

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, 16 May, 1986.

Time — 10:00 a.m.

OPENING PRAYER by Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER, Hon. M. Phillips: Presenting Petitions . . . Reading and Receiving Petitions . . . Presenting Reports By Standing and Special Committees . . .

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. E. KOSTYRA: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I have two reports to table under Ministerial Statements. I'm pleased to table Volume 1, Financial Statements of Public Accounts for the year ending March 31, 1985, and Volume 2, Public Accounts, 1984-85, Supplementary Information for the year ending March 31, 1985; and I have a Ministerial Statement.

I rise on a matter of serious concern to the people of Manitoba regarding the Federal Government's Bill C-96, An Act to amend the Established Programs Financing Act, and to thereby reduce planned federal support for health and higher education by \$2 billion annually by 1990/91.

Our government views with extreme concern the passage to Committee of the House of Commons of Bill C-96. This unfair legislation will remove \$5.6 billion from planned federal support to our vital health and education services between now and 1990/91 — \$238 million of this total from Manitoba. By 1990/91, federal funding will fall a total of \$313 million short of the 50/50 sharing which existed in 1979/80. By 1991, this will cost each Manitoban approximately \$300.00.

Madam Speaker, this is not the first unilateral and unfair action by Federal Governments to undercut these services. In spite of a long tradition of previous consultation, the former Liberal Government unilaterally reduced its base support to health and higher education in 1982/83 by over \$740 million annually. Beginning in 1983/84, higher education has seen its support cut by a further total of \$600 million to date.

This week my colleagues, the Honourable Larry Desjardins and the Honourable Jerry Storie and I have sent an urgent telex to the Chair of the Committee on Bill C-96, the Honourable Alan McKinnon. Manitoba urged the committee to follow the precedent set by previous committees on fiscal arrangements, and to travel across our country, thereby allowing Canadians to be heard on this vital matter. Manitoba will be presenting its views to the committee in a forceful manner. We trust that there will be no rush by the Federal Government to pass this unfair legislation.

I have also been in touch with my provincial counterparts, as has Mr. Storie and Mr. Desjardins. We are by no means alone in this battle. Premier David Peterson said the following, and I quote: "This

reduction in the funds provided the province will translate into a reduction in services. There will be fewer hospital beds."

Mr. Gerard D. Levesque, the Minister of Finance in Quebec said: "It is unfair to the provinces, because they have been counting on the amounts agreed to in the accords."

The Minister of Finance for New Brunswick added: "It is unreasonable for the Federal Government to think that the provinces which have taken difficult measures to deal with their own financial situation can also be expected to absorb part of the problem at the federal level."

Even the Federal Government's own Nielsen Task Force fears that this action by the Federal Government could substantially reduce its role in Canada's health care system.

This is an extremely urgent question, Madam Speaker. The Federal Government appears to have the wrong priorities — banks ahead of health care, oil companies ahead of education, defence expenditures growing while health and education must settle for less. These priorities are wrong. These reductions will hurt Manitoba. It will hurt senior citizens and their need for health care services; youth and their need for adequate educational opportunities.

Our government will not cease in making its case for fair federal funding for the health care and higher education of all Manitobans. We are pleased with the support from the Manitoba Coalition on Health and Higher Education and many other community organizations.

Madam Speaker, in the light of the complex history and details of these arrangements, I will be preparing to have officials of my department present a briefing to all members of this Legislative Assembly.

All Manitobans must stand up against these unfair reductions.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Morris.

MR. C. MANNES: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Firstly, I thank the Minister for his statement.

Madam Speaker, what we have presented today by way of Ministerial Statement, of course, is a prelude to the Budget to come down next Thursday. It is an attempt to provide an ominous sign to Manitobans that, indeed, the very shortcomings of this government fiscally are to be laid at the feet of Ottawa. Let me say, that's the sign and that's the attempt by the Minister today, Madam Speaker.

I want to indicate to the House, as members opposite through the election campaign and indeed previous to that have failed to do, they have failed to indicate that the increase coming to Manitoba as far as federal transfer during this fiscal year will be \$102 million. That was released within the Wilson Budget.

Yet the members opposite choose to use, in a semantic form, the word "cutback" on every occasion.

Let me tell you, Madam Speaker, that if you are getting \$100 today and you get \$95 tomorrow, that's a cutback. But if you are getting \$100 today and you are promised \$105 in the future but you only get \$104, you do not call that a cutback. You call that less than you expected; less than you had hoped for, but you cannot call it a cutback as members opposite have done for the last two years, Madam Speaker.

They are not going to get away with it. We are going to talk during the Budget Debate and during the Estimates we are going to lay out the specific figures and we're not going to talk about, as members opposite have, try to scare Manitobans about these words in the form of cutbacks, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, we can talk about the Wilson Budget and put in terms that indeed it's a 5 percent increase that is being received through the transfer payments; and yet, let's also indicate that spending within this province has increased at 7.5 percent over the last year. Let's realize that inflation within this province has gone up at the rate of 4 percent. So whose house is out of order, Madam Speaker? So let not the Minister — the Budget is coming down on Thursday, one where no doubt there will be major increases in taxation, one where there will be a major increase in the deficit — try to offload that responsibility by way of a ministerial statement on the Federal Government today.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Energy and Mines.

HON. W. PARASIUK: Madam Speaker, I beg leave to table the Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the year ended March 31, 1985, I believe that was distributed to past members earlier this year; the Annual Report of the Manitoba Energy Authority for the year ended March 31, 1985; the Annual Report of the Manitoba Oil and Gas Corporation for 1985, and the Annual Report of the Department of Energy and Mines for the year 1984-85. I also have a Ministerial Statement.

I am pleased to make public and table in the House today a contract agreed to between Manitoba Hydro and Northern States Power Company of Minneapolis.

Northern States Power has agreed to purchase 200 megawatts of summer peaking hydro-electric capacity for the six months of May through October, from 1993 through 1996. We expect the sale to bring an estimated \$40 million in revenue to Manitoba Hydro over the four years of the agreement.

This sale, which is now in the form of a signed contract, is one of three export arrangements the Premier announced in mid-February. The largest was a firm power sale of 550 megawatts per year for 16 years to the Upper Mississippi Power Group — a group of six utilities in seven U.S. states adjacent to Manitoba. The other export arrangement was a 20-year 500 megawatt seasonal diversity exchange agreement with the Upper Mississippi Power Group and Northern States Power. As previously announced, contracts for these two export arrangements are expected to be signed within the next 4 - 5 months. They will be made public then and tabled in the House at that time.

As in the earlier 500 megawatt Northern States Power sale, these three export arrangements will be subject

to regulatory approval by the Federal Government's National Energy Board and the Government of Canada. An application when they are completed and signed will be made for all three to the National Energy Board.

It is a natural feature of our climate, and of our hydro system, that we have surplus capacity in the summer months. We are taking advantage of that surplus by selling available capacity on a firm basis getting double the price we would otherwise receive if this power were sold to Northern States Power solely on an interruptible basis.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, the Government of Manitoba is proud of its accomplishments in the area of Hydro development. We are specifically proud of our continued success in reaching export sales agreements with other utilities which increases our revenues, ensuring that electricity rates for Manitobans remain the lowest in Canada.

With the permission of the House, I would now like to table the contract reached between Manitoba Hydro and Northern States Power.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. H. ENNS: Madam Speaker, we welcome the announcement with respect to additional hydro sales. We are pleased that the Minister has at least maintained a commitment that he made to my leader a little earlier this week about providing us with some information as we move into the Committee Stage next Tuesday to consider the Manitoba Hydro Report and current activities of Manitoba Hydro with respect to sales to our southern neighbours.

Madam Speaker, the sale of off-peak power to our southern neighbours, of course, something that was established as far back as the mid-Sixties and the late Sixties and the Seventies, as it's always been good business for Manitoba Hydro to attempt to sell that surplus power that we generate during these months in such a great surplus. The Minister talks about doubling the price. I would hope the price has increased somewhat since those days, after all there is an inflation factor working, Madam Speaker. We will have to avail ourselves of the contract terms and look in greater detail as to what advantage this sale affords to the shareholders of Manitoba Hydro, namely the people of Manitoba.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: Thank you, Madam Speaker, I beg leave to table a number of reports; the Annual Report of the Department of Municipal Affairs for the year ending March 31, 1985; the Annual Report of the Manitoba Municipal Board for the year 1985; and the Annual Report for the Surface Rights Board of Manitoba for the year ending March 31, 1985.

MADAM SPEAKER: Notices of Motion . . . Introduction of Bills . . .

SPEAKER'S RULING

MADAM SPEAKER: Before we reach Oral Question Period, I would like to comment on the point of order that the Member for St. Norbert raised at the end of question period yesterday.

I have perused the draft printout of Hansard and note that the honourable Member was concerned that another member abused question period and the Rules of the House.

I would like to point out to the Member for St. Norbert that Beauchesne Citation 235 states: "The Speaker's attention must be directed to a breach of order at the proper moment, namely, the moment it occurs," and considering that there was substantial business conducted between the time that the issue occurred and the end of question period, the point of order was definitely out of order.

However, on the content of the point in terms of a Minister abusing question period and the rules in the exchange between the Minister and the Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek, I will quote the words of the Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek: "The Minister has continually referred to myself as signing a contract, waved it in this House and I asked, Madam Speaker, that he table the Order for Return that he is waving around in the House." Consequently, on the substantive issue, I believe the Minister was complying with a request from a member of the Opposition to table that particular document that he was waving around in the House.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, with respect to your ruling, I would just like to point out that the question that we were . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

I do hope that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition was not reflecting on my ruling which, of course, is not subject to debate.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, I wonder if on a point of order you would just peruse the document that was tabled in the House . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

My ruling stated that regardless of what the document was, the point of order was raised out of order.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Northern Flood Agreement - Settlement outstanding liabilities

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, my question is for the Honourable First Minister. The Throne Speech refers on several occasions to the issue of fairness in dealing with all sectors of Manitoba society. A question for the Premier is, there are a number of outstanding liabilities accruing to five northern Native communities under the Northern Flood Agreement, what agreements have been reached to date with respect to the outstanding liabilities to these five northern Native communities under the Northern Flood Agreement?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, there have been a considerable number that have been resolved up to

this point. I will accept the question from the Leader of the Opposition as notice and bring into the House a list of those agreements that have been arrived at up to this point under the provisions of the Northern Flood Agreement.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, I am aware that a number of arbitrations have been settled with respect to individual compensations. I am wondering whether or not the government is in a position to settle the overall outstanding liabilities under the Northern Flood Agreement with these five northern Native communities that accrue back, as the Premier is well aware, to the construction of hydro-electric projects in the Seventies.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, the matter falls within the responsibility of the Minister of Northern Affairs, except I can advise the Leader of the Opposition that discussions are under way in respect to the potential of resolving this issue in an overall fashion. Those discussions had been taking place for some time and are continuing at the present time and, hopefully, we will be able to bring about a resolution but it's too early to be definitive as to whether that will take place or not.

