



Fourth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

41 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature**

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	Liberal
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
CHEEMA, Gulzar	The Maples	Liberal
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	Liberal
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Cliff	Interlake	NDP
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	NDP
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Liberal
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
GRAY, Avis	Crescentwood	Liberal
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	NDP
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	NDP
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
NEUFELD, Harold	Rossmere	PC
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PALLISTER, Brian	Portage la Prairie	PC
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	NDP
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	NDP
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	PC
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP
<i>Vacant</i>	Rupertsland	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 8, 1993

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Peter Unik, Tom Partridge, Allan Smith and others requesting the Family Services minister (Mr. Gilleshammer) to consider restoring funding for the friendship centres in Manitoba.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Val Shorting, Gerry Cadman, Rod Freeman and others requesting the Family Services minister (Mr. Gilleshammer) to consider restoring funding for the friendship centres in Manitoba.

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Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Darryl Livingstone, Tanya Johnson, Danielle Fournier and others requesting the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) to consider restoring funding for what was an excellent program, the student social allowances program.

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Wally Stewart, R. Bjornsson, Jean Jacques and others requesting the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) to consider restoring funding of the student social allowances program.

* * *

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Loretta Gott, Frank Genaille, Gordon Ferland and others requesting that the Family Services minister (Mr. Gilleshammer) consider restoring funding to friendship centres in Manitoba.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Martindale). It complies with the privileges and practices of the House and

complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS Manitoba has the highest rate of child poverty in the country; and

WHEREAS over 1,000 young adults are currently attempting to get off welfare and upgrade their education through the student social allowances program; and

WHEREAS Winnipeg already has the highest number of people on welfare in decades; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has already changed social assistance rules, resulting in increased welfare costs for the City of Winnipeg; and

WHEREAS the provincial government is now proposing to eliminate the student social allowances program; and

WHEREAS eliminating the student social allowances program will result in more than a thousand young people being forced onto city welfare with no means of getting further full-time education, resulting in more long-term costs for city taxpayers.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) to consider restoring funding of the student social allowances program.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Budget

Property Tax Credit

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier some questions dealing with the budget and the budget statements released in the House.

It has been reported that the \$114 million that represents the revenue increases through a reduction in property tax credits and the tax measures introduced by the government would

have been equivalent to a rise in the provincial income tax of 5.7 points or an increase of 1.4 percent in the provincial sales tax. In light of this report, I wonder whether the Premier would tell Manitobans, does he feel the way he has applied these revenue increases in property tax credits—does he feel these have been applied in a fair way to Manitobans?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Yes, Mr. Speaker.

* (1335)

Mr. Doer: I am glad the Premier has confirmed the 5.7 percentage increase in the rise in the tax equivalent, or the 1.4 percent.

Budget Property Tax Credit

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): My question to the Premier is: How much of the \$53 million in property tax reductions comes from the minimum provision for property tax, and how does that fit with the Premier's description of a fair and compassionate budget?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to say with accuracy—I asked the same question of the officials in Taxation. They said it depends which measure you want to look—[interjection] Well, for the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), of course, who is such an expert at filling out the T1C-1 Manitoba form, he would not recognize that all of these credit benefits and indeed the property tax, they are all woven together on that form. So it depends which area he wants to look at first.

I can say roughly the impact, the \$53 million, in rough terms, half of it is as a result of the reduction in the property tax credit, and the other half of it is a result of the new definitions associated with the application of income that now has to be taken into account for tax credit purposes, not for income tax purposes but for tax credit purposes.

Budget Property Tax Credit

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Our calculations are, and that is why we asked the government, that some \$23 million of the changes in the property tax credit system arise from a change in a provision, a new introduction of a minimum tax for property taxpayers in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, we have looked through a number of examples across the province, and we are getting a number of phone calls from people, from seniors, from others, who cite the fact that this \$250 minimum will represent a tremendous burden on low-income people. Some 25,000 people making under \$20,000 a year will actually now have their property taxes going up by two or three times because of the minimum property tax provision from the government.

I would like to know from the government: Does it still consider it fair for a person in Transcona who paid \$75 in taxes last year because of their \$400 property tax now, with the minimum, will pay 230 percent more under the minimum tax provisions of the provincial government?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, what is really interesting is that this individual, who so loudly condemns every individual item that he can pick out of the budget, will not give an alternative as to what he would have done, lacks the courage or lacks the ability to come up with an alternative. When asked pointblank by reporters, repeatedly, he says he does not have any alternatives. But he has lots of criticism. What we can, of course, assume is that the shadow mouthpiece for the New Democratic Party, the Choices people, are the alternative that really is the Gary Doer New Democratic alternative. That would be an \$800-million deficit instead of this deficit, as well as an additional increase of a couple of hundred million dollars in taxation.

That is the alternative that the New Democrats offer through their shadow group, Choices, because they do not have the courage or the understanding to provide the answers themselves.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the Premier did not answer the question of fairness. A person like Terry Stratton gets a \$75 increase in their property taxes. A senior in Transcona, somebody in Burrows, somebody in Broadway, many people in rural Manitoba now are going to get three and four times that amount of taxes.

Budget Property Tax Credit

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): You know, most people in this country are calling for a minimum corporate tax. What we see by the Tories opposite is a minimum tax on people. Those are the policies of this Premier.

I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon), how many people making under \$20,000 a year will now see their taxes go to \$250 as a minimum tax? How many people making under \$20,000 a year will see that?

* (1340)

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the member was wrong in his facts. He said there would be a \$23-million global impact on those who now would have applied against them, a \$250 threshold before property tax credits take effect.

An Honourable Member: You did not know a few minutes ago.

Mr. Manness: No, I did not say that, to the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman). He did not ask about the minimum; he asked about the impact of the property tax credit, and I gave him the global. As far as the minimum application, that will have a \$9-million impact.

Mr. Speaker, obviously the members are again, in their research, either just shooting at numbers on walls or indeed they are doing no research at all. The member wants to know how many people will be impacted. I say to him that by our analysis, about 6,000 homeowners who previously paid no property taxes, who made no contribution whatsoever to services provided to municipalities, will now pay.

The member talks about unfair tax. Let Manitobans recall in 1987, the greatest attack on those who are so-called, the poor, was the 2 percent tax on income without reference to the ownership. Individuals earning \$10,000 a year were forced after that tax to pay \$200. That was the ultimate in poll taxes ever applied in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance nor the Premier (Mr. Filmon) did not answer the question of how many people under \$20,000 a year will have to pay the minimum tax and what will the impact be. The minister answered in a very selective way about how many homeowners. This tax also—
[interjection]

I asked the question. That is the purpose of Question Period. You know, the Premier is only off a quarter of a billion dollars in his deficit, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier has only been off on four election promises on taxation. Read my lips, Mr. Speaker.

The question is: How many people under \$20,000 a year had this new minimum tax introduced, because the government selectively answered the question? This also impacts on low-income renters who will also have to pay this tax.

I would like to ask the Premier: Is it fair for these low-income renters, many of whom are senior citizens, now to have this radical increase, in essence, of their taxes through the measures introduced by the Filmon government in their budget two days ago?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition shows his total ignorance in the understanding of the 6,000 people to whom I have referred. He makes the assumption that, if you live in a lowly assessed home, you have no income. That is an erroneous, false decision because there is no way we have of knowing—when an assessment comes down and we provide a credit against a tax bill, we have no way of knowing what the income of that individual is because we do not cross-reference.

I do not think members opposite would want us to cross-reference the assessment, the value of the home, and the income tax. Surely the members opposite do not want big government to step in and to have that on the files.

So I cannot answer that question, and he could not answer that question if he were in our position. The reality is, it cannot be answered.

