Manitobans will accord you their respect.

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): It is truly an honour to be able to rise in this House and to address all honourable members of the Assembly. This is the second time that I have had this opportunity to make a major address, the first time being just a little bit more than a year ago, and truly I feel it was a privilege to have this opportunity to address the motion, to address the Speech from the Throne.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome back all members. We have been absent from this House for a little while. I am delighted to be back and energized and filled with energy and in the spirit for the future goals.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome our new pages. I believe there are eight in all that have been saddled with the responsibility to provide for the workings of this Chamber. I am certain they will find that at times it can be perhaps a little mundane and boring, but I am certain that will be balanced by periods where it will be extremely hectic. I would like to offer them a word of welcome and to say a note of appreciation at this time, if we

do not have that opportunity to say that once again.

I also wanted to take this opportunity as the House recognized the six interns that are spending this year with us. Certainly they assist in everyday activity within our offices, and we do not have that many opportunities to say thank you for the work that they do for us. I am certain that they are appreciated regardless of what office they work in and most certainly we have personal opportunity to thank Ms. Shelly Wiseman in our Room 138.

* (1710)

Madam Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome His Honour the Lieutenant Governor Peter Liba, who I am certain is going to find his new position challenging and rewarding. Certainly I was very much appreciative to learn that he indeed started out with his career in the media serving the Portage Daily Graphic and the Neepawa Press in Portage la Prairie under the watchful guise of our now Mayor Ian MacKenzie. I certainly want to take this opportunity to wish him well and for continued prosperity in the position of Lieutenant Governor for our fair province of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, we are all welcome back to the place which we currently call home at this moment, but we are missing one member of this House, a member that I have come to sincerely appreciate, that member being the honourable member for St. Boniface, Mr. Neil Gaudry. I was deeply saddened when I learned of his passing. Although I attended the memorial services for Mr. Gaudry, I would like to add at this point in time for the official record what Mr. Gaudry meant to me as a new member of this Assembly.

He bestowed upon me a sense of commitment and dedication to constituents. He was one of the finest legislators I have ever come to know. He regarded everyone with fairness and respect and he believed in genuine co-operation and willingness to work together for the betterment of this province. I recall very fondly of his attention to detail and to the welcome that he presented to the presenters

when he travelled this province in seeking of input towards the Calgary Accord that our nine premiers conceived. He brought a sense of welcome to those presenters and a sense of relief so that they might present their views without a sense of the anxiety that we all feel from time to time when we rise in a place we are not comfortable with.

Mr. Gaudry's love of his work and certainly of his family will sorely be missed by myself and, I am certain, this Chamber. Bon voyage.

Madam Speaker, I also want to bring attention to the Honourable Yvon Dumont, our former Lieutenant Governor of this province. Having been appointed the Queen's representative in 1993, Mr. Dumont took his responsibilities and duties with professionalism and pride. He served this province well, and he will be missed. I will remember not only his prowess within his performance of the Red River jig but for the respect he had for all those whom he served within this province. He worked to make it a better place.

I speak specifically of his energy and enthusiasm for his position where he showed respect and recognition for the elementary school teachers through an award that he created. He hosted many outstanding elementary school teachers at his residence and recognized their involvement and certainly indeed their contributions to the young people of Manitoba.

I would like to thank Mr. Dumont and wish him well in all of his endeavours that I am certain will follow into the next chapter of his life. The very best wishes to him and to his family.

Now, Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize four members of this caucus who have announced their retirement from this, their political life. In the year and a half I have had the privilege to know and come to know four members, those members being Mr. James Downey, Mr. Glen Findlay, Minister Rosemary Vodrey, and Mr. Albert Driedger. This province has benefited well from their commitment and dedication to their position as legislators and representatives for the

constituencies of Arthur-Virden, Springfield, Fort Garry, and Steinbach.

May I speak first of Minister Downey. Mr. Downey was first elected 22 years ago in that constituency of Arthur-Virden. He has chosen this public life, and we have been the benefactors of that decision. He has represented Manitoba far and wide, certainly in the last position as Industry, Trade and Tourism minister, of which I cannot think of a better person with his talents and gifts to promote and sell Manitoba to the world.

Mr. Glen Findlay, the member for Springfield, I did not come to know first as a member of this Legislature, but as my professor at the University of Manitoba. I gathered much from his lectures in the Faculty of Agriculture, and I must say I certainly appreciate the wisdom shared then as well as the wisdom shared today in his capacity as the former Highways minister whom I got to know and appreciate.