MR. G. FILMON: Yes, Madam Speaker, the Northern Flood Agreement was, of course, signed in the fall of 1977. My question then to the Minister of Northern Affairs is, what is the current value projected by the government for settlement of the outstanding liabilities under the Northern Flood Agreement?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs.

HON. H. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, on the question of the current value there's been a lot of speculation in the Nielsen Report as to the value of the Northern Flood Agreement; but the value that we had placed on it as a province was in the area of \$40 million and the value that is currently being speculated by the Nielsen Report, is in the area of \$500 million. That is beyond what we had anticipated would ever be the value that was projected at that time the agreement was signed.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, knowing that there are three parties to the agreement, I wonder if the Attorney-General could indicate whether or not the province assumes total liability under the Northern Flood Agreement should the Manitoba Hydro default on its commitments.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

HON. R. PENNER: I'll take that question as notice.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, in view of the fact that province has placed a value of about \$40 million on the liabilities under the Northern Flood Agreement, and in view of the fact that the five communities have not accepted — in fact, have totally rejected the offers

of I believe a total of \$42 million under the agreement — can the Minister indicate whether or not the government is prepared to enhance its offer to these five communities?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs.

HON. H. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, I am sure the Minister knows that there are four groups of people represented in the negotiations, and the negotiations are currently going on. I don't think that the House is the appropriate place to be negotiating an agreement of that complexity.

MR. G. FILMON: Well, Madam Speaker, has the government then offered more than the \$40 million that has already been rejected by the five northern Native communities under this agreement?

HON. H. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, as I had mentioned earlier, there are four different parties involved in the negotiations which are still ongoing. We are coming very close to meeting some of the concerns in the area of land claims and, hopefully, they will be accepted very shortly. As to a final figure, the negotiations are still going on and I don't think this is the appropriate place to be making a statement on the negotiations when the negotiations are ongoing.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, during the course of the election campaign and prior to it, many representatives of these five northern Native communities expressed great concern that the negotiations were not going on satisfactorily.

Madam Speaker, my question to the Minister of Northern Affairs is, who is negotiating on behalf of the Government of Manitoba in respect to the Northern Flood Agreement?

HON. H. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Government of Manitoba, the Department of Northern Affairs is doing the negotiating and also the other parties involved in it. There is a representative representing the five northern bands, the Federal Government and Manitoba Hydro. Negotiations are presently going on and a member of my staff is Andy Miles who is directly involved with the negotiations on northern projects.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, my question to the Minister of Northern Affairs is whether or not there is a role for the new Minister without portfolio responsible for Native Affairs to participate in these negotiations.

HON. H. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, I was extremely pleased when the Member for Rupertsland was appointed as a Minister responsible for Native Affairs. In our negotiations, he has brought a unique understanding of Native people, of which he is a member. He has brought that unique understanding to us and he will be playing a very big part in the negotiations that are taking place in the area of the treaty land entitlement, Northern Flood Agreement. Any time the Native people are involved, the Minister

responsible for Native Affairs will be playing a very big part in the negotiations.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister without Portfolio responsible for Native Affairs, whether or not he will be recommending that the province increase its offer of compensation to the five northern Native communities in order to try and arrive at a settlement.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister responsible for Native Affairs.

HON. E. HARPER: Yes, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the Leader of the Opposition for the question I may say that I will be discussing the issue with my colleague, the Minister of Northern Affairs.

I may say that the settlements that we have offered so far and specifically the issue of Cross Lake, where we offered to build them an arena — I remember the opposition members crying about settling that issue and I could maybe shed the light — we have paid over a million dollars in terms of payments to trappers through compensation, also assistant payments. As well, a few months ago we provided about \$450,000 retroactive payments to trappers in that area. Also the Hydro provided the \$184,000 to cutting and improvement programs which will provide access to the trappers in that area.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, I am glad that the Minister responsible for Native Affairs referred to Cross Lake because specifically that band rejected, unanimously, the last offer of the government under the Northern Flood Agreement.

So will he be recommending to his colleagues that they increase their offer to these northern Native communities in order to help settle the affair?

HON. E. HARPER: Yes, I will be recommending some offers to the Minister of Northern Affairs, but that's for my colleague and me to discuss. It will be done in the best interests of the people in Cross Lake.

Drivers' licences - suspension re failure to honour time payment

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Minnedosa.

MR. D. BLAKE: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question is to the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation. The motorist who took advantage of the time payment plan under the Motor Vehicle premiums, the first instalment is due on May 30, and I understand notices are now going out in the mail. These notices apparently contain a threat that there will be a suspension of the driver's licence upon non-payment of the instalment premium.

Could the Minister inform the House if the threats of suspension of the driver's licence will be carried out?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to thank the Member for Minnedosa for that question. In fact, the information that is going out with the notice of the second payment for premiums spells out what has been in the provincial legislation since 1971.

Section 269(2) of The Highway Traffic Act does allow the registrar to suspend a licence for an indebtedness to the corporation. This is nothing new and it is certainly something that the corporation intends to carry through as a responsible corporation.

For those motorists who fail to pay their second premium, that is a debt against the corporation, a debt that is owing to all the motorists of Manitoba who do pay their insurance on time.

MR. D. BLAKE: Madam Speaker, a supplementary question to the same Minister.

It is inconceivable that the corporation will be recommending cancellation of a driver's licence when the licence to drive a motor vehicle has absolutely nothing to do with the licensing of that particular motor vehicle. You could register a motor vehicle without having a driver's licence.

Would the Minister reconsider suspending a driver's licence for non-payment of the motor vehicle registration fee?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Perhaps I can just explain how this possibility might arise. If a motorist registers a vehicle and takes the insurance on a payment plan and does not provide the second payment by the due date, and if notice is not served upon that motorist, whether it be by registered mail or personal service, legally the vehicle is still insured and there is an indebtedness to the corporation. As a means of collecting that indebtedness the threat of suspension of a driver's licence may then be employed. That, as I indicated, has been the provincial legislation since 1971.

MR. D. BLAKE: Madam Speaker, for clarification, the licence to drive a motor vehicle has nothing to do with the particular motor vehicle. It has nothing to do with the ownership of that vehicle.

Would he consider suspending that order to cancel the driver's licence upon non-payment of a motor vehicle registration fee?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: The existing legislation has been around for four years. I think it is fairly equitable legislation, equitable to the motorists of Manitoba who do fulfill their obligations to the corporation and to the other motorists in Manitoba.

It is one of the means that the corporation has at its disposal to bring about a situation where motorists who have an indebtedness to the corporation, have reason to make good that debt. If there is no such threat then we, as vehicle owners who do pay our payments, are losing that revenue.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Minnedosa.

MR. D. BLAKE: Yes, I would like to ask a supplementary, Madam Speaker. I wonder if the Minister could advise

the House how many drivers' licences were suspended last year for non-payment of vehicle registration premiums.

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: I don't have the exact figure but my understanding is that there were problems with about 5,000 such situations. It is a small percentage of the total, but it is a fairly significant revenue loss to the corporation. Therefore, there are new means of attempting to get those persons, who are indebted to the corporation, to pay those debts.

Education funding formula

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Brandon West.

MR. J. McCRAE: Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Education.

In view of the fact that some of the more efficient school divisions in this province, notably the Brandon School Division, must increase their special levies dramatically because of the present provincial funding formula, thereby placing the burden of these costs on property taxpayers, and this year in Brandon it's to the tune of an increase of 13 percent, Madam Speaker, has the Minister approached any school divisions for discussions respecting the funding formula used by the province? And if not after all this time, why not?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. J. STORIE: Madam Speaker, after all this time, yes, I have discussed this issue informally with the Manitoba Association of School Trustees, with other people involved, organizations.

I am certainly prepared to meet individual representatives of school boards as time allows, but I want to deal with the premise that the member used in his question and that is that somehow some school divisions are not receiving a fair share — and obviously we could talk about what fair is — but in the case of the Brandon School Division, using the current formula that is being used, has provided Brandon School Division with 1 percent more than what would have been available to them under the Educational Support Program. So it isn't the case that this program is being used to treat school divisions in any unfair manner.

I would point out to the member as well, the school divisions determine to a very great extent the kinds of programs they offer.

I made the point yesterday to one of his colleagues that some school divisions have substantially more problems to deal with in the area of single parent families, teaching English as a second language, transient student populations, all kinds of problems. For the member's own edification, perhaps he should look around the province and perhaps tour some of the schools in Northern Manitoba and in this inner city, as I have, to see the educational problems that other school divisions face. Fairness is a very important question, but it has to be viewed on a provincial basis and it cannot be viewed on the parochial kind of issues that the Member for Brandon West is raising.

MR. J. McCRAE: Madam Speaker, the Minister has said that he would be prepared to meet the divisions as time allows. I think it's pretty clear from his answer that he hasn't met with the Brandon School Division as yet.

Does the Minister subscribe, Madam Speaker, to the policy adopted and followed by his predecessor that school divisions which spend lavishly in one year receive higher percentage funding increases the following year than school divisions which spend carefully and prudently?

HON. J. STORIE: Madam Speaker, the member opposite is using rather emotive language. The question of "lavishly" has not been determined; it may be a question of need. I have asked the member opposite to perhaps explore what the need is in some other divisions.

I would point out to the member as well that under the current funding formula the supportable expenditures, the provincial support to the supportable expenditures in the Brandon School Division were approximately 81.1 percent. The provincial average of provincial support to supportable expenditures was 79.1 percent. So Brandon did reasonably well under that formula.

In terms of the other question that the member raised, clearly, Madam Speaker, it seems to be sensible that those divisions that have exceptional problems, those divisions that because of those problems have additional expenditures, that the province, in fairness, must address those. So the formula is based to a certain extent on the supportable expenditures that a division incurs.

Madam Speaker, the percentage of support from the province is above the provincial average in those terms and that seems to be fair.

MR. J. McCRAE: Madam Speaker, instead of playing around with figures and being cute, is it the intention of this Minister to deal with this matter on an urgent basis and change the funding policy of the government so that school divisions and taxpayers across the province may be treated fairly and so that programs don't have to be cut and, if not, why not? Yes or no, Madam Speaker.

HON. J. STORIE: Madam Speaker, I intend to ensure that school divisions are dealt with fairly. Madam Speaker, I have given the member the information to indicate that Brandon School Division in this case was treated fairly. I certainly intend to ensure that that happens on a consistent basis.