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, if the member wants to know the impact, as I said yesterday, on an individual who is earning \$27,500 or less, I am saying to him, there will be a reduced impact under that level on the \$75 aspect of the property tax credit.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I asked about how many people are impacted under \$20,000. The Department of Finance used to keep track of that. I guess the Tories have ordered them not to keep track of it now because they do not care about the impact. I asked how many total—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

* (1345)

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I have asked a number of questions which the government did not answer today about fairness. They cannot answer the

question of fairness because the introduction of a \$250 minimum that is not tied back to the income tax form—as answered by the Minister of Finance to a question I did not ask, it is not tied to the \$27,000—will be a much more regressive tax for poor people, for senior people, for people across Manitoba.

We are getting calls and calls into our office from people about the Filmon poll tax and the minimum tax in the province. I would like to know how many renters will be impacted. The minister has indicated 6,000 homeowners. How many low-income renters will be impacted by the introduction of a minimum tax? Is it consistent to have some of these people who are actually in tough financial circumstances have their taxes go from zero to \$250 or from \$75 to \$250 or from \$100 to \$250, massive percentage increases in their taxation, whereas other people, for example in Tuxedo, have very little increase in their percentage increase in taxes?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, \$13 million represents the total saving in reducing from \$325, the minimum, to \$250. Thirteen million dollars is the total saving. I would guess that roughly two-thirds of that would be with respect to those of us who receive the benefit right away at the time that we pay our property tax, and the remaining portion would be those renters who apply through the tax form.

School Divisions Restructuring

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education.

The government admits it cannot find new revenues except through new taxes. It has failed to address the need for restructuring the government functions. On the one hand, we have a government that is cutting the educational budget, which will have a negative impact on the quality of education to the students of the province, while on the other hand, restructuring of the number of school divisions would save the taxpayers money and improve the overall quality of education. What is this government doing about restructuring of the school divisions? Nothing.

My question to the Minister of Education is: Why is this government doing nothing to deal with the restructuring of the number of school divisions?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, first of all, the member does I believe make an error by suggesting that the

number of dollars put into Education is strictly what maintains the quality of education or dictates the quality of education, because we know that that is not necessarily true.

In addition, the member asked about restructuring of school divisions. He obviously has not been paying attention to the number of major initiatives that Education has been a part of, including the reform of The Public Schools Act and the introduction of Francophone governance, all of which have to take place in an orderly way for the next stage to be considered.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting. If she does not believe money has anything to do with education, why is she spending \$7,000 to have children go to Ravenscourt?

Point of Order

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, that is a colossal cheap shot. The member had better reflect on his approach to the way he throws these slurs, these comments across the floor, because two and three and 56 can play that game, and if he wants to continue that—and he has been abusing the rules and playing dangerously around the edges now for three weeks with respect to that. So I stand to call him, and I demand he retract and withdraw that comment to the Minister of Education. He has personalized it. He does not treat the member like an honourable member, like indeed the rules dictate, and I say to him, he has to withdraw and apologize to this House.

Mr. Lamoureux: On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, absolutely no way will I withdraw those comments. They were legitimate. It was coming from—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Inkster, kindly take your bench now, sir.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, I think it is unfortunate, first of all, that when the government House leader rose on the point of order, he also used language which has been ruled by this House as being unparliamentary, suggesting that the member for Inkster has been abusing the rules. In fact, he should not, in moving a point of order, break the rules as well, although I think perhaps—and I appreciate the comments made by the member for Inkster may not have been intended to be personal

comments, but we have had, I think, enough personal comments in this House, that perhaps the member may wish to withdraw it in terms of any personal comments. I think that might do something to improve the House.

Mr. Speaker, we often take shots on issues, but we should not take shots on a personal basis.

* (1350)

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable government House leader, I would like to remind the House of Beauchesne's 481(f), that a member would not make a personal charge against another member.

The member for Inkster did come dangerously close, and I would just caution the honourable member for Inkster, and in a future occasion, of that rule, because we are all honourable members in this Chamber. I would ask all honourable members to treat each other as such. So I caution the honourable member, pick and choose your words very carefully.

School Divisions Restructuring

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, if you happen to live in the north end in the city of Winnipeg, you pay the highest percentage of property tax, primarily because of the Winnipeg School Division No. 1 and the geographical area in which you happen to live. A \$70,000 home, for example, in Winnipeg No. 1, property tax should be \$1,034; in St. James, \$756; in Assiniboia South, \$879.

To the Minister of Finance or to the Minister of Education: Is this the sharing of the tax burden equally? Does the minister support the inequities that exist—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has put his question.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am glad I asked my colleague the MLA for Emerson, to the extent that the Liberals supported the reassessment changes—[interjection]—the member for Inkster—because we acknowledge that there has been tremendous assessment differential throughout not only the city of Winnipeg, but I dare say, through all of the province of Manitoba. This government had the courage to deal with that. We recognized that we are at '85

assessments now and in a year we will be to 1991 assessments.

We have done what we could with the support of the Liberal Party, with the support of that member opposite to address those shortcomings. I say we are to be given some tribute, all of us in this House, who have tried to deal—to try to deal with those problems, and within a few years, those differences will be taken care of.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I am talking about the school divisions. The Minister of Finance should be—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It is not a time for debate.

School Divisions Restructuring

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): As the Minister of Finance says, Mr. Speaker, property tax has nothing to do with ability to pay. I am asking the government: When is this government going to deal with the issue of restructuring the school divisions so that individuals will be paying their fair share of taxes?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, as I said to the member, we have a number of issues that are ongoing in the Department of Education, and I let him know what some of those are, the implementation of Francophone governance, looking at The Public Schools Act and any changes that we will be making in that area—a number of issues. We would like to proceed in a very orderly way because we understand that school divisions have a great deal of work to do, and we said at the time that that would simply be deferred until the other issues were completed and were well organized.

Budget Impact on Seniors

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance.

Senior citizens in this province have paid towards education all of their lives, and even Sterling Lyon, a former Premier of this province, recognized and wanted to offset school taxes. Now we have this government hitting senior citizens by effectively adding \$175 to their property tax statements through elimination of the Pensioners' School Tax

Assistance Program. Indeed, thousands and thousands of seniors are being hit in this way.

Why does this government, Mr. Speaker, single out seniors and others who are vulnerable to bear the burden of tax increases and expenditure cuts in this province?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, what Sterling Lyon realized was that you could not pay tomorrow on the basis of all the bills and all the debt you amounted today.

When the member talks about the property tax credit—and I can go through the history if he wants. Indeed, when he was part of the Schreyer government and there was an increase in some of the levels, that was done on the basis of borrowed money for the most part. I am here to tell you today that if indeed we were able to borrow money still at the rate that the former member of that government, indeed that the Pawley government had, maybe we would not have had to make a reduction in the credit also.

* (1355)

I say to the member opposite, whereas his government made its contribution on the basis of borrowed money, Manitobans today realize the folly of that, want today to see this deficit reduced and are in strong measure supporting this budget and, I say to him, basically realize that it is leading the land in the approach it has taken and are supportive.

Mr. Leonard Evans: I remind this minister, in '88 he had an opportunity to even eliminate some of the public debt, but he did not do so. He chose to ignore that opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask the minister: How can this minister be so callous by adding a burden of up to \$175 for seniors in addition to a loss of the property tax credit? Seniors who remember the acute protracted restraint program of the Lyon government will have even more reason to remember this government for targeting the poor and the vulnerable. Why are you picking on the senior citizens of this province?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, we are not picking on the senior citizen of this province. We are doing nothing different than the NDP did, between the ages of 55 and 65, when they means tested that group in society. Now we are means testing everybody from 55 and older. So when the member talks upon the senior citizen, why did he allow Mr. Kostyra to bring down a 2 percent tax on a senior

citizen earning \$12,000, flat tax? Why did he allow Eugene Kostyra to bring forward a 2 percent flat tax on the single person who was earning \$10,000? Why did he allow him to do it?