Also, Minister Vodrey came to be known to myself for a number of years prior to the entry into this House. I certainly garnered a great deal of respect for her commitment and her passion for the people of Manitoba. Her dedication to her portfolio of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship is indeed one that I personally will miss, and I am certain that many constituents of this province have come to appreciate her true dedication to her portfolio. I certainly wish her well in her next chapter within her life away from the public's glaring eye.

Also, too, Mr. Albert Driedger, who has represented Steinbach. I have come to know Minister Driedger, as the Highways minister, when I came to plead one's case upon improved road conditions when farming in Portage la Prairie. The Minister Driedger, at that time, was always approachable and understanding, and I must say for the record I certainly appreciated that opportunity. I wish him well, and his family too, in their retirement.

Mr. Downey, Mr. Findlay, Minister Vodrey, Mr. Driedger have dedicated themselves to this province. Madam Speaker, thank you for this opportunity to recognize them.

Madam Speaker, before I move on to specifically the throne speech, I know you have gone into a great deal of latitude within the members addresses here, but another member of this Legislature has also announced his retirement. I speak specifically of Mr. Gary Kowalski, who has represented the constituency of The Maples. Gary has an attachment to Portage la Prairie, with his Uncle Bill operating a gas station in Portage la Prairie for more than 40 years.

Gary has demonstrated to me his understanding of his constituents and his dedication to representing their interests. He will continue that dedication and representation into the next career with the Winnipeg Police Services. I sincerely wish him all the very best in that endeavour. I am certain we will all be benefactors of that, having perhaps the knowledge of last Tuesday's activities outside our door, which Winnipeg's finest were very much involved and proudly displayed their capabilities.

Madam Speaker, now to the throne speech and specifically the economy and the mentions throughout the throne speech. I am extremely proud to be a member of this Legislature and the government of Manitoba. This province now reflects the lowest unemployment rate in all of the nation, a very distinct position of which we all should be very proud.

We, as legislators, can only attempt to provide for the climate in which private industry can flourish and provide the jobs for our young people to fill their dreams. I am very proud that the job creation has created the opportunities for our youth. I am sincerely committed, as is this government, to job creation and stimulation of this province's economy.

Our youth unemployment is the lowest in Canada. It is tied currently with Alberta, but I am certain we will better that in the next months to come because we are committed to the youth of this province. We recognize our youth as being our future, and our future requires our sincere attention and support so that they may develop and prosper and provide for our future because indeed we will rely upon them in our retirement.

That is why I, Madam Speaker, I am very proud of our government in some of the youth programs. I speak specifically of one program, which was named in a member's statement today, and that is the program offered to the public as the Green Team. Since its inception in 1992, the Green Team program has provided summer opportunities for the young people of Manitoba. Some 9,000 Manitoba young people have been involved in this program over the course of the last seven years. The youth have gained extremely valuable work experience, and we have gained their youthful enthusiasm within our parks and our communities. The youth of Portage la Prairie I speak specifically of have benefited from this program.

* (1720)

Madam Speaker, the Manitoba economy continues to improve as we approach the new millennium. Our government has a vision of how to keep their province strong and how to market our products. We have a development plan that will lead this province into the new millennium. The era of global markets has endless possibilities, and we have entered a time where the Internet and its encompassing technologies will change the marketplace forever.

Our government has ensured Manitoba businesses that their products will be on-line and will be showcased through the world. The Manitoba marketplace, a web site recently announced by the Ministry of Rural Development in co-operation with the other ministries to provide—

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Point Douglas, on a point of order.

Mr. George Hicke (Point Douglas): I rise on a point of order. The member for Portage la Prairie just rose prior when our speaker was making some notes and reading from some notes that she had, and I just wonder if the member for Portage la Prairie would follow his own suggestions and table a document he is obviously reading from to show if he is true to his own convictions, because it seems as if he is

reading from some sort of a personal letter that someone has written to him. I wonder if he is willing to table that. Remember it works both ways.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for St. Norbert, on the same point of order.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Madam Speaker, on the same point of order. The honourable member for Point Douglas is quite aware that Beauchesne's clearly states that, when we are dealing with the throne speech, we are able to read through our speeches. As members on that side of the House have done over the years, this House is doing this as we have in the past.

Madam Speaker, that was not a point of order.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Point Douglas does not have a point of order. According to Citation 474 in Beauchesne, members are entitled to read from prepared text during debate on the throne speech.

* * *

Mr. Faurichou: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I certainly appreciate the member opposite's thoughts and input at any time.

I do have some particular points jotted on paper for today's presentation. As you will, hopefully, appreciate, I am new to the Legislature and slightly intimidated by the awesome Chamber to which we carry out our business.