What the member should not be doing, Madam Speaker, is assuming that he knows all of the ins and outs of the educational system and purporting to present those in a single question. He will have an opportunity to explore the Department of Education, the funding formulas that are in place and why they are in place during the Estimates process.

Free trade - effect on dairy and poultry producers

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. C. BAKER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Agriculture.

Has the Minister's department investigated the effects of free trade to Manitoba dairy and poultry producers?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, yes, the department, in consultation with various marketing boards, has examined this matter. It is clearly the opinion of not only our department but those of commodity groups dealing in the feather industry and in the milk industry that any opening up of the supply-managed commodities, which are the only commodities, Madam Speaker, which provide producers a reasonable income based on their cost of production and, of course, a steady supply of fresh products for our consumers in this country, and those are the commodities in which consumers have benefited over the years with the most stable prices in terms of agricultural products and it would be devastating in terms of free trade on those commodities.

International Baccalaureate Program

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Honourable Minister of Education.

The international baccalaureate program has been in the pilot stage now for seven years. Despite the fact that it is doing an excellent job training those children who have academic talents, and that credits are granted at Harvard, Princeton and Yale, and McGill and the University of Toronto, and our students are getting grades above the world average, when will this department finally admit that it can be given full program status?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. J. STORIE: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Certainly, the international baccalaureate program is a successful one, and the Member for River Heights is aware of the fact that the province has provided opportunities for supporting that program. Obviously, it, like many other programs that divisions have sponsored on a pilot basis, have merit. The problem is that with school divisions, and certainly with the province, how do we continue to fund those, how do we fund those in an equitable basis; at the same time being cognizant of our concern over the ability of taxpayers, whether through taxation measures or through municipal taxation measures, carrying that load? It's a question of priorities.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Will the Honourable Minister of Education urge the University of Manitoba to grant credit status to these young students in that they are getting credit status and scholarship status at universities outside of this province, and we are in fact suffering from a "brain drain"?

HON. J. STORIE: Madam Speaker, I think the Member for River Heights raises a legitimate point. I have had a chance to meet with the presidents of the universities, but I have not specifically raised that matter. I can tell the Member for River Heights that I think her question is one that goes beyond the question of whether students in the international baccalaureate program should receive credit. I think there is also room for some expansion of our offering of credit programs through the high school program generally. I certainly will be pursuing that thought with the universities.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: A supplementary, Madam Speaker. Will your department meet with the three divisions now presently offering the international baccalaureate program to encourage and facilitate the transfer of students outside of their divisions as their policies at the present time discriminate against gifted children who can't enter those programs?

HON. J. STORIE: Madam Speaker, I have indicated on many occasions that I have no objections whatsoever to meeting, to discussing. I am not as familiar with the problems that the three divisions have as obviously I could be at this point, but certainly if they have concerns that they wish to bring to my attention I would be more than happy to meet with them.

Education funding - level of funding for divisions

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Kirkfield Park.

MRS. G. HAMMOND: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education.

The St. James-Assiniboia School Division enrolment has declined a staggering 35 percent since 1979, and they have reduced staff by 26 percent mainly through attrition and early retirement, introduced a model energy conservation serving for the division, saving the division \$342,000 annually, and closed nine schools. Because the new education formula penalizes St. James for being fiscally responsible and places a further burden on its ratepayers, will it be the new Minister's policy that St. James-Assiniboia now cut programs, as was suggested by the former Minister of Education, or will he change the formula to address the continuing problem of declining enrolment?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. J. STORIE: Madam Speaker, again we have the emotive language of penalizing. Madam Speaker, the formula is set up, I think, on a fairly understandable basis. — (Interjection) — It's in education. — (Interjection) — In four years you've learned nothing.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.
The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. J. STORIE: Madam Speaker, the government's support to the education program is based primarily on a very simple formula, on a simple principle. If

divisions take the initiative, are spending additional money, then clearly additional provincial support is warranted in most circumstances.

In the case of St. James — and I don't want to belittle the difficulties that the St. James School Division is facing — declining enrolment is a problem. It's a problem in terms of staffing; I'm aware of that. It's a problem for the school boards.

The fact of the matter is that government support to the education program is providing support based on the previous year's supportable expenditures, at a minimum, and that's the best we can do. School divisions, like the province, have some flexibility in terms of the programs they offer and in terms of the special levy that they charge.

Madam Speaker, we hear members opposite telling us in their Throne Speech and in questions, or asking us during question period to spend more money. At the same time, they asked us to get off the backs of taxpayers. School divisions have the same problem.

Madam Speaker, the program that is in place is equitable. The difficulty is, and I have no problem with this, I have never met a school division yet — I'm sure that one is not going to come forward in saying cut our funding. They all believe that they have legitimate programs that need funding; they all believe that they need more provincial support.

Madam Speaker, all we can do is allocate the resources that we have in the most equitable manner.

Prayer in schools

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Gladstone.

MRS. C. OLESON: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question is to the Minister of Education. Is it the intention of the Minister in this Session to introduce legislation governing prayer in schools?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. J. STORIE: No, Madam Speaker.

MPIC - coverage for vehicles at Expo

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Burrows.

MR. C. SANTOS: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The economic climate in the community generally influences the rate of economic recovery and expressions of public attitude about support for young business people is a very important variable.

Last Wednesday, the Winnipeg Free Press carried prominently a story about a young man who had difficulty getting some liability insurance coverage for his pedi-car business. Could the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation inform this House what happened to this young man?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker.

The problems that were outlined in the Winnipeg Free Press are common to a number of businesses in Manitoba, and I am pleased that the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation has been able to provide the type of insurance that their businesses require in a number of circumstances.

With specific reference to the gentleman who was referenced in the Wednesday's edition of the Winnipeg Free Press, while it's true that the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation was hesitant in providing liability coverage for the whole operation, which included the pedi-cabs in Vancouver, I am pleased to advise the member that in fact that same day on which the item occurred in the Winnipeg Free Press, the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation did offer coverage for the vehicles that are to be operated in Manitoba, at a reasonable rate, insurance that, I might add, was probably not available from any other insurance company in Canada. MPIC even went beyond its normal responsibilities and helped open some doors for this gentleman in Vancouver to be able to operate his business at Expo.

MR. C. SANTOS: A supplementary, Madam Speaker.

Could the Minister inform the House what steps the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation will be taking to help young entrepreneurs and other such people secure such coverage in the future?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: I thank the member for that supplementary question.

As I indicated, there is a problem with the insurance in the insurance industry at the present time. The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation will continue to assess each application as it comes in and, wherever possible, we will provide the type of insurance, as we have for a number of businesses in Manitoba that would not be operating today without the insurance provided by the corporation. We will continue to assess the applications and where the operation is such that it does not produce any kind of situation where the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation is at extremely high risk, we will endeavour to provide the coverage at a reasonable rate.

Economic outlook of Manitoba

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Morris.

MR. C. MANNES: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The other night in the Throne Speech Debate, the Minister of Finance was speaking in glowing terms about the performance of the economy of Manitoba. He used sources indicating that our economy was going to perform very well over the next year. He, however, added a little more caution in a couple of newspaper interviews where he said last week in Brandon that our province will be squeezed between lower revenues and higher costs and it will make for some very difficult choices between increased taxes or program reductions.

Taxes - decrease in

MR. C. MANNES: My question, Madam Speaker, given that our economy is doing so well, can the taxpayers of this province, once the Budget comes down next Thursday, expect to see decreases in taxation, decreases in deficit and an increase in social spending similar to what occurred in Ontario where their economy is also doing so well?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. R. PENNER: . . . know better than to ask for Budget information in advance.

HON. E. KOSTYRA: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I can confirm that the economic outlook for our province, as a result of our diversified economy, the strength of our businesses, the cooperation of labour and the activities of this government over the past four years is rosy for the future, Madam Speaker.

I can also indicate that two-thirds of the sources of revenue for the Provincial Government are outside of the direct control of the province in the areas of transfer payments and in the areas of revenues that are derived from the federal income tax system.

So there is a considerable squeeze on the revenues of the province, in part by the planned reductions in federal transfer payments and in the kinds of problems that are inherent in the present structure of the income tax system. It is our intention to ensure that we maintain our important health, education and other social services at the same time that we attempt to bring about as much fairness in the revenue sources that are available to the province.

The member, in response to my ministerial statement today on Bill C-96, failed to indicate one position the Progressive Conservative Party in Manitoba takes with respect to that bill. That bill will have the impact of taking away a lot of potential revenue to the Province of Manitoba for areas of health and post-secondary education. Because of their blind allegiance to their federal party, they fail to take a position. Yet one of his colleagues, the former Minister of . . . — (Interjection) —

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Morris.

MR. C. MANNES: A supplementary, Madam Speaker.

Given that close to a half of our revenues are derived by direct taxation of some form on the residents of this province, can the Minister indicate whether or not, proportionately speaking, our direct revenues from our taxpayers will increase as a proportion similar to that in Ontario, given that our economy, again, is doing as well as any economy in this land?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. E. KOSTYRA: The difficulty facing the people of our province, Madam Speaker, is that that there will have to be some way of making up for the revenue shortfalls over the next number of years; it may be

through the reduction of services, it may be through increased taxation. I would hope, Madam Speaker, it will be through joint cooperation between all the provinces in this country and the Federal Government.

You know, they take this position, blindly supporting their federal colleagues no matter what they do, yet the former Minister of Finance, the former finance critic, the former Member for Turtle Mountain, took a position in opposition to the previous Federal Liberal Government when they were even talking about changes to fiscal arrangements.

In his budget of 1981, Madam Speaker, and I quote from Page 279 of Hansard, he indicated that the Province of Manitoba was opposed to the planned reductions that the Federal Government was considering in fiscal arrangements. Because that was a Federal Liberal Government they chose to oppose it; but when it is one of their own make they blithely say, yes, we agree to those cuts; yes, we agree to cutbacks on Manitobans; yes, we agree to cut some health and post-secondary education.

MADAM SPEAKER: May I remind both the Member for Morris and the Honourable Minister of Finance that question period is not a time for debate.

The Honourable Member for Morris.

MR. C. MANNES: A final supplementary, Madam Speaker. My previous question was very direct, it dealt specifically with Manitoba's own taxes. To what degree will Manitoba's failing farm economy and the results thereof, in a revenue sense, be fully reflected within the revenue projections that will be presented next week?

HON. E. KOSTYRA: My answer to those questions were positions that are of concern to Manitobans, and were dealing with the needs of Manitobans. With respect to agriculture, Madam Speaker, I think the actions of this government over the past four and a half years, the statements and the actions that are taking place with respect to agriculture that were in the Throne Speech, I think are indicative of the position that this government has taken with respect to agriculture.