So I say to him, he cannot be pious in this whole area. No government since the beginning of time in the province of Manitoba has hefted a larger tax, a larger poll tax, than the NDP did in the 1987 budget.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, we had all kinds of offsets to help and protect those people on low income, and the minister knows that.

My final supplementary. I want to ask this minister: Just how many dollars in total is he going to take away from the seniors of this province because of the changes in the property tax credit system and the Pensioners' School Tax Assistance Program? Just how many dollars are you taking away in total—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has put his question.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, this measure, for the most part, is based on the ability to pay. So if the member can tell me what percent of the seniors are earning incomes above \$25,000 and which are under, I can answer his question. But, I am telling him, we make the decision on the basis of income ranges. We do not make the decision on the basis of age. We have introduced the ability-to-pay concept with respect to our tax credit system.

Health Care System Equipment/Supply Costs

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, quote: The government will not introduce user fees. User fees do nothing to encourage effective utilization of health services, and they may serve as a barrier to needed services for some people—Minister of Health, May 1992.

Why has this government broken its promise by introducing user fees, or contributions, as the minister calls them, on health services and on health supplies such as colostomy bags, walkers, other equipment? Is this not totally contrary to the minister's so-called health care reform?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, we have introduced contributions by users in the health care system for the very simple and underpinning reason that the dollars could be reinvested to further enhance community-based care initiatives.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the Premier (Mr. Filmon).

What will the Premier tell the sick, the disabled and the elderly, why he has broken his government's promise and introduced user fees for such things as crutches and assistance for the disabled? What would the Premier tell these people who are phoning our offices every single day?

* (1400)

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate my honourable friend's concerns for the citizens of Manitoba. We have those concerns as well, and that is why, when we made a number of our budget changes, we took a great deal of care to consult and collaborate with the other provincial Health ministers, Finance ministers to try and achieve some consistency between provinces in terms of service provision in the Ministry of Health and other ministries. That is why you will note that we chose as a maximum, where affordability was there in terms of a per diem and personal care homes, to choose the Ontario example.

Mr. Speaker, discussions with Saskatchewan showed that they saw fit in their health care provision services to introduce very similar measures in home care that my honourable friend is now criticizing in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I simply say there are no easy decisions in government today unless, of course, you have the luxury of being in opposition saying one thing from opposition and changing your mind whenever you get to government.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Speaker, the minister did not deal with the question of breaking his word. It is in this document, and Manitobans know it.

Mr. Speaker, will the government reconsider the income threshold levels for the 74 percent increase that they have levied on nursing home fees because of the hardship this sudden increase will have on some pensioners? In fact, we had an individual phone this morning; because he will be paying the maximum, he will no longer be able to afford such luxuries as haircuts, glasses, clothing, housecoat, slippers and the odd ice cream cone whenever he gets to go out of the nursing home.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I would be very pleased if my honourable friend—if he is at liberty to do so—would share the individual's name with me in confidence, and I will have people from the ministry contact him, because I simply want to say that from

time to time the information my honourable friend the member for Kildonan and his cohorts have put out in the public venue has not exactly been accurate.

I would like to deal with this individual's complaint if he has the ability to provide that individual's name, because, Sir, there is no pensioner who does not have the ability to pay who will be impacted whatsoever by that decision to raise the maximum contribution. It is based on ability to pay. It does not compromise, as my honourable friend alleged yesterday, an independent living spouse in the community, because those are considerations that we took fully into care when we made the decision to raise the maximum per diem on the ability to pay by seniors in personal care homes receiving all of their care needs at the taxpayers' expense.

Department of Health Administrative Salaries

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, perhaps this government should go back to the classroom and learn about the three Rs, reform, restructure and revenue generation, because they have failed miserably in all three of these.

The budget document that this government has presented really has not dealt with any real reform towards community-based services. When we look at the budget amounts for '93-94, as an example in the Department of Health, we see that senior managers in administration and directorates have increases in the budgets, but when you look at the budget lines where there are actually services to real people in the community, we have seen a decrease.

Can the Minister of Health explain why he has allowed for an increase in salaries of administration and directorates when in fact the budget lines related to services to the people in the community have seen a decrease?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I would be more than pleased to share those sorts of details at Estimates, because I think my honourable friend would find, with exploration of the budget which is presented in the Ministry of Health in a somewhat more informative way, that her allegation does not have substance.

Home Care Program Budget

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if the Minister of Health could practise the government's philosophy that they like to talk about—about open, honest government.

I would ask the Minister of Health if he could tell us why we see an actual decrease in the Home Care Assistance budget and this minister had promised that we would see an increase in home care services. Why is there a decrease?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I just so happen to have the budget in front of me.

Page 80, Section (b) Home Care: (3) Home Care Assistance, this year's budget \$63,187,500; last year's budget \$62,081,000, an increase, not a decrease as my honourable friend alleges.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Speaker, with a third supplementary to the Minister of Health.

The minister indicates that the budget line says there is a \$1.7 increase, but the minister also knows full well that Home Care overspent their budget last year over \$2 million so that in fact, when you look at the money spent last year—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question is?

Ms. Gray: Can the minister explain to this House why Home Care Assistance budgets and grants to External Agencies and Gerontology, which are services to seniors, why we have seen a decrease?

An Honourable Member: I think she has you this time, Don.

Mr. Orchard: Thank you for the message. Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend's presumption under Home Care, as I have indicated in the budget, is not a factual assessment. In addition to that, my honourable friend failed to take into consideration an answer I believe I gave yesterday or the day before in terms of the changes in service provision which we estimate will be approximately \$3 million compared to last year. We did not remove that budget of \$3 million. We left it, in fact, in the Home Care budget to provide a higher level of more sophisticated services in the Home Care budget to provide more needed care rather than less, Sir.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in terms of some of the funded agencies which are a part of this budget, they were subject, as were all funded agencies, to a minus 2 percent in their grant level, and that accounts for the

reductions in some of the areas of my department. That is similar to the approximate reduction in hospitals and other institutions. That is not inconsistent with the rest of government.

Children's Dental Program Alternative Services

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative budget indicates there is a new oxymoron. We have seen industrial park, military intelligence, Progressive Conservative. Now it is Tory fairness. They call a budget fair that targets seniors, working people, aboriginal people and the poor, and they are also targeting rural children.

An Honourable Member: Is there a question?

Mr. Ashton: Indeed, there is a question. It is to the Premier (Mr. Filmon), and I hope he will answer.

I would like to ask him where rural children are going to go to get the more than 120,000 services that have been performed by the previous child dental program, now that this government has cut the program. Where are they going to go for dental treatment?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend will be well aware that the education prevention portion of the Children's Dental Program is being maintained. Unfortunately, and I say this sincerely, we made the decision to eliminate the treatment program which involved extractions and the completion of fillings. Now that was a difficult decision, and we are expecting that children who had access to that program in rural and northern Manitoba will access regular dentistry for that care.

It is the same difficult decision that Saskatchewan dealt with in their budget and removed the treatment portion of their children's dental health program. Significant changes have occurred in the some 18 or so years the program has been in place in that there has been a greater proliferation of dentistry throughout rural and northern Manitoba.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, the minister knows and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) knows, there just are not dentists in a lot of small rural communities, and it is going to create a major hardship.

I would like to ask the Premier, the government talks about sharing the burden here, it talks about pulling together. When they talk about contributions, are they now expecting that the people of rural Manitoba, many poor people who

cannot afford dental care, are now going to have to contribute the teeth of their kids so that this government can balance its supposed deficit, Mr. Speaker, bring it down? Is that what we are talking about, having kids—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has put his question.

* (1410)

Mr. Orchard: I know my honourable friend will make that accusation in Manitoba but would not make that accusation in Saskatchewan, where an NDP government removed the children's dental health program.