Once again I might mention, as regards to our economy here in Manitoba, we have outpaced the rest of Canada in our exports. Our exports have reached \$6.1 billion last year annually, an absolutely outstanding 13.1 percent increase year over year. The province now stands with seven consecutive years of double-digit growth in exports. Our export growth is

the second strongest export performance of all the provinces.

Madam Speaker, I am delighted to tell you that the local economy in Portage la Prairie shares this bright outlook. Our local unemployment rate even remains lower than that of our province at 4.6 percent. The number of people in Portage la Prairie collecting social assistance in Portage has dropped by over 500 individuals since 1993. I am very happy to tell you that the city of Portage la Prairie is less reliant on its social services. The Portage la Prairie residents are finding work and receiving the necessary training in coming into the competitive workforce. I might cite just one particular opportunity that three individual income assistance recipients have had, and that is receiving the basic skills training at the Manitoba Developmental Centre.

It is very important for me to recognize and congratulate all peoples who work so hard day-in, day-out in Portage la Prairie.

Madam Speaker, I would like to take this moment to say thank you to those persons that have shown a commitment to having a business in Portage la Prairie that has offered employment, whether it be full or part time. Specifically, first off, would be McCain. We have a processing plant, the largest in Canada for French fries, offering continued employment, not only in the production field, but opportunities for management positions throughout the McCain company worldwide.

Also too the Manitoba Food Development Centre offers much to persons looking to diversify and opportunities that they might find in value-added processing of food commodities.

Madam Speaker, I believe my time today is limited. I am delighted to have had this opportunity, because I know that there are other speakers that want to put their particular thoughts on the record, but I am very, very pleased and proud to have had the opportunity to serve the residents of Portage la Prairie.

May I conclude my comments with one that I would like to read to you from my own handwriting here. May I? Madam Speaker, I

have always looked with respect upon all members of this House and I would ask at this point in time for them to show the respect that I show all members by not commenting or discussing at large when a member is speaking.

I must say that I have a new respect for all the men and women who dedicate themselves on a daily basis to the people of Manitoba, and I speak specifically of those men and women in our civil service. I would like to take this opportunity, as a member of this Legislative Assembly, to say a heartfelt thank you.

To the members of this Assembly, I would also like to take this opportunity to say that I have garnered a lasting and greater understanding and appreciation for all those persons that give themselves to public life. You are all to be congratulated for your commitment to the people of Manitoba. Remember always, though, that we are indeed a privileged few. An experience of service within this Chamber is afforded less than one one-hundredth of 1 percent of all Manitobans. Let this Chamber, as it was designed, give us the faith and hope and spirit to provide the leadership that all Manitobans desire and long for so that they may be productive individuals.

Madam Speaker, once again, it is truly a privilege to have this opportunity to serve. If I caused perhaps a little bit of second thoughts on the opposite side of the House today when I rose on my point of order, it was of the most noble and honourable point that I raised in this Chamber. No offence hopefully will be taken by the member opposite, specifically the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli). I would very much like to ask that she recognize it in that particular light and that I am only attempting to be helpful and always courteous and respectful.

Now, Madam Speaker, I guess the hour is drawing closer to the end of the day when I understand that there will be other House business to be taken forward, but having now afforded—

* (1730)

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Pursuant to subrule 40(2), I am interrupting the proceedings in order to put the question on the motion of the

honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that is the subamendment to the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. Do members wish to have the motion read? Yes.

It has been moved by the honourable member for Inkster that this government has also failed to uphold basic democratic principles by its failure to call this House back into session for nine months, its failure to introduce fixed sittings of the legislative session, and in its delay in implementing the proposed electoral boundary changes.

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

* * *

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes, Madam Speaker, I believe that there is the support possibly, and I look to the New Democrats, to have a recorded vote on this issue.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Does the honourable member for Inkster have support? According to our rules, I need to see three individuals standing to indicate support has been given.

Support has been granted.

Formal Vote

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

The question before the House is the motion of the honourable member for Inkster, that is, the subamendment to the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Division

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

Yeas

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

Nays

Cummings, Derkach, Downey, Driedger (Charleswood), Driedger (Steinbach), Dyck, Enns, Faurschou, Filmon, Findlay, Helwer, Laurendeau, McAlpine, McCrae, McIntosh,

Mitchelson, Newman, Penner, Pitura, Praznik, Radcliffe, Reimer, Render, Rocan, Stefanson, Sveinson, Toews, Tweed.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Yeas 23, Nays 28.

Madam Speaker: The motion is accordingly defeated.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, there may in fact be a willingness for the House to call it six o'clock.

Madam Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock? [agreed]

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is accordingly adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow (Wednesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 13, 1999

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