The terms of any specifics, one would have to wait for the tabling of the Budget, but I can assure you, Madam Speaker, that this government will not take out its problems with respect to revenue and expenditures on the backs of the farmers like the Federal Government did.

Oil spill - Assiniboine River

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. J. MALOWAY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister of the Environment.

In view of the fact that similar spill incidents have happened before, could the Minister please provide the House with more specific information regarding the recent oil spill on the Assiniboine River?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister for the Environment.

HON. G. LECUYER: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The member is, I gather, referring to the spill on the Assiniboine near the Aubrey Street outfall which occurred at the beginning of the month. There has been a boom installed and after that, a second one as the water levels were going down, and will stay in place until the river level reaches the normal summer level. The exact location or the source of that spill is still not known, but I want to also indicate to the member that it was established that it was from, again, the sewage outfall and, therefore, is primarily the City of Winnipeg responsibility, with which we are indeed assisting. But the problem is being resolved through a clean-up operation.

MADAM SPEAKER: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

SPEAKER'S RULING

MADAM SPEAKER: Before we move to Orders of the Day I would like to present a ruling to the House.

On May 9, 1986 the Honourable Member for St. Vital rose immediately after Oral Questions on a matter of privilege to complain about the use of the words "Blackmail and extortion" in a Winnipeg Free Press Frances Russell column of April 16th. The Honourable Member stated, respecting the words complained of, "I find those words offensive; they are libelous, they are defamatory and they reflect on the House and on me as a Member of the Legislature." The Honourable Member in his remarks also suggested that the newspaper's action in printing the article in question "amounts to a contempt of this House."

The Honourable Member concluded his remarks by moving:

THAT the matter of the Frances Russell column in the Free Press of April 16, 1986 be referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections.

and tabled a copy of the offending newspaper column.

I then took the matter under advisement to enable me to read the article in question, to review Hansard, and to examine relevant passages in the Parliamentary authorities.

Three essential conditions must be met when a matter of privilege is raised in order for the Speaker to rule that debate may proceed:

- (a) the matter must be raised at the earliest opportunity;
- (b) the Honourable Member raising the matter must conclude his or her remarks with a motion; and
- (c) sufficient evidence that a breach of the privileges of the House may have occurred must be presented to warrant giving the matter precedence over all other business then before the House;

The Speaker must decide whether these conditions have been met and, if satisfied that they have, it is then up to the House to debate the matter and to decide whether a breach of privilege has occurred.

In reviewing this matter, conditions (a) and (b) clearly have been met. With respect to condition (c), that is the presentation of prima facie evidence of a breach of privilege, I would like to draw the following relevant references from the authorities to the attention of honourable members:

Beauchesne (5th ed.) citation 16 reads in part: "the distinctive mark of a privilege is its ancillary character. The privileges of Parliament are rights which are 'absolutely necessary' for the due execution of its powers. They are enjoyed by individual Members, because the House cannot perform its functions without unimpeded use of the services of its Members; and by each House for the protection of its Members and the vindication of its own authority and dignity."

Maingot "Parliamentary Privilege in Canada," p. 191 states:

"Furthermore, parliamentary privilege is concerned with the special rights of members, not in their capacity as ministers, or as party leaders, whips, or parliamentary secretaries, but strictly in their capacity as members in the parliamentary work."

Bourinot (4th ed.) p. 51 states:

"So, libels or reflections upon members individually have also been considered as breaches of privilege which may be censured or punished by the House; but it is distinctly laid down by all the authorities: to constitute a breach of privilege such libels must concern the character or conduct of members in that capacity."

(as MLAs in their parliamentary work as distinct from a Minister, etc.)

Erskine May (20th ed.) on p. 159 states:

On 26 February 1701, the House of Commons resolved that to print or publish any libels reflecting upon any member of the House for or relating to his service therein, was a high violation of the rights and privileges of the House. Written imputations as affecting a Member of Parliament, may amount to breach of privilege, without, perhaps, being libelous at common law, but to constitute a breach of privilege a libel upon a Member must concern the character or conduct of the member in that capacity."

(as MLAs in their parliamentary work as distinct from a Minister, etc.)

at p. 152 Erskine May (20th ed.) also states:

"Reflections upon Members, the particular individuals not being named or otherwise indicated are equivalent to reflections on the House."

I conclude from this statement that conversely where a particular individual is named or otherwise identified, as is so in this case, a reflection on that Member is not a reflection on the House.

The Frances Russell column did not concern the character or conduct of the Honourable Member for St. Vital in his parliamentary work.

The Honourable Member's statement to the effect that the words complained of reflect on the House and on him as a Member is not supported by the references cited.

I must therefore conclude that the Honourable Member has failed to present prima facie evidence relating to the alleged breach of privilege.

I must therefore rule that his matter of privilege is not in order on the grounds that no prima facie case has been established.

COMMITTEE CHANGE

MADAM SPEAKER: Point of order? The Honourable Member for Emerson.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: I have a committee change, Madam Speaker, I would like to move.

I would like to move, seconded by the Member for Brandon West, that on the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources, Mr. Filmon for Mr. Mercier.

MADAM SPEAKER: It's an announcement to the House?

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Yes.

ORDERS OF THE DAY THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

MADAM SPEAKER: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Ellice, and the amendment thereto proposed by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Riel.

MR. G. DUCHARME: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to wish you well in your new position. However, I do not envy you in your position — according to a recent quote in a paper in a no man's land.

I would like, first of all, to congratulate all the members on their elections, especially the new ones, and I will call those the Class of '86. It is a privilege and, indeed, a pleasure to rise to speak, to make a contribution, to be part of the Gary Filmon Conservative team and participate in the Throne Speech. I believe the present members on this side of the House will soon be the government and will be the new direction as necessary for the years to come.

First of all, I would like to thank the people of Riel for their confidence in electing me. I feel especially proud to represent an area that was once the home of one of Manitoba's outstanding MLA's, the late Don Craik.

Madam Speaker, I am proud, as a former city councillor and school trustee to have contributed to the planning and successful growth in the St. Vital area, senior citizens' homes, crime prevention, community clubs, parks, schools, and I hope I can only carry on the expectations the people of Riel have placed in me.

Geographically, Riel is in the middle of the original City of St. Vital. In 1880, the R.M. of St. Boniface was formed; however, the name caused confusion with the Town of St. Boniface, and in 1903 the name was changed to St. Vital, originating from Bishop Vital Grandin. It is the homestead of the Louis Riel House, and for the benefit of the Member for St. Boniface, if he ever wants to recognize the MLA in the area, it is the home of the St. Amant Centre.

As a small businessman in this province for the last 27 years, I am especially concerned about the atmosphere of this present government toward small business. The Canadian Federation of Business has criticized the NDP administration for having the worst — and I say the worst — relations with small business

in any Canadian province. The federation, and I quote: "Never in the 14-year history of the federation, has the province stood out so dramatically by generating so many serious concerns." Would you believe that Manitoba was the only province in 1985 where consumer bankruptcies and business bankruptcies increased — in consumer bankruptcies, 658; and in business bankruptcies, 324? Would you believe since the NDP have been in power, 1,371 businesses have declared bankruptcy? That is one for every day that the NDP has been in power. Since 1981 private investment in Manitoba was decreased from 77 percent of all total investment to 71 percent of all total investment.

The Conference Board predicts that Manitoba's growth will lag behind the national growth with a growth rate of 2.9 in '86, in comparison to the expected national growth rate of over 4 percent.

Also, as a former councillor, I became aware of the decrease in the contribution of this municipal government as compared to other provinces. During this NDP administration there have been constantly higher, consistently higher, increased in taxes every year it has been in government, increases by over 60 percent. And this is caused by the interference of this particular Urban Affairs Department in dealing with our city matters, and it has been the biggest cause, their inability to keep hands off.

I am concerned with the Urban Affairs recent announcement that there will be no changes in the City of Winnipeg boundaries before the fall election. Although I appreciate the position they are now in, however, it was their delay in implementing that has caused this position. The reason for my concern, I represented the Seine Valley Ward, a southeast ward with a population of 35,000, compared to other wards adjoining at 15,000. The workload — I'll give you an example — at the last public hearing, zoning variance meeting, there were 39 hearings; 36 were in the Seine Valley Ward; there were three total hearings in the adjoining wards. I really think the people should have the advantage of a rep-by-pop, that was the original intention of this particular government when they set up The City of Winnipeg Act. I do not think that the present Minister and staff should have any difficulty rectifying this immediately.

Also, as a former school trustee, I discovered the problems faced by the local school boards dealing with this government. This NDP Government has not lived up to its promise to move forward 90 percent funding of school costs. Many boards, particularly areas of growth and population, will have to raise property taxes again to cover cost increases, a direct contribution to the government's 1981 promise that a larger share of education funding should come from the growth in taxes, as income and sales tax, rather than property taxes. Serious inequities will result.

We all know that our first priority is to the public school system; however, the NDP have also shown a lack of commitment and decisive direction in the area of private school funding. It was avoided during their party platform and again in the Throne Speech — no consideration.

I have seen, when I was on the school board locally, the quality of education in Manitoba's system decline and its continual problem for this government. As a

trustee at the local level, I have seen that this government's lack of leadership, this government's mismanagement cause a lack of cooperation and communication between teachers and parents, an inability in the system to allow parents' input and consultation.

At the city level, to further open government, a freedom of information was established. However, this government has been reluctant to hold itself accountable to the legislation. This act has been plagued with delays and excuses and is still not proclaimed.

I'm going to go back to some experiences — I guess it would be my first experience dealing with this particular government. Having participated in the kangaroo court of 1969, the Autopac Commission, the obvious bias of the members of the Auto Insurance Commission was unbelievable. The objectives of these hearings were to provide a public automobile insurance coverage at a rate which will support the benefits provided.

I would like to have you know, or read in a little article in the Tribune paper of Thursday, October 23, 1969 — the Tribune, that was my kind of paper. In that report, it says, "Pawley announces auto insurance study. Government Services Minister Howard Pawley announced today the province has set up a 3-man committee to study all aspects of auto insurance in the province and make recommendations to Cabinet." — (Interjection) — He did; he did.

Mr. Pawley said, "A further responsibility of the committee is to examine the possible introduction of a government auto insurance business." Which he did. Mr. Pawley said that if the government plan is started, it would be a non-profit scheme. A further quote from Mr. Pawley: "I don't believe government corporations should make profits."

So I say to you, First Minister, why have the profits not been returned to the shareholders through reductions to the taxpayers of the insurance system?

In Saskatchewan — and you always seem to be bragging about their particular automobile insurance scheme — an analysis of potential error margin in claims would exceed forecast in claims by more than 11 percent. Premiums were lowered by the Saskatchewan Rates Review Commission when its surplus reached \$60 million. One is forced to be critical of MPIC's \$71 million surplus.