Mr. Speaker, since I have been a Minister of Health—and this program was ongoing beforehand—many more communities in rural Manitoba have been supported by taxpayer-funded grants to fluoridate their drinking water, for instance. It is those initiatives plus the new education and understanding around prevention of dental disease that has led to a generation of children which have a far greater dental health than has ever before been achieved.

Sir, it is not coincidental that that also occurred in Winnipeg and Brandon, where there was no dental treatment program under the children's dental health program, because there is a new understanding by parents, by children as educated in the school system, which will be continued, which emphasizes prevention as the best, best method of preserving good, sound teeth.

Budget Property Tax Credit

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, the tax increases introduced by this government are some of the cruelest we have seen in this country. Rural Manitobans are being hit extremely hard even though they are having the lowest services, reduced health care and reduced educational services.

People across my constituency are calling with their concerns. I would like to share one example. A resident who last year paid \$134 will now pay \$250, an 85 percent increase in taxes.

How can the Minister of Finance justify increases to people on the lowest income and also people who have the lowest services in this province?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am sure it was a very important question, and the member would want a full answer. I would ask her to rephrase it, if she could.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Swan River, would you kindly repeat your question, please.

Ms. Wowchuk: The tax increases that this government has introduced are some of the cruelest in the country. Rural Manitobans are being hit extremely hard even though they have the lowest incomes and some of the fewest services, reduced education, reduced health care by this government.

People across the constituency are calling, and I would like to share one example. A resident who is typical of many of the ratepayers in my constituency paid \$134 and now will pay \$250 in taxes, an 85 percent increase.

How can the Minister of Finance justify such an increase in taxes from low-income people who are getting very little service or reduced service from this government?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I justify the action because the debt of the province on a per capita basis is \$11,500. That is the indebtedness of every one of us, regardless of where we live, regardless of the type of conditions in which we live, regardless of our occupation, regardless of our age. That is the per capita indebtedness.

Most of that debt accrued, if the member opposite wants to see this chart afterward, during the years '81-82 to 1987-88, Mr. Speaker. Most of that debt accrued during those six years, so all I have asked in this budget is that everybody pay some contribution towards that, acknowledging that those individuals who are now receiving \$325 credit, they will have that reduced to \$250 and lesser amounts, under an income of \$27,000.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, the minister is admitting, because of his mismanagement, he is going to correct his mistakes on the backs of the poor.

How can he justify senior citizens who are on low income, on fixed income, paying \$47 in property tax—that is all they were paying—and now they are going to pay \$250, again, correcting his mistakes on the backs of the senior citizens? How can he justify—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has put her question.

Mr. Manness: I do not know if the member opposite has seen the tax form of her constituent or not. If she has, Mr. Speaker—[interjection] The income tax.

If she has and it is as low as she reports, that constituent of hers is receiving a tax credit of several hundreds and hundreds of dollars under the richest tax credit system in the land which is not included in that tax form. So, Mr. Speaker, that constituent of hers now will receive a lesser amount but still hundreds and hundreds of dollars of tax credit relief under still the richest tax credit system in the land.

Budget Social Assistance Recipients

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, there is no question that this budget has had its greatest impact on those who have the least amount of revenue. There is no question about that. I would like to know what kind of analysis that the Department of Finance did with respect to measuring it.

For example, can the Finance minister tell the House today, what has been the impact on the disposable income of a social welfare recipient who will now have to pay optical, dental and pharmaceutical benefits that were previously paid for, will no longer get tax credit changes, will pay an increase in the sales tax?

Not called a tax by the Minister of Finance, what is the impact of the disposable income?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the member in her question assumes that the needs—in her case, to use her example, this particular welfare recipient—are all in the areas of glasses and of other requirements.

I would say to her that in the detail that we have under a number of breakouts, that specific example has not been provided to me. I would sense that on balance there is not an individual in this province, who is receiving welfare or amounts more, who is not being impacted to the tune of \$125 by the results or indeed by the announcements made in this—in other words, as a minimum, \$125 for every Manitoban.

Mr. Speaker: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY BUDGET DEBATE (Third Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: On the adjourned debate, the third day of debate, on the proposed motion of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) in amendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable Leader of the Second Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs).

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, as all members know, there are two major debates in this House each year. One is the Speech from the Throne and the other is the speech that those of us in this Chamber give in reply to the budget speech.

I had thought when I gave my speech in reply to the Speech from the Throne last November that that would probably be my last speech as a Leader on one of these two major addresses because I thought the party would have by this time chosen a new Leader, but that is not to take place until the 5th of June. So I rise today, Mr. Speaker, to speak on this budget as a Leader for my party.

I wanted to spend some time in reflecting about what kind of speech I wanted to make. I wanted to know whether I should do what is typical of all Leaders of the Opposition, whether official or third party, and do the usual everything-is-bad-and-nothing-is-good type of speech, and I have given those speeches. I make no apologies for having given those speeches. But I was filled with such sadness at this particular budget speech that I chose to not do that kind of haranguing type of speech, which I have done in the past—and easy to do, particularly on this speech presented by the Finance minister.

* (1420)

I decided that I would do my best to show the government that they indeed had choices and to examine as clearly as I could some of the choice options I thought that they had, and to ask them why they made the choices that they did, instead of some alternative choices which I hope to lay out for them today, because in fact I think there are some choices they could have made and they chose not to make those choices.

Mr. Speaker, you know, we go outside of this Chamber and we see that the snow has melted and

pothole season has arrived. It is spring. Maybe that is why most budgets are presented in the spring, because it is supposed to be a time of hope. Governments usually, in this moment and spirit of hope, try to put together a package that will make people feel better about themselves.

They sometimes list in those statements forecasts of increased revenue and forecasts of new jobs. They quote from—last year, the Conference Board of Canada which said, this was going to be the best province in the country in terms of growth.

Well, it was quite interesting, but this speech did not have any of those forecasts. It is the only speech, in going back a number of years, that I found that did not have those forecasts. It would appear that perhaps the reason they did not have any forecasts was because the forecasts are not very good. The forecasts are all negative.

So although spring is a time for renewal and spring is a time for rebirth, there did not seem to be that message of hope and renewal and rebirth in the speech of the Finance minister.

You know, this is also the gardening season, Mr. Speaker. It is a time when those of us who like to garden start looking over the seed catalogues and start examining the plants that we would like to plant in our garden. We also do some looking at what did well last year and what did not do so well, and we make decisions about, well, I will not plant that in that particular spot, because it did not really come up very well. To some degree—

(Mr. Jack Penner, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

An Honourable Member: You planted the seeds upside down.

Mrs. Carstairs: No, I did not plant the seeds upside down. It just happened to be too, unfortunately, shady and because I was planting in a new area, I did not realize the foliage would spread quite so much as it did. The sense that we want to do this is I think almost part and parcel of our sense of ourselves.

I was reading a book not too long ago by Germaine Greer in which she talks about the menopausal woman looking to plant flowers, that she cannot have babies anymore so she looks to plant flowers. Well, I am a menopausal woman, and I think, wow, you know, is this why all of a sudden I am getting interested in gardening? Is this the thrust that is getting me going? I do not know whether that is it.

I have, I have to say to you, taken more interest in the garden in recent years, and I really do take more pleasure as I see those plants come to life. So I, in examining this budget, decided I would also examine what kind of growth was I seeing in this government, what kind of growth opportunities was I seeing for citizens. I think there are a lot of parallels, quite frankly, between gardening and a government, because if one wants to use the metaphor to its extreme, the seeds for Manitoba's future are our children.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) talked about that. He talked about the need to give our children a future that was less debt-ridden than perhaps the future of the past. But that is not all our children require. Our children require nurturing. Our children require care. We want our children to remain in this province. We want them to be able to maximize their potential. We want them to be able to contribute. We want them to be able to invest in Manitoba's future. The plan has to be that there is some provision for that to take place, that the government has to have a plan so that there is a future for our children.