Motorists are being charged unduly high premiums to generate excessive reserves. It has clearly contradicted its original mandate to provide Manitobans with the lowest possible cost of insurance.

As an employer of a small business, again, of approximately 15 employees, I am concerned about the dangerous precedence of the payroll tax now at 1.5 and probably in the near future, maybe in a week or so, it will be three.

I am concerned about the automatic increase at the whim of these types of Finance Ministers, considering the original tax was announced provincially without any private consultation with the Federal Government and certainly dampened already difficult federal-provincial relations. As well as it being a hidden tax, it is a tax on employment and does not fit at any time when the biggest issue is unemployment, jobs, especially the young people that we keep hearing from.

While the province gives grants to municipalities and schools to defray cost of taxes, it only results in more

inequity in the tax system. This is regressive. The largest burden is felt by the low income earner.

Health care. Thank goodness I have only had to visit and not stay in one of these hospitals lately. No wonder our present Health Minister seems a little reluctant to go. This government has been so preoccupied with cutting costs, it has put itself in a reactive rather than a proactive situation.

Quality care that the government maintains it continues to strive for, at best met minimal standards. The government has to deal with numerous critical health care situations as well as other chronic problems. Poor, aging equipment; understaffing; overcrowding in urban centres, and underutilization and complete neglect in the rural and northern communities.

In the St. Boniface Hospital, a hospital that we used to brag about when we were kids, and most of us probably had relatives that work in it, is probably the closest to my ward. There were over 800 concerns expressed by nurses in the hospital in regard to the inability to deliver adequate care, for the safety of their patients being in jeopardy. This was a 30 percent increase over the concerns expressed in 1983.

Again, the senior citizens of Riel have been in touch with me already on the recent announcement re Pharmacare. They are up in arms, as are all the seniors, as earlier indicated by one of our members. This government has already broken its promise to these senior citizens of not increasing it. Then it increased the deductible by 33 percent to \$100 from \$75.00. The increase will affect many people in their fifties and early sixties, those who depend the most on Pharmacare and are already having trouble making ends meet.

In the recent election, many people in my area could not understand the inability of this government to sit down and settle disputes with the chiropractors and not force the many Manitoba chiropractors to sue the MHSC for alleged breach by the government's failure to consult them before making changes to the coverage available to Manitobans. I say this is the wrong way to negotiate.

In the Throne Speech, the fairness and quality of life. Huh! This arrogant, self-righteous government acts like it is the only caring government around. Oh, they care all right; they care so much for the seniors, as I already mentioned about the Pharmacare deductible — they have raised that by 33 percent. They care for those tens of thousands of chiropractic patients who do not receive benefits they deserve. These people are being treated like second-class citizens. They care about showing Manitobans an open government; they care so much that they have issued Special Warrants of \$1.5 billion since their last Budget.

They have forgotten the unemployed; there are 22,000 more people unemployed now than there were when they were first elected in 1984 (sic).

They claim, in a recent Budget Speech, to care about small business and, again, I repeat — a bankruptcy for each day their government has been in power.

Their labour legislation is the worst in the country for a businessman. It is very easy for a union to certify and extremely difficult to decertify. The first contract legislation has tipped the scales of justice to force all the risk and responsibility on the management side and all that thus allows the unions to do as they please with no responsibilities of their own.

With regard to the Scientific Research Tax Credit plan — I guess I have to mention that because it was first brought to my attention by the Honourable First Minister approximately a year ago. He was the first one that told us at an official delegation when we asked for some monies, he said to us, "Well, have you heard about how this is affecting the taxpayers of Manitoba?" And us, "Oh, is that correct?" He said, "Yes, how can anyone call themselves a true Manitoban if they invest in this type of a tax scam?" Those was his words. Then his Finance Minister called it "legalized theft." But when the Members for Transcona and Radisson engaged in it, the Premier said that's all right, boys.

How hypocritical! In one sentence he is talking tax reform; in the next he is allowing his Ministers to take part in such a scheme.

If Manitobans were not the highest taxed province in Canada, people would not have the need to invest in such schemes. You created the market, Mr. Premier; this government and its sanctimonious holier-than-thou leader is a disgrace to the citizens of Manitoba.

This cynical Premier goes to the media and states that 200-and-some-odd jobs are going to be lost because of hard times. All along, he knew that no one was going to lose their job because of labour legislation, realizing what kind of labour legislation they just finished giving to the MGEA.

At every turn, this government blames its woes on the cutback of federal transfer payments. He doesn't want to admit that in 1986-87, Manitoba would receive the only supplement equalization, making it the only province singled out for extra Federal Government money. Every year more money is derived from the Federal Government. It happened in '82-83, '83-84, '84-85 and then again '85-86, and then we're still going to be, as I repeated earlier, again be receiving more monies in '85-86.

A MEMBER: More, not less.

MR. G. DUCHARME: More money! How can this Premier mislead the people of Manitoba by inferring that our province is getting less every year?

Women in our province must have the opportunity to work. The lack of facilities in our day care system has forced many of these women to go on the welfare roles making them lose their self-esteem and putting a stigma on their whole family. There are many private day care systems around that have been discriminated against by this hypocritical government. These establishments have lots of room, more than adequate facilities and well qualified workers, but this government will not allow the private day care facilities because of the operator's wish to probably make a profit. Well, since when is the word "profit" a bad word? I found in the last couple of days it seems to be here.

After reading this Throne Speech, I can see why this Rip Van Winkle Government is not clicking. It speaks of prudent expenditure management. It's amazing that this government with its record would talk about prudence; however, I must say, it's about time. In the past five years, this government has tripled — and we're probably going to hear more next week — the deficit of the previous 112 years with the lack of fiscal responsibility. Their poor management of the Manitoba

taxpayers' money has burdened the taxpayer with an over \$6,000 per capita debt.

There is no doubt that this government is creating jobs. Of this 106 people in senior office levels, 76 of them were created since this government took office to direct attention away from their own incompetence. They haven't even set up a fedbashing office.

Of course, there is the Jobs Fund. The political tool is a complete failure in terms of the long-term job creation. These green and white signs outlast the jobs and each job is a cost of approximately \$30,640.00. This government has no concrete economical development plans. They fail miserably at every economic turn, such as, Manfor, Flyer, their famous forgotten airline; an example of this incompetence in management is the hiring of the Manfor's CEO. Imagine, making \$150,000 a year plus bonuses, homes in The Pas and Winnipeg, nine weeks holidays annually, memberships to private clubs.

Then again, in Flyer, \$400,000 - they're supposed to be good managers in lieu of the wages because of the incorrect layoff notices; and their latest hiring of a defeated Cabinet Minister at \$55,000-plus annually to walk our halls and sit over there in the gallery with his former colleagues. Government involvement in business first got me involved in politics. Some years ago, during the earlier mentioned kangaroo court, on mentioning to the present Member for Selkirk that I was unsure of the future of my family, he suggested I find an alternate means of employment and one thing led to another and that is why I'm here today.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank him publicly for his encouragement for me being here. I look forward to contributing and completing my goal, only my goal is to sit on the right side of the Speaker with the rest of my colleagues and carrying out the job that governments were originally intended to do.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER, C. Santos: The Honourable Attorney-General.

HON. R. PENNER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, first of all, I would like to congratulate the Speaker and yourself, but particularly the Speaker, for her election to that pre-eminent position. She's already shown, but those of us who have worked with her knew, she would show, namely, her dedication, her intelligence; she has shown by her rulings that she is fair, that she is even-handed, that she is firm, that she is knowledgeable. I regret the ungracious comments of the Member for St. Norbert with respect to her rulings. I do not think they were called for.

I would also like to say very briefly, with respect to the election of the Speaker, that the failure of the Leader of the Opposition to nominate her as Speaker, no doubt there are remote precedents for that, but basically it demonstrated a lack of class. It was regrettable; it was ungracious; i. was uncalled for.

I'd like to say, with respect to new members. First of all, congratulations to all who have been elected, but particularly to the new members as they have, no doubt, only begun to learn it's a hard life. Some may find that it's not even worth breaking a leg over.

To the Opposition new members, a few words of advice - not to the old members, I believe that they're

beyond redemption. My advice to the Opposition new members is hunker down, you're in for the long haul. You know, that long haul for which you should hunker down is going to be made even longer, if I may suggest - with kindness mind you - by the way in which the Opposition has functioned under the last two leaders with whom I've had some experience - the present Leader of the Opposition, the former Leader of the Opposition. Their Opposition can best be characterized, and I believe I'm being fair, as negativism. Not criticism which is the legitimate function of the Opposition, but negativism. Indeed, that was nowhere better demonstrated as the basic approach of the Opposition than in the speech we just listened to from the newly elected Member for Riel. If he believes that is the role of the Opposition, that rag-bag collection, that cut-and-paste bit of negativism, then he is going to be sadly disappointed in that impossible dream of power, which he kept on talking about as the only coherent theme in his speech. The new elected member for Riel has a lot to learn about being a member of the Opposition.

Above all, what has characterized the Opposition in this House as long as I've been a member here is a lack of vision for Manitoba. For the use of the word "vision" I have no apologies, I may use it more than 23 times in this speech. The people of Manitoba know that the Opposition Party in this province has no vision. They know that the Tories in this House are, in effect, the major detractors of the achievements of this province. That, too, was reflected in the speech of the Member for Riel. Yes, a lack of vision plus mired in personal attacks. I must say I was singularly disappointed in the speech of the Member for Brandon West who showed that he, too, thinks that it is the job of the Opposition to alternate between detracting from the achievements of this province and personal attacks. If you think that that's what the role of the Opposition is, then indeed you're there for a very long time. So we are here and you are there; so my advice basically is, settle in and settle down. I sincerely hope you learn to be a good Opposition.

I want to say that I was impressed by the speech of the Member for Virden. I didn't agree with everything that the Member for Virden said, but the Member for Virden made an honest and, I think, an effective attempt to deal concretely with what he thought should be done in a number of areas. That was a good opposition speech and where we hear speeches of that kind, we will say so.

I want to tell them that we on this side know that we can learn from time to time from the opposition; and the record of the last Session will show that where constructive suggestions have been made to change legislation, we have done so. We certainly are not going to be a stubborn group that thinks that we have had the last word when it comes to the drafting of legislation or to the ideas in legislation.

So I say to you, to members of the Opposition, stand up for Manitoba, be proud not just of our 100,000 lakes and of our friendly people, that's easy enough; but be proud of our record in job creations where we have had either the lowest or the second lowest or the third lowest unemployment level in the country in the last three years; be proud of our record in housing where we have led the country in housing starts for the last

couple of years; be proud of our day care system which is acknowledged to be the best in the country; be proud of our justice system which in many significant areas is acknowledged to be the best in the country; be proud of the industrial peace which has characterized the employer-employee relationships in this country and leads the nation in that respect; be proud of our cultural institution; say those things and don't worry about the fact that it may here and there touch upon the achievements of this government. We, as a government, have said that those things touch upon the achievements of the people of Manitoba. Yes, we say we have contributed to that, and we want you to contribute to that.