I did not see a plan, because the plan had to include a fundamental restructuring of how our government operates. I do not mean tinkering, and I do not mean hack and slash. I really mean a thorough re-examination of the scale of government. We were hopeful that the government would do this, that they would be bold and that they would really be brazen, that they would take a brazen new look at the way a government must operate.

We know that the government has looked at some ideas that we have made in the past and so we hope to offer them some alternatives this time as well. Not everything in the budget is bad. We support the government's initiative to reduce aviation and diesel fuel taxes, because we think that is forward looking. Those industries are essential to the future growth of Manitoba and by reducing those taxes, we have made ourselves a little bit more competitive. I am not sure that it is going to attract new industry, but it is going to at least make us competitive and that alone makes it of value.

(Mrs. Louise Dacquay, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

We have to ask ourselves some very fundamental questions about what role a government is to play

in the economic climate of scarce fiscal resources. The Finance minister is absolutely correct. There is a scarcity, a paucity of fiscal resources for every single government in this country, no matter what their political stripe. That is a truth nobody can deny.

The phenomenal wealth creation that we saw in the '70s and '80s in land development is passé. The Reichmanns, the Campeaus and the Trumps and all of those who invested in that kind of land development—and that did stimulate the market—are not going to be able to do that kind of thing in the '90s.

Just yesterday, for example, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), in his reply, talked about the boom of Ontario in the late '80s and the impact that this had on this province in terms of transfer payments. He said it is not going to be there in the '90s, and he is absolutely right. We are not going to have the windfall mining revenues that we had just a few years ago, because world prices on mining products generally are way down. So we cannot depend on windfalls to solve our problems.

Neither is it enough to just tinker with the way governments do business. We know that governments cannot be all things to all people, but we do believe that government has to provide leadership and on occasion intervention and on occasion incentive.

We are at a crossroads, and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) has had the opportunity to make a difference. We just do not think, unfortunately, that he has. We believe that we must re-examine how government departments operate and are structured. We have to consider combining departments, programs, boards, commissions, agencies and councils. The government made a step in that direction with the consolidation of 18 administrative and personnel branches, but they could have gone further. They chose not to.

Why have they not moved to eliminate some of those departments? For example, the government has made a mockery of—and I cannot call it without putting a prefix before it—the so-called Seniors Directorate. We called for this initiative. We thought it was really a way for the Seniors Directorate to quite frankly make contact with health, to make contact with social assistance, to be kind of a guiding light, if you will, for the needs of seniors in our community. That has not happened. Nothing

has happened in the Seniors Directorate that has changed the day-to-day lives of seniors.

Why has the Minister of Finance not admitted that it is a farce and eliminate it, if that is all it is going to be, an in-name-only department? Why does this government continue to fund garden parties for mobile seniors when seniors are asked to pay for walkers? I simply do not understand a government that can do one and not deal with the other. Why has this minister failed to develop a bold new policy for the future when so many of us are prepared to work together, if only they will give us some hope for the future?

The member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), yesterday, talked about the issue of prairie integration. You know, the Canada West Foundation has come out with a bold concept that there is a possibility we could save \$5 billion. I do not know whether it is \$5 billion. That seems like an awful lot of money. It is the amount of money basically in this provincial budget.

* (1430)

But even if it could save many millions of dollars, it is monies that could be reallocated to direct services for people who live in the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Why, for example, is there still no merger between city and provincial public health? Why are we running two bureaucracies when one could do? Can it be that preserving turf is more important to those running City Hall and running this government than the provision of service?—because we have to get money out of administration and we have to get money down to the service level.

I have heard the Premier say many times, and I agree with him, these are difficult times, and we have to make difficult choices, but we also have to make the right choices. It is the responsibility of all elected officials, not just the government, but of all elected officials, to make these difficult choices within the context of our economic circumstances and to always be careful of those who are most vulnerable.

You know, we are going to have a deficit of \$367 million, according to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). That is higher than the projected deficit when he introduced his budget last year. Everybody talks about how he is getting the deficit down. Well, that is hard, quite frankly, to provide some explanation for. I am not talking about the fact

that the deficit for this year was \$762 million. I am saying that he budgeted last year for \$330 million in deficit. He is budgeting this year at \$367 million, and he says I am getting the deficit down.

It does not make any sense, Madam Deputy Speaker. The reality is that the public are becoming so cynical of all of us that they simply do not believe any of us.

We have to curb government spending. There is no question about that, but we have to look at brand new ways of running the government. That means we have to go back to the planning table and ask which programs can government provide and which programs must it provide, which can be self-sustaining and which must be eliminated.

The government had choices, but the choices it chose were always to hurt the most vulnerable. For example, the government decided that grants could be cut to advocacy groups, but part of their definition of advocacy group includes, it seems, whether you are a friend or a foe of the government. How else do you justify funding for the Consumers Association, a valid, valuable organization, where you cannot find money for the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization, you cannot find money for the Manitoba Foster Family Association, you cannot find money for the Indian and Metis Friendship Centres? Surely this government recognizes that these groups represent the most vulnerable in our society.

If this Finance minister were bold, he would have taken \$5 million out of Industry, Trade and Tourism, where there is duplication of services and, in some cases, triplication, and he could have applied \$2.5 million to the deficit if that is what he had wanted to do and \$2.5 million to the friendship centres, the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization and to the Manitoba foster families.

Where were the priorities? Were they with his political cronies in the Economic Secretariat where salaries actually increased with no benefits directly or indirectly to Manitobans.

They certainly do not lie with the working poor who will now have to pay sales tax on baby supplies or nonprescription drugs, which increase daily as more drugs are delisted, and school supplies, or with the sick who will have to pay more for their prescription drugs.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I find it just a little ironic that the Finance minister recognized that a tax on

books was a tax on literacy so he refused to impose it, but he did not recognize that for most children literacy training takes place in schools, and he taxed their school supplies. Now, is it any worse to tax the book than to tax the math set, or are they both bad? They are both bad. You do not tax the books, but you do not tax the school supplies either.

Does the government's priority lie with the Sport Directorate which has an increased budget? It does not lie with those who are trying to get off social assistance to go to school. Does it make sense for the government, just yesterday, to spend thousands of dollars on newspaper ads for training programs when you have cut training, and cut 1,200 young people off student social allowance? Does it make any sense?

If I go back to the garden, it is like they threw up a handful of seeds into the air with the hope they would all land on fertile ground and multiply, but you know not all land has the same quality and not all people have the same advantages.

Perhaps the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) does not understand that when the rich get the same reduction in a tax credit as the poor, then the impact on the poor is so many times greater.

I just took a look at the property tax credit. I took the income of \$27,500. I took off the \$75, and I said, all right, what is the percentage of \$75 on \$27,500? It is .2 of 1 percent, not a huge percentage, it is .2 of 1 percent, but do you know what it is on an income of \$150,000? It is .0005. It is 400 times greater at \$27,500 than it is at \$150,000. [interjection] It is. Take .2 and .0005. Well, you take \$75 out of \$150,000, Gary, and it will come out at .0005. Take \$75 out of \$27,000 and it comes out as .02.

An Honourable Member: One is just six times the other, so all it can be is one-sixth.

Mrs. Carstairs: Six times, 600 times.

An Honourable Member: It cannot be that way. Well, I am glad you do not teach math.

Mrs. Carstairs: No, \$75. It is not the same percentage. It is a dollar amount.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the reality is that the impact on the person of a large income of paying another \$75 is minimal. It is very minimal, but is not minimal when you are budgeted to the point where you are counting your pennies and your dollars. People with a family of four earning \$27,500 in this province are barely above the poverty line. I do not

understand, if they were going to look at the property tax credit—and they did, they decided to do that—why did you not differentiate according to income? Why did you not say that those of us with upper incomes had to pay more? Why do I have a tax credit of \$325 reduced to \$250 when lots of people have much lower incomes than I have and are not going to get the same benefit that I am going to get? I do not understand that. [interjection]

* (1440)

Well, you know there is quite a bit of difference of \$75,000 than \$27,500. All I said was that somebody at \$75,000 in income could afford to pay the actual cost of child care. I think somebody at \$75,000 a year can pay the actual cost of child care, but I do not think, quite frankly, that somebody at \$27,500 should pay exactly the same as somebody who earns \$75,000 or somebody who earns \$150,000. It is very simple.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there is no question that a plan for Manitoba must include deficit reduction. However, this government is content to use, I am afraid, arbitrary hack-and-slash techniques. That is really regrettable. I think it is very sad, because it is really essential that we generate more revenue for Manitoba and for Manitobans. We did not see any of that in this budget.

We have to work together to attract new business to Manitoba, new business which will not just take the tax break and then lay off personnel. We have to have new business that will create permanent jobs for Manitobans and which will attract other new businesses to Manitoba.

The government has said, for example, that it is committed to making Manitoba an information centre. Well, then how does he explain that there have been cutbacks to that particular initiative within his own budget? Surely, he has admitted that we have to redouble our efforts in this initiative, and yet it looks as if those cutbacks have taken place. Yet we have an Economic Development Board which seems to only collect salaries. We have not seen it produce anything. We can no longer wait for those results.

This is where the minister should have been honest and honourable in terms of his goals and recognized that there was a real folly in setting up the Economic Secretariat where the commitment to research and development has just not played out.

In the last Speech from the Throne this government used the word "innovative" nine times. Nine times they talked about innovation, but we have not seen anything innovative. Manitobans want jobs. Manitobans want to work. Putting Manitobans to work in competitive and sustaining industries will reduce the deficit, but we see nothing in the budget to do that.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) told us in his budget speech that because of public debt costs money was simply not available for priority health and education services for Manitobans. On this side of the House we were wondering how this government decides on its priorities. For example, why is there a 2.5 percent increase in the salaries of the executive administration of Culture and Heritage? Why is there still \$2 million allocated for Community Places grants—\$2 million?

Let us examine for a moment, Mr. Finance minister, just what these Community Places grants have been allocated for. You know, last year it was \$50,000 given to the Winkler Golf Club; \$50,000 was given to the Virden playground; \$50,000 was given to Binscarth to build a new pool.

Now, we too are concerned about the quality of life in rural Manitoba, but the government is attacking basic education and social programs in those same rural communities.

We do not understand their choice. It was a choice. [interjection] Well, I know, but I—you have to make tough choices. You are the one who is saying you have to make tough choices, Mr. Finance Minister. I know they put \$10 million into that program. I am well aware what the NDP did, but why do we still have it when we have tough times?

Madam Deputy Speaker, a tennis court is not going to help a family who cannot afford to buy basic necessities, and there are very few aboriginal children who were provided with services at friendship centres who own tennis rackets and are out there playing tennis on tennis courts—very few of them. Ask an abused woman in Fiin Fion whether she needs a shelter or a recreation facility. You know, that is the kind of tough choice that has to be made, and it is not the tough choices that were made.

A quality education system is essential to ensure that Manitoba has a skilled labour force. We all pay

lip service to that rhetoric. Unfortunately, it is just rhetoric.

We have been calling as a party for reform for Manitoba's educational system since 1986, but the only action we have seen is cuts to education funding. The government simply does not demonstrate a real commitment to the future of Manitoba's children.

I mean, last November in the Speech from the Throne they said education is the key to a healthy economic future. What do they do? [interjection] Well, they did not knock the door, they locked the door, unfortunately, and some are pounding at it trying to get in.

The budget does not introduce any reform initiative to fundamental problems with the system. It does not help our schools cope with new technology. The public schools of this province have taken a funding cut of 2 percent, but they have also taken a cut of 66 speech pathologists and hearing clinicians in rural Manitoba, which has resulted in uncertainty about the quality of education for those children, especially those with special needs.

Fundamental education reform is long overdue, and it is time the government paid more than lip service to it. Why have we not started that boundaries review? Restructuring and amalgamating school divisions could ensure that nearly every dollar in education is spent on delivering programs to Manitoba students. We have the highest administrative costs in education in the country, and it is not coincidental that we have the second highest number of school divisions. It is not a coincidence.

An Honourable Member: Who has No. 1?

Mrs. Carstairs: Saskatchewan.

The picture looks as bleak for post-secondary education and training. Unfortunately, the government clearly does not understand that a well-trained, knowledgeable workforce is essential in improving the economic situation of the province. The sad part about it is, again, those of us who are better off, our children, we'll make sure they get their education. We will help them. We will give them that boost. We will give them that support. It is always those who are from disadvantaged homes and disadvantaged families, they are the ones who are going to suffer. They are the ones that saw their student assistance grants cut.

* (1450)

You know, the financial assistance program under student loans has been cut by 7.8 percent. Who do you think those children are that were applying for those student financial assistance loans and bursaries? Do you think they were children of upper middle-class families? Of course not, unless that family has kicked them out, and that is not a frequent occurrence. These are young people who have come from homes where there has not been the same value in education, often because they simply could not afford it. And summer jobs have become for some youngsters almost an impossibility to get. It is not that they do not want to work or they will not work, it is they cannot find employment.

You know, we thought there was a glimmer of hope just a few days before the budget. We saw that the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) announced that there was going to be a consolidation of the skills training program. We were going to get rid of some of the administrative hierarchy, and we thought, good, sounds positive.

What do we find in the budget? Well, we found, unfortunately, that the new advanced education and skills training division has taken a reduction of almost 10 percent. The cut includes significant decreases for programs such as employment enhancement and youth programs and apprenticeship programs, not administrative cuts, the program cuts.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this province has the lowest rate of young people enrolling in full-time community colleges of any province in the nation. We know that. We have an underdeveloped community college system, and it is becoming more and more underdeveloped as the years go by. Eight percent of our high school students enroll in community colleges. In some provinces that is as high as 27 percent.

As a result, Manitoba youth has very little to look forward to. Not only has the quality of education and training in this province been undermined, but cuts have been discouraging young people from continuing their education. Student social allowance programs which enabled people to acquire the skills necessary to find jobs have been eliminated.

Young people are realizing that a lack of education almost guarantees them a life of

unemployment or of marginal employment. I do not know how they think young people are going to make it in this province without a little bit of help.

Support for child care has been eroded, but who has been eroded? Did they increase the overall fee? No, they could not do that, because when they did that last time without a sliding scale people took their children out of child care. So they knew they could not increase the upper limit again, so what did they do? They went and attacked the people at the very bottom. Those who were not even paying the \$1 a day subsidy are now going to be asked to pay \$2.40 in subsidy. Where do they think they are going to get it from? They were not paying the dollar in many cases because they could not come up with the money, so where are they going to get \$2.40 a day?

It simply defies imagination, and yet the only conclusion that I can come to is that they want these people to stop working. They want them to quit their jobs and stay home, because they are not going to be able to afford the child care. If they cannot afford the child care, they have to quit their jobs. Is this the drive behind this? Is this the incentive? Is this what they want to do?

Well, you know, we heard about the need to share the pain. Madam Deputy Speaker, who has really been asked to share the pain? Does this minister really think that those with upper incomes are going to share the pain? Does he really think that, if property tax bills go up for families whose income is six figures, they are really going to feel that pain? No, they are not. They are simply not going to feel that pain. People in lower incomes will, they will feel the pain. That is what I do not understand. I do not understand how a government cannot recognize that some feel the pain more than others and adjust their policies accordingly.

I asked the minister today if he knew just what the impact would be on a social assistance recipient who had lost their dental, their optical, pharmaceutical benefits and some of their tax credits and now would be asked to pay provincial sales tax. I do not want to misquote him, but I think what he said was that he figures the minimum might be about \$125. Well, \$125 for some families is a lot of money. It is not a lot of money for me. [interjection]

Well, it is a lot of money for someone at half of your income, too, or a third of your income or a tenth

of your income. I do not know the Minister of Finance's income, and it is none of my business.