I would like to congratulate the Mover and Seconder of the Motion in reply to the Speech from the Throne. They showed humanity and good humour, and it is clear that their contribution to the work of the government and the government caucus is going to be immense.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to thank the people of Fort Rouge who — despite many predictions of my early political demise, some from those who are no longer here — returned me to this House with a healthy 5 percent increase in the NDP share of the vote in Fort Rouge. I want to say that that is not something I regard as a personal vote, though I believe I have been a responsive and available MLA and I think that's very important. That's the first duty of those of us who are elected no matter what other duties we may have. We have to be available to our constituents; we have to be responsive to our constituents; we have to know what they are thinking, know what they are feeling, know what they are saying, and we have to respond.

No, that increased vote of the NDP in Fort Rouge was not a vote for myself but for the policies of the NDP Government in which I have had the honour to serve. I want to talk just briefly about the effect of those policies in Fort Rouge. There are more people working in Fort Rouge than was the case in 1981. The day care facilities in Fort Rouge — and it's tremendously important to the people in Fort Rouge because there is a very large community of families, recent immigrants to Canada, for example, in which both parents must work in order for them to establish their roots and establish their homes, who need day cares — the day care facilities in Fort Rouge have improved tremendously north of Portage and south of Portage. The cultural facilities, I take pride in the way in which we have been able to assist such institutions which are rooted in this part of the province, as the Gas Station Theatre, as the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and other cultural institutions of that character.

Above all, when one thinks of Fort Rouge, when I think of Fort Rouge, when I think of the effects of our government policies in Fort Rouge, I think of rent control first of all, then I think of housing, and the two are very closely related. The mention of these leads me, Sir, to a brief consideration of some of the achievements of our first term in office and of their significance. I do this because there are, here and there, some political commentators who will say, oh well, where is the vision; what have you done?

Let me just enumerate a very small sampling of some of the things, some of the legislation we have introduced in our first term in office. I start with the mention I have

already made of rent controls. There is no doubt that the rent control system, the rent control regime in Manitoba is the best in Canada. And yet one of the first major utterances of the Leader of the Opposition, after he was elected leader, was to attack that rent control system.

On February 14, 1984 — Hansard — he delivered a valentine for tenants. "Mr. Speaker," he said, "they bring in rent controls restricting people's right to own property and restricting people's right to a fair return on investment." That was his orientation. They have taken away people's freedom of choice and made them totally dependent on government for their protection and for their opportunity to live in rental accommodations. Significantly, the closer we approached an election, the less one heard from that side and from its party on our rent control, so much so that my Conservative opponent in Fort Rouge who — I must say, never engaged in personal attacks and I respected him for it — ran on our rent control program.

He should have referred to the rent control program that the Leader of the Opposition was responsible for when he was Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs when I was running for office in Fort Rouge and he was a Minister of the Crown administering their rent regulation program. Rents were increasing 35 percent, 40 percent, 100 percent and then he had the nerve on the 14th of February, 1984 to come in and deliver that Valentine Day's message to tenants.

A MEMBER: He was going to tax the tenants.

HON. R. PENNER: That's right. Do you remember that plan to tax the tenants?

Coupled with our rent control program, as I mentioned, is the most significant housing program in Canada. In the years in which we have been government, and I include starts predicted for this year, a grand total of 15,400 units of housing, both private and public sector housing, have been commenced — 15,400 units. Think of that in terms, for example, of employment — 11,400 full-time equivalent direct and indirect jobs. So there is a relationship between a profoundly important social program, housing, affordable shelter, employment and that's what we keep on saying; that this is the relationship that one must build between programs and between social needs and the economy — 11,400 units. Significantly, as a result of government initiatives, and basically what we are talking about is the role of government in relationship to the economy and in relationship to the province as a whole. For the first time in a dozen years or more, the private sector — because of what the public sector did north of Portage — is moving in. I am not talking about the North of Portage development; I am talking north of Ellice which was considered to be the worst part of the core — north of Ellice — the Shelter Corporation and other private developers have now gone in and are adding significantly to the housing stock where they wouldn't touch it. They only went in when government played the role that government should play.

I mentioned those. I mentioned day care where we established the best standards legislation but, in addition to standards legislation — and, Madam Speaker, you played a very important role in the

development of that legislation and the consultation with people in this city and in the province on that legislation — we not only developed standards legislation, but we added to the stock of day care spaces to the point where, by the end of our first term in office, I believe there were 13,000 spaces available where, at the beginning, there was something between 1,000 and 2,000 spaces available. There is, in any event, a tremendous increase in the spaces available and that now links and finds a significant echo in the Throne Speech as to what we propose to do in our next term of office.

Seat belt legislation — and that took some courage — we were under severe attack but we persisted. We knew we were right; we are right. That is in place and it is working.

Election finances — I believe that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology has already spoken on that particular issue, something which, in fact, enhances the democratic process.

Conflict of interest legislation — we all remember the debate in this House on a number of key issues with respect to conflict of interest, and I'm happy to note that the Premier has reaffirmed our intention to bring in significant strengthening of that legislation some time during the course of this Session. I hope to be associated with it.

The Law Enforcement Review Act attacked as if it were meant to punish the police when, in fact, the police associations and individual police officers now admit that it is a fair system and, indeed, enhances their ability to carry out their duty.

The Jobs Fund, labelled by some over there as the fraud fund — in fact, it has produced thousands of long-term jobs in a variety of innovative ways. I spoke about Labour Relations. The first contract legislation attacked by the Member for Brandon West — some Opposition Labour Critic he's going to be — has lauded the model derived from British Columbia where it's still in place, despite the Conservative nature of that government, from federal equivalent type of legislation and in every place first contract legislation has worked. It will work in Manitoba, we'll see to it that it works in Manitoba.

Equality rights — Manitoba was the first province to begin to look at our own statutes to make sure, long before Section 15 of the Charter was proclaimed, to make sure that we lived up to our obligations with respect to the Charter's promise of equality rights. For example, Madam Speaker, in this last Session we not only introduced specific equality rights legislation as part of our Charter package, but we introduced significantly pay equity legislation about which there is not an inconsiderable degree of ambivalence on that side of the House, and we look forward to see how they rationalize their approach to pay equity as our program develops, both in the public sector and in the private sector.

In terms of pension benefits we brought equality rights to bear specifically in terms of removing sex discrimination with respect to premiums, with respect to plan, with respect to payouts.

In terms of human rights, for which the Member for River Heights has made some criticism, we amended the legislation significantly — not significantly enough. There's more to be done. We have enhanced the program with the addition of additional resources.

Freedom of Information, yes I, too, join all of those who hope — and that includes everybody on this side of the House — that we can accelerate the preparatory work that is to be done in order that it can be proclaimed.

But, you know, it lies ill in the mouth of members opposite to criticize us; we, in fact, brought in the legislation. I have before me — I'm not going to spend a great deal of time on it — the record from Hansard of what happened in the years '77 to '80-81 when the now Minister of Energy and Mines, then Member for Transcona, introduced a resolution that this matter be referred to a Standing Committee of the House in order to develop some knowledge of what should be done with respect to freedom of information. They, as government, first of all, insisted on an amendment to that resolution that the government only be required to consider the advisability of referring it to a Committee of the House. There's courage! Then, whenever the Member for St. Norbert, then the Attorney-General, was asked what are you doing about freedom of information, he said, don't bother me we're still considering the advisability of referring it to a Committee of the House.

In fact, they never referred to a Committee of the House at all, they never even got as far as doing that, and why? Well, among other reasons, the then Premier of the province, subsequently Leader of the Opposition, Sterling Lyon, insisted that it was his concern that freedom of information paved the way for subversive activities. It's in the record, that was his abiding concern. So, it lies ill in the mouth of the members of the Opposition to chastise us about freedom of information. We brought in a piece of legislation which still stands as the best in the country, and we'll wait to see about the federal review of its legislation, we may bring in amendments to strengthen our own. We will proclaim it and we will proclaim it just as soon as we are able to get the file schedules and the access guide in order.

What emerges from this very brief review of our first term in office, Madam Speaker, is vision, a social democratic vision of a fair — and I make no apologies — a just society in which the central role of government in fulfilling its responsibility, its mandate to make sure that there are jobs, to make sure that there is fiscal management, even to the point of incurring a deficit to make sure that we get over the rough times; that we maintain and strengthen, even in rough times, the social safety net, that central role of the government has been part of the fulfilment of that vision of a fair society and of a just society.

You know, Madam Speaker, from time to time — although we don't hear it so much anymore — members opposite have said that we don't know how to run a peanut stand. That's right, we don't know how to run a peanut stand, but we sure as hell know how to run a province.

I want to refer, Madam Speaker, of course, to the Throne Speech. Madam Speaker, I'm proud of that document. You know, the Member for River Heights, others in this House, some brilliant editorialists, have referred to the Speech from the Throne as being gutless, as a rehash of election platform. What does that tell us about their views of political morality? If that Throne Speech does nothing more than cause the people of Manitoba to reaffirm their badly damaged faith in the

credibility of the political process — damaged because of what's happening in Ottawa — it will have played a tremendously important role. I would have thought that the fulfilment of election promises is the first thing, the First Throne Speech in a new Session of the Legislature should set about doing. I would have thought that the test of that Throne Speech is, in fact, what it says about what it has promised because a government is elected on the basis of what it promised and, if it can't set about the work right as soon as it's elected of doing what it promises to do, then it doesn't deserve to be government. That is a test of political morality from which Honourable Member for Emerson you can learn a great deal. You'll learn not so much from your federal colleagues.

There's more than simply the fulfilment of election promises. Substantively, what that Throne Speech contains is something, not only we as a government can be proud of, but the people of Manitoba can be proud of. I contributed to it, as I have contributed to the Government of Manitoba so splendidly in the past four years.

Look what the Throne Speech, for example, says in terms of the justice system. It talks about the establishment of a crime prevention centre to assist community groups, to encourage other community groups, with respect to a very important aspect of the justice system crime prevention. It promises, and we will deliver in this Session, a justice for the victims of crime bill. You know, during the election campaign when that announcement was made, the Leader of the Opposition said what, you're going to tax criminals? This is terrible. He quickly became silent on that issue when it became known that just the day the writs were issued, when I happened to be in Vancouver attending a federal-provincial territorial meeting of Ministers of Justice — you remember that — I had in fact, because it was on the agenda, said that it was our intention to proceed . . .