The reality is—if we just take an MLA's salary in this House, with the nontaxable portion, make it \$48,000 a year. If it is \$48,000 a year, the impact is going to be far less than the mom with a couple of kids living on social assistance who is getting \$14,000 a year. That is what I find difficult to understand.

I find it difficult to understand why foster families are being asked to take \$2 less a day. If the government did not think that money was too much a couple of years ago when they gave it to them, why do they think it is too much now? That is what they are really saying: We think you are getting too much, so we are going to take it from you.

More than that, I do not understand why they took the money away from their association. To me that was the far more dangerous cut, because what they did was they removed their support system. They took from them a sense of their own ability to talk with others who were suffering from the same difficulties that they were. I do not understand why they would feel that a cut like that, which might really jeopardize the opportunity for an individual to take a foster child, why they do not understand that the cost of that will be far greater. If Manitoba foster parents choose not to take children, then the cost to this government will be ever so much more than the cost of funding that association.

I think the government almost sees that as a threat. They should not consider it a threat. It is not a threat. Foster families, the ones I have spoken to, have said, we will no longer feel secure taking those children. We had almost our own kind of safety net, and they have taken that safety net away from us. So we do not feel as secure to take on new foster children, and that is why they are going to choose not to do that. That is a tragedy, both for the children, but also for the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), because it is going to cost him more to look after those children in alternative facilities.

It is time that we looked—and I have said this before in this House, and I will say it again—at a guaranteed annual income. I would prefer it to be a federal program, but if we cannot, then let us re-examine what we have done in the past in this province and let us lead the way in Canada and begin with a kind of mini-com (phonetic) income package again in this province and show that we

can, in fact, get rid of administrative waste and make sure the money goes directly to service, because that is what it has to be all about.

I want to speak just briefly about the health care initiative, because we have supported it. We have supported the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). We have watched the same initiative basically picked up by the New Democratic Party in British Columbia and the government there. We compared the two books that came out, and the program from B.C. was almost identical word for word to the program from Manitoba. So you cannot say that the plan of the government here was so awful. Others are looking at it.

But we did call on the minister to put into place a health monitor, so we could be upfront with the public, so that he could report to the people so that they could in turn—the monitor group—report to government, that they could identify the problems out there and that corrections could be put into place quickly. I think many of the difficulties that the Minister of Health is encountering, quite frankly, is because of misinformation or lack of information. I think that if he had been more upfront, some of this would not have occurred, but we are finding that in this budget, the action plan that he said he was going to put into place does not show itself in the budget.

If we are really going to move to community-based services, why has there been a cut of 15.8 in Healthy Public Policy? Why has there been a cut of 29.6 in Health and Wellness? Surely, part of health reform is wellness, and a theory and a concept of wellness which means prevention programs. Why has Acute and Ambulatory Care taken a 12.5 percent cut? Why has home care, if one compares not budget to budget but expenditure to budget, gone down?

* (1500)

Only a week ago, the Minister of Health seconded a Pharmacare card system, but we are told by the Minister of Finance that people have to pay more for their Pharmacare. I hope the government, if it is going to look at additional premiums for Pharmacare and, unfortunately, that is the only solution I can see as to how you can have increases according to his budget, is that he is looking at another one. Well, if he is going to do it, then would he look at the possibility of putting in a sliding scale, because that Pharmacare deductible is getting so high for people

on low and fixed incomes that they simply cannot pay it. Some of them are denying themselves drugs, and we know that.

This government has eliminated the dental care program under the Children's Dental plan. We were pleased to see that the prevention component of the plan was still in place, but I have spoken with the head of the northern dental plan, who was the head of the northern dental plan for a number of years. She talks about the requirement to remove rotten teeth of children in the North for prevention so that the second teeth can come in, in satisfactory form. Is that prevention or is it treatment? According to this budget, it is treatment, and yet if that treatment is not provided, Madam Deputy Speaker, there will be no prevention. There will be no healthy second teeth.

What provision is there going to be for those who need that kind of dental work and whose family simply cannot provide it? I have some understanding of a willingness to not provide dental care for those whose incomes are sufficient that they can pay for their own children's care but what about the poor? What about those who do not have that money? What protection have we put in for those families? I see nothing in this budget.

We heard this government talk about compassion but, you know, I do not see any compassion. I certainly do not see any compassion for the epidemic of violence against women in our society. We have a Pedlar report. We know what must be done. We know what the social costs are of ignoring it and yet there is nothing in this budget that would suggest that there is going to be any more resources. Indeed, there will be fewer resources because courts will not even be open to hear some of those cases on Fridays in the summertime. It is a little ironic, it is almost as if you are saying do not abuse on Thursday night or perhaps you should abuse on Thursday night because you cannot go to court on Friday. The whole concept leaves me terribly befuddled in terms of what the program is and what the real direction is.

You know there has been some restructuring in the government. We cannot object, for example, to the consolidation of the Information Technology Branch with the Industrial Technology Branch. It sounds reasonable. We cannot be too concerned about the disappearance of the Sectoral Development Branch. Those are changes which obviously can be made. It makes sense, indeed, for

them to be made, but we have noticed that the government's knife cuts very selectively. Nowhere is this more important and more apparent than in I, T and T. It was spared from the consolidation of the Economic Development Board of Cabinet.

Remember the Economic Development Board of Cabinet? Remember that? We have not heard very much from it. We have not been overwhelmed with activity, Madam Deputy Speaker, and we criticized it last year because we said that it was just another layer of economic management bureaucracy. We were worried that nothing would come of it and we were right because nothing has come of it.

We do not understand why, if we are supposed to share the pain, you share it, unless of course you are a close advisor to the Premier (Mr. Filmon). The Premier should end his charade and be honest with the people of Manitoba with respect to this. He should cut the Economic Development Board and save the \$850,000 in administration plus untold numbers of dollars in salaries for the Premier's select group. If he really believes in total quality management, and he certainly is promoting it in terms of health care, then TQM demands that the planning and economic analysis functions of the Economic Development Board be transferred to the Business Services and Strategic Initiatives Division, because the first thing TQM says is to get rid of layers of bureaucracy. Wipe them out. So if he believes in it, do away with it.

We have also noticed that the government has spared its overpaid and much flouted Economic Innovation and Technology Council. Here, too, we criticize the needless duplication of activity, and here, too, we do not see any activity. We see staffing. We do not see anything in the way of new programs. Here, too, the government seems to have chosen to protect the salaries and per diems of its friends on the council.

There is not a single activity that this council performs that is not mandated and could not be handled by the department. The government has chosen to protect the salaries of the part-time council members at the expense of line administration staff in that department.

While we are looking at restructuring, we have to look at the commitment to serve our province to give something back to one's province. I wonder if the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) actually went to

all of the people who sit on boards and commissions, some of whom are paid, you know, \$130 for a half day and \$210 for a full day. One chair is paid \$310 for a full day. Did they ask them to donate their service to the province?

I mean, that is what they are asking the Manitoba Foster Family Association. They were paid people. They are asking them now to become volunteers. Why do you not ask those who are getting these per diems? [interjection] Get rid of them entirely. That is what you did to the Manitoba Foster Family Association. You eliminated it. Eliminate the per diems. Say, do it in honour of service to this province. Do it because you feel that volunteerism is important.

We have heard the Premier talk about volunteerism. Well, let him get out there and all of his patronage cronies. Let us have a little volunteerism. Let us eliminate the per diems. I mean, you want the volunteers for the friendship centres and the crisis centres and the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization. You want all those people to become full-time volunteers. So how about a few of the per diems?