A MEMBER: And what did the feds say?

HON. R. PENNER: And the feds said, and every other province lauded us as taking an initiative that no one else had taken, they said, that's splendid, and they're all looking at the details of what we are doing. They are coming down from Ottawa to assist us in the drafting of that legislation to set up a model.

Again, in the Throne Speech, we talked about a law foundation, and details will be forthcoming, but this is a way of encouraging the legal research, legal education, legal aid. We have talked about something that is tremendously important, an expansion of the maintenance enforcement system — and I give credit to the Member for St. Norbert who played an important role in the establishment of that system when he was the Attorney-General — we are now going to expand it in rural Manitoba. There is an allocation, Madam Speaker, that will be seen when the Estimates are tabled, of significant resources to make sure that can happen.

We have announced measures to deal with abuse, particularly the abuse of the elderly, further measures with respect to charter compliance, and we have recently announced a significant improvement in the

legal aid system in this province. Most significantly, Madam Speaker, we have raised the financial eligibility guidelines to vastly increase the number of people who potentially are eligible for legal aid, and we are going to be able to do so within a reasonable allocation of resources.

For example, just as one example, the present gross income threshold for a family of seven is \$17,600 gross income. We are raising it, Madam Speaker, to \$28,000; that's a very very significant increase and will improve the accessibility of the justice system to a very significant number of people. Yes, Madam Speaker, I say it again and I say it without apologies, we have a vision of fairness, of equality, of balance in the justice system as well as in other parts.

Earlier I referred to personal attacks and I want to just say a word about that. A personal attack directed to a very significant extent against the former Member for Springfield is tasteless. I am going to keep track, incidentally, of how often they will have spent that \$55,000 before the end of this Session. They have already spent it 10 times and I expect that they will spend it about 20 more times before this Session is through. Yet its reflection of our priority with respect to rural infrastructure is what they really should be talking about. You know they don't like it because they seem to harbour the notion, first of all, that they are the legitimate governing party of Manitoba — well, you would think that being losers four out of five times they would have forgotten about that — but they seem to harbour the notion, Madam Speaker, that they are the only group that has the interest of rural Manitoba at heart. Do you remember how you ridiculed one of the greatest politicians in this province in recent times, Pete Adam, when he was Minister of Municipal Affairs — I say that very carefully — who brought in Main Street Manitoba, Main Street Pete, you know, you all laughed — (Interjection) — how many communities?

A MEMBER: Dozens and dozens.

HON. R. PENNER: No, more than dozens of communities have benefited significantly from that program. Now we are looking at something even more important, the whole question of rural infrastructure. We have retained a person who you know knows rural Manitoba, its communities and people like no one else in this province probably, and what do you do? You use it as the occasion for a personal attack. You don't like what we are doing and you use the personal attack in order to deal with it. Yes. And your personal attack on the Minister of Energy and Mines who sought, as no doubt many in this House have, to minimize his tax legally.

I would like to see the cash flow of the Member for Morris, for example, in terms of how much he actually produces by cash income as a farmer and how much he actually pays tax on, and he probably uses, as did the Leader of the Opposition . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

A MEMBER: Well, you come over to my place and I'll be able to show you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

A MEMBER: Well, Madam Speaker, we don't have to listen to this.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please. I presume that the honourable members like to have the attention of other honourable members when they are making their contribution to this debate, and I expect that they will give all honourable members the same consideration. If they are not interested in listening, I am sure they can find other things to do this morning outside the Chamber.

HON. R. PENNER: The Leader of the Opposition uses dividends tax credits; it's legal for him to do so. Who knows, even an analysis it may even be appropriate for him to do so. We'll look at that when we look at the question of reforming the tax system.

I want to say this: In my view — well, it's not only in my view by far — Manitobans owe a debt of gratitude to the Minister of Energy and Mines. He assumed that portfolio just when the recession hit and the resource industries of this province took a tremendous hit. The world market for metals plummeted, northern mining communities were in trouble, there was bad news day in and day out, and yet he stuck to it as Minister of Energy and Mines and he looked at the possibility of the development of the resource sector of this province and he, in the work that he has done, which in many ways has been brilliant and imaginative, has produced a power resource development portfolio for this province which will bring prosperity to this province for decades and decades, and that's what you don't like.

You see, you have this dream, this impossible dream of power; that's your only vision. The Member for Riel reflected that, the Member for Brandon West reflected that — we can hardly wait to sit on that side of the House — and yet they see the prosperity of this province unfolding and, in part, because of the resource development initiatives that have been led by the Minister of Energy and Mines.

Yes, do you remember their megapuffery in order to be elected, and it turned out to be a hollow sham, a paper tiger? And yet we have a person in the person of the Member for Transcona, the Minister of Energy and Mines, who has done the work and you don't like it. So what do you find? You find a personal attack. You know, thousands are presently working on or with respect to Limestone. That will be the case with Conawapa.

Let me say this about the potash industry. Your defence of Saskatchewan's interest is shameful. You can find nothing better to do than say, why are we doing this? Saskatchewan is doing it better than we can. That, in essence, is what you are saying. I would wonder if that would be your approach if there was in fact an NDP Government in power in Saskatchewan.

Yes, there will be a potash mine in Western Manitoba, Madam Speaker. It will be a world class mine and there will be hundreds, if not thousands, employed as a result of that development for which the Minister of Energy and Mines has taken the leadership. Attack him personally, if you will, but you're not going to fool us, you're not going to fool the people of Manitoba as to what your real objectives are.

Yes, Madam Speaker, we have a vision; we have a vision. In the words of the old working-class song, "we

have a glowing dream of how fair this world can seem when each person can live his or her life secure and free," a dream, no. A vision of Manitobans at work; of young Manitobans having equal opportunity to all facets of the educational system, including higher education; of the aboriginal people, finally after 400 years of neglect and exploitation, being recognized as those who have occupied the land from time immemorial and have certain basic rights with respect to their land, with respect to which we are the visitors. They were never a conquered people though they were treated as a conquered people. We will fulfil Manitoba as seen as being in the lead of attempting to resolve the constitutional problems associated with the granting of aboriginal rights.

Yes, we have that dream; yes, we have that vision. It's a vision of a social democratic Manitoban. That's what I'm working for; that's what the Minister of Energy and Mines is working for; that's what we on this side of the House are working for, working with the people; and that's what we will achieve — a social democratic Manitoba — a fair society, a just society, one in which the kinds of inequalities which we still see are reduced or eliminated. And if we don't see it in my lifetime, then we will see it in the lifetime of my children and for your children and your grandchildren, for whom finally it's all about.

If you don't have that vision, let me say this to you sincerely and soberly, if you don't have that vision; if all you can think of is how quickly can you get into power; if all you can think of is how can we attack the government next; if all you can dream of in your caucus is the kind of questions that will get at somebody personally; if all you can do is what the Member for Riel did, and the Member for Brandon West, is launch a completely negative attack on the achievements of this province, the people of Manitoba will continue to recognize you for what you are — an opposition party, but not a good one.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MADAM SPEAKER: Before recognizing the Honourable Member for River East, I would like to draw attention of members to visitors in the gallery, 100 students of Grade 9 from Garden Valley Collegiate, under the direction of Miss Heather Hinchcliffe. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Rhineland.

I would like to welcome you all to the Legislature this morning.

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE (cont'd)

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River East.

MRS. B. MITCHELSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would, at first, like to wish you well, as others have done, in your new capacity. As one who is undertaking new responsibilities, I can empathize with the apprehension one experiences when faced with new duties and new challenges.

I would also like to congratulate the returning members of the House on their re-election, and I would

especially like to congratulate the large numbers of new members on both sides of the House who have been chosen by the people of Manitoba as their representatives. As one of 19 new members in the House, I look forward to the Thirty-third Legislature. I know that we will all be working very hard to "learn the ropes," to become familiar with the ebb and flow of debate, and to participate fully and effectively in the legislative process, especially as we will be addressing many important issues vital to the social, health and economic prosperity of our province.

Madam Speaker, I would also like to express my appreciation to my leader and to my colleagues on this side of the House for their kind words of welcome and encouragement. I am proud to be one of the eight women in this House, but, more importantly, I am proud to be one of the three women representing the Progressive Conservative Party. I am sure I can speak for our 11 new members when I say that we look forward to the months ahead, knowing we can count on assistance and support from our more experienced and very competent colleagues.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the electorate of River East for their confidence in me, and to assure my constituents that I will serve them to the best of my ability, and that I will make myself accessible to their specific needs.

I would like to begin, Madam Speaker, with a brief sketch of my constituency and, in doing so, indicate areas of particular concern to the citizens of River East.

River East is a suburban constituency with more than 18,000 eligible voters, which represents the third largest provincial constituency, and it is situated on the northeastern fringe of Winnipeg. The River East population is characterized by diversity, from labourers to professionals, from housewives to students, from renters to homeowners, from preschoolers to pensioners, from new Canadians to first, second, third and fourth generation Canadians, and all play an integral part in defining its distinct character.

During the recent, and therefore not forgotten election, I had the opportunity to speak with many residents in River East. As alluded to earlier, there is no single description which characterizes the individuals in River East and, indeed, there is no single issue which concerns my constituents. Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, the people of River East have not been provided with an opportunity to grow and develop, and they have not been given the chance to apply their industry and their energy to planning for the future. There has been very little activity in River East in the form of government assistance and support since the formation of this constituency in 1981. In my opinion, River East has been short-changed by this New Democratic Government.

River East is a dynamic community that is growing, developing and changing direction. In the past two years, there have been approximately 900 housing starts. Young families, with faith in Manitoba, have made the financial commitment of buying a home and "putting down roots in River East." As I met with scores of these optimistic individuals, several themes emerged — several areas of concern were expressed. They spoke about education and opportunities for their children; they shared their fears about rising taxes, in particular, property taxes, and in the economic future of Manitoba.

Many of the people I talked with have stretched their financial resources to the limit to purchase a home, and their fears are quite justified. I understand that River East residents will have to bear the burden of immediate, substantial property tax increases. I would urge this present government to proclaim Section 2 of Bill 105 as a protective measure against inordinate increases.

For many young families just starting out two incomes are a dire necessity and, where there are young children involved, it is necessary to utilize day care facilities. Manitoba's \$21 million day care budget makes it the second highest per capita in Canada behind Alberta, yet obtaining quality day care is still limited. River East constituents can certainly attest to that. They are less than fortunate when it comes to day care facilities. There was only one full day care facility which provides 40 spaces for children between the ages of 2 and 5 years of age and one school age day care facility which provides 31 spaces for children between the ages of 5 and 12 years of age, located within our constituency's boundaries. This is but another example of how River East has been short-changed. It is obvious to myself, but most particularly to the women in my constituency who require additional day care facilities, that this government must change direction. The solution to this dilemma is to allow and encourage the private sector to become involved once again in the provision of day care facilities.

These same young families expressed their concerns to me with regard to the quality of education in Manitoba. Many of the parents of River East opt to send their children to private schools for various reasons — perhaps because of disillusionment with the current public schools' quality of education — perhaps because of strong religious beliefs — perhaps because special heritage language programs are more readily available — and perhaps because they desire to enrich their children's lives to cultural and ethnic programs. Government should be prepared to enhance support to these private schools. We must prepare our youth for the challenges they will face in the future.

As a mother, wife, professional, and rather "new" politician, I too empathize with the issues affecting women and I believe they are of critical importance to the future of our province. A number of my constituents are working mothers and in some instances, are single parents. These women must be allowed to achieve full social and economic equality with men. It is our responsibility to ensure that women have improved opportunity for education and for the upgrading of skills.

Of course, at the other end of the spectrum, there is a significant senior citizen and pensioner population. These residents tell me a different story. Their concerns focus on health care and being able to enjoy their years in security and with dignity. Some of the concerns related to me by seniors are most disturbing. Real incomes that have been ravaged by inflation or medical needs that appear to have a low priority. The aged must be able to enjoy the greatest possible levels of security, independent and continued opportunities to participate in and contribute to the life of our community. Senior citizens must have services made available to them in order that they may stay in their own homes with a sense of safety and security. I was encouraged to hear

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that the government is committed to the expansion of Home Care facilities. This is indeed an area in which improvements and additional government funding is required.

In November of 1981, the Honourable Premier of Manitoba was quoted as saying, "Our priority for Pharmacare is expanded service, not higher fees for Manitobans." I find this particularly disturbing in light of the most recent increase in our seniors' Pharmacare deductible which was announced immediately after the election by the Honourable Minister of Health. This appalling 50 percent increase for seniors is really unwarranted and certainly not indicative of a government whose campaign slogan was "Stand Up for Manitobans." We must not lose sight of our seniors' concerns and let more pressing issues occupy our time and energy.

The Throne Speech stated that, "Manitoba has a diverse economy with a strong and vibrant small business sector. Historically this sector of our economy has been responsible for the creation of the majority of jobs in Manitoba." River East is an example of but one constituency in which small business plays a most integral part of our province's economy. In order for these small businesses to produce and prosper, they must hire employees. Madam Speaker, hiring employees is one of the best methods I know of to help reduce unemployment. Why then does this government penalize business for this practice by assessing a 1.5 percent payroll tax? For the good of our province's economy, and more importantly to enhance the opportunities for our young people to prosper in Manitoba, I urge the government to rescind this 1.5 percent payroll tax immediately.

Additionally, steps must be taken to remove the unnecessary paperwork and complex regulations that burden small business. I further recommend a review of the anti-business pro-labour legislation which currently exists. There's an imbalance in the current legislation that must be addressed in order for small business to flourish. Small business must be provided with the kind of assistance that ensures job security and job creation.

A further issue, Madam Speaker, which is of concern to my constituency is the lack of access to other parts of Winnipeg from North Kildonan. River East's main thoroughfare, Henderson Highway, is one of the most congested of Winnipeg's main arteries. You have only to travel this thoroughfare once to appreciate River East's commuters are frustrated with the continuous heavy traffic. I'm certain that the Honourable Ministers' opposite will recall my predecessor, a member of the current government, rising in this Assembly and questioning the then Honourable Minister of Urban Affairs if he would enter into discussions with the City of Winnipeg to cost-share a bridge connecting Henderson Highway to Main Street.

I am also certain that the then Honourable Minister of Urban Affairs will recall giving a favourable response to the former Member for River East. I trust, Madam Speaker, that I can count on the support of the new Honourable Minister of Urban Affairs, whose constituency borders mine and whose constituents will also benefit, to immediately begin discussions with the City of Winnipeg for cost-sharing of this desperately needed river crossing. Especially, Madam Speaker, in

light of the fact that the City of Winnipeg has placed this project in their five-year planning document as was recommended by this present Provincial Government.

A second major transportation concern is the incompletion of the Perimeter Highway. Once again, the people of River East and North Kildonan have been short-changed. Why should this be the only area of the city in which the Perimeter Highway has not been completed? I am also convinced that members present are aware of the horrendous traffic problems on Highway 59, or more commonly known as Lagimodiere Boulevard, as a direct result of this highway being utilized as a temporary part of the Perimeter Highway.

It is particularly disturbing to see that portions of the existing Perimeter Highway have been in existence for so long that they now require continuous upgrading and repair when the northeast section of this highway has yet to be completed. My question is, Madam Speaker, what does the present government have in mind regarding the completion of this said Perimeter Highway?

As the appointed deputy critic for health care, I can assure my colleagues on both sides of the House that I will take my responsibilities most seriously. As one who spent many years working in the health care system, I believe I understand the concerns of my River East constituents, especially in the terms in the delivery of health care services.

In 1968, an 18-acre site was purchased on what is now Concordia Avenue and Molson Avenue and planning was begun on the new 200-bed hospital. The bed count was subsequently reduced to 132 beds under the administration of this New Democratic government.

May I remind you, Madam Speaker, that every other community hospital in this city is larger than Concordia Hospital. The Grace Hospital has 309 beds; Victoria Hospital, 260; the Misericordia, around 400, and Seven Oaks, 328. The new reduced bed Concordia Hospital, our community hospital, was officially opened on November 23, 1974. It serves the northeast quadrant of the City of Winnipeg, which currently has a population in excess of 110,000. This figure is projected to increase to 127,000 by 1996 and including East St. Paul and Springfield Municipalities, the population is projected to be 140,000. The primary service area, three times the size of Brandon, is bounded by the city perimeter to the north, the Red River to the west, Nairn Avenue to the south, Transcona to the east, and eastern Manitoba, especially the Rural Municipalities of East St. Paul and Springfield.

Until 1983, this community hospital basically offered full services to our community. The closure of the obstetrical unit of this hospital in 1983 by the current government was devastating to the board of directors and, more importantly, to the area, particularly in view of the fact that the initial reason for establishing Concordia Hospital was to provide maternity services. The Concordia Hospital treats over 30,000 patients annually in the emergency department, third only to the Health Sciences Centre and St. Boniface Hospital. Construction was recently completed on the expansion of this badly needed emergency department but this is not enough. Recently there have been negotiations to add 60 extended care beds. Madam Speaker, Concordia Hospital does not need extended care beds. The hospital and, more importantly, the community

needs acute care beds. This hospital is not yet providing our community with the services required.

Concordia must provide psychiatric treatment programs in addition to the present part-time services of a psychiatrist. It is the only community hospital in Winnipeg without adequate psychiatric services.

Our need for ultrasound and nuclear medicine is evident. A case in point, the Concordia Hospital Foundation, through its own fund raising ventures, has recently just purchased some badly needed ultrasound equipment.

In 1981, the current government made a commitment to health care in Manitoba. They have cut and rationed services. Today, personal care home fees are 54 percent higher than in 1981, even though inflation has been just 28 percent. As a prime example, River East constituency has only 81 personal care beds to service our seniors. I understand the current government does not encourage private care facilities to help ease the burden on the current overcrowding in our hospitals. I personally know some of my constituents who are willing to invest capital in private care facilities. Such private care facilities would create job opportunities for Manitobans and would boost Manitoba's sagging economy. How, then, can this government, the government of the people, refuse to permit licensing of private nursing homes which would enrich the quality of life for our needy seniors. We have a crisis situation of overcrowding in our hospitals and we have had for over four years. Hospital administrators and nursing staff are worried about deaths being laid at their doorsteps. Part of this overcrowding is due to the fact that the seniors are brought to emergency departments and left there, Madam Speaker, by families who are no longer able to cope and have no other alternatives.

Madam Speaker, two viable alternatives are increased home care and increased respite care, which would relieve some of the burden of these concerned families and would also go a long way to alleviate the overcrowding in our hospitals. In my opinion, there does not seem to be any comprehensive or long-term planning in health care in Manitoba. It is one thing to boast about the fact that Manitobans pay no medical fees, but it is intolerable and completely unacceptable that this so-called free care is substandard and too often not available. How can those who state that they stand up for Manitoba be proud of the fact that patients must spend up to 48 hours on stretchers in emergency departments waiting for beds? I also question, Madam Speaker, the effectiveness of this health care system when one hears of patients with serious illnesses who have to wait up to six months for elective surgery. I feel confident, Madam Speaker, that no one in this House and, in particular, the Honourable Minister of Health, can say that this is an acceptable situation.

The current government's accusations that the Federal Government's reduction in transfer payments will damage the level of health care cannot be

substantiated. In fact, the converse is true. Initially, Manitoba would have received \$408 million as a supplementary payment, but in the 1985-1986 fiscal year, it will receive an additional \$50 million, and in 1986-1987 an additional \$65 million.

Over the next five years, Manitoba will be receiving more money from the Federal Government for health care, not less. How can this government on one hand cry for federal assistance and on the other hand refuse to allow private investment to help ease our financial problems in the health care field? I would strongly urge this government to develop an overall health care facility, a medical technology strategy, a human resource strategy, and more effective preventative capabilities within the health care services system. Enhanced mental health services throughout Manitoba, and the development of a health research strategy must also become top priorities. I look forward with anticipation to new legislation and creative solutions in this vital area.

Madam Speaker, many times before and since March 18 I've been asked, "Why enter the political arena?" It's not an unusual question. I'm sure many of the members present today have been asked the same thing. I'm equally sure that the responses are varied and reflective of particular interests. For me, Madam Speaker, the answer is quite simple. I want what is best for my constituents in River East and what is best for all Manitobans.

I don't see this to be a contradictory response — one segment of the population cannot prosper at the expense of the rest — one region cannot grow if the remainder is allowed to wither and flounder. The concerns of the aged cannot be sacrificed for the needs of the young. With these principles in mind, the most effective way to achieve a fair and just society is to work within the legislative structure. That, Madam Speaker, is why I entered politics.

Earlier in my opening remarks, I alluded to the fact that for too long River East has been short-changed. The impact of decisions made or not made in this House have been driven home to me in no uncertain terms. During the next weeks and months, important decisions will be made; decisions that will affect the lives of all Manitobans. Perhaps I am naive, Madam Speaker, but I have faith in our political institutions — faith in the belief that we in this House really do want what is best for our constituents and for all Manitobans.

This observation may cause the cynical to smile and the disillusioned to "nod knowingly." If so, I do not apologize. I am proud to be a Progressive Conservative. I am proud to be a member of this Assembly and I am proud to represent the constituents of River East.

Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The hour being 12:30 p.m., the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 2:00 p.m. Tuesday next.