So we come back again to the choices that the government has had the chance to make for six budgets now. It has had a chance to develop an economic plan for Manitoba's future. For six budgets now, the government has chosen not to introduce a plan to take us into the 21st Century.

We will continue to watch how the government handles economic development in rural Manitoba, but it seems that their entire program for rural development is based on whether you win a gambling pot or not.

You know, we were cautiously optimistic when the REDI Program was first announced. We were concerned that standards be established and guidelines be set in place. But we have not seen the money flow as it was promised to us when REDI was formulated, and we have been particularly concerned to note some of the questionable uses of the REDI Program.

I mean, we want to know, for example, what a parking garage does in stimulating economic development in Altona. Is that really what the purpose of it is? Yet that is where the REDI money came from.

We were hopeful that the Minister of Finance would take this opportunity of a lifetime, because I

think he did have some public support. I think he did have some public understanding that economic times were tough and that tough decisions had to be made, but I think he failed to be fair and he failed to be equitable. He has lost a great deal of that good will, and that has been truly unfortunate, because they recognize that we have seen a budget carved out on the backs of the poor. They recognize that golf courses and snowmobile trails will still be supported, unfortunately, by this government for their affluent friends, that services to the vulnerable have been cut or eliminated.

I want to end with this. I am particularly concerned about our greater and greater dependence upon lottery revenues. You know, if one sits and watches television just occasionally, one cannot help but get an ad which encourages people to buy lottery tickets, encourages people to go to gambling casinos, encourages people to spend on the VLTs. I do not think we fully understand, first of all, that it tends to be those who have the least who spend money in these areas, but we also fail to understand the long-term social impact of the encouragement of people to spend their money this way.

* (1510)

I will be honest. I have never been in the Crystal Casino. I bought a Lotteries ticket once because I wanted to know how to buy one and I played the VLTs once, again because I wanted to find out how to play them. I do not know why people play them, I must admit. I will be honest with you. I do not understand what is appealing about them because I did not find them very appealing, but the reality is that millions and millions of dollars are being spent in this province on gambling.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): And outside of this province.

Mrs. Carstairs: Well, you know, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) says, outside of this province as well. [interjection] Yes, it is big time, but I would suggest to the minister that there are many more millions that are being spent in this province by Manitobans on gambling than they ever took out of this province to gamble—many more millions.

The problem is that it is destroying the fabric of society. I mean you have to be concerned, all of us, when you hear from the RCMP that people have left suicide notes and attributed their suicide to playing VLTs.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): How many cases?

Mrs. Carstairs: I do not care how many it is, to the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger). One is enough for me. Two is too many for me. I mean surely, as people, and I do not blame the Tories for this because all kinds of governments are getting into it, but surely as a society we have to examine why it is we are doing this, why it is that we are encouraging people to take money from often their children, food and clothing needs of their children, to play VLTs and to gamble in casinos.

I have to wonder whether we as a government should be encouraging it, whether we as a government—I say we, meaning all of us, all 57 of us together—should be doing this and whether we should not really seriously be looking at the long-term implications and not just the short-term money. We are becoming more and more dependent, and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) know this, on those revenues, that it is going to be almost impossible to reduce them.

We think that, unfortunately, this government has chosen to be remembered as dream weavers because that is what those ads represent to me—dream weaving, freedom. Freedom. If you win a lottery—freedom. That is not where freedom comes from. Freedom comes from within.

Therefore, I move, seconded by the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray), that the amendment be amended by adding thereto the following words:

And further regrets that

(a) this government has failed to adequately invest in the education and training of Manitobans as witnessed by the cuts to student social allowances, to university funding, to the advanced education and skills training division;

(b) this government has failed to address the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable members of our society by cutting speech pathologists and hearing clinicians for children with special needs, by requiring parents who require subsidized daycare to pay more than they can afford, by raising nursing home resident fees, by reducing payments to foster families, by reducing dental, optical and pharmaceutical benefits to social assistance recipients, by cutting funding to friendship centres;

(c) this government has failed to ensure the universality of the medicare system by introducing user fees for clients under the home care plan, by

placing a cap on medical fees and by discontinuing the treatment portion of Children's Dental services; and

(d) this government continues to obfuscate the government's financial statements with its continued use of the Fiscal Stabilization plan.

Motion presented.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Madam Deputy Speaker, sitting here for the last day and a half and listening to the addresses of the two Leaders of the opposition—

An Honourable Member: How you have suffered.

Mr. Cummings: —and how I suffered, that is right, how I suffered.

I have to say that again it has been reconfirmed that neither of the opposition parties has the faintest idea of what some alternatives might be as to how to deal with the financial situation of this province.

We have seen a long litany of complaints not only from the leader of the official opposition but, just listening through the speech of the Leader of the Second Opposition, she presented a very compassionate and caring point of view and was worried about the future and the sensitivity of government decisions, but she should not assume, nor should the official opposition assume, that there is any less compassion on these benches or that there is any less concern about those who are vulnerable in society or that there is any less willingness on this side to take care of those individuals in our society and make sure that they are looked after when they cannot fend for themselves.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when the community of Manitoba points the finger, looks somewhere to point the finger as to why these decisions have to be made, the decision is going to have to be to point the finger to those members opposite who have contributed massively to the amassing of a deficit in this province that now drives us to making these kinds of decisions.

Now I am sure that if they had thought that the economy of the country, the economy of the world, as a matter of fact, was going to be impacted by some of the things that happened on a global basis, they would have started making some changes when they had the opportunity to do so, but they did not see that coming. They continued to borrow, as did federal governments, as did all sorts of other

governments across the country, as a matter of fact, across the world.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when we look at the debt that we have amassed over the last 10 years in this province, governments have been doing very much what society itself was doing, which was to borrow against inflation. I would think there are a good number of us in this room who at one time or another have made a few dollars on inflation when there was consistently a growth year over year in the values of items for sale for items of our—[interjection] Well, yes, I am sure the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) wants to hear this. I better get a little closer to my mike.

* (1520)

In amassing the kind of debt that we did, inflation was driving it and it was driving inflation. We have all heard lots of discussion in this House about where that has led us. But, when we talk about protecting the future of the young people of this country then I think we have to really put it into perspective, because I agree that there are decisions that we made that we would rather not have had to have made. Frankly, whether it was when the years when the members opposite and their party were governing this province or even in the first years of our mandate, if we had been able to deal with the debt more aggressively we would not have been faced today with as dramatic decisions as we are being faced with.

We should never suggest that dealing aggressively with the financial problems that face this province, that face this country, are not important or that they do not need to be dealt with sensitively. Then we are simply burying our heads in the sand. [interjection] Well, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) says, sensibly and fairly. I challenge him. I challenge him to present the alternatives, Madam Deputy Speaker. What idea has he got, the bereft of ideas from the time they were thrown out of government. In this House, they cannot credibly present an alternative to the type of decisions that are being made.

Madam Deputy Speaker, a number of people point to our great neighbour to the South, and they will say, look at the economic situation there. Look at what President Clinton is going to do. The fact is that the Americans have not yet faced the kind of tax load that we have in this province. Those who would suggest that following the route they are

going to have to follow over the next short while as an example to governments here forget that they have all sorts of taxation room that the people in this country have already been subjected to. We only need to look at gasoline prices as a shining example of the difference in the pressures that are on their economies and their taxation system as opposed to this country. [interjection]

The member opposite, inadvertently, has pointed to one of the most important and crucial decisions that we have made in this budget. That is to make sure the very fabric of this province that the Leader of the Second Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) wanted to talk about is protected in terms of our health care, is protected in terms of the basic responsibilities that we have to the less fortunate in this society.

His idea of protecting that is to use a phrase that my colleague from Portage la Prairie coined not very long ago, and that is a fiscal child abuse, because what we are doing is imposing on the future generations of this province the lack of access to programs that we have been privileged to enjoy for the last 25 years in this province. [interjection]

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am not sure what the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) was saying. It seems to me that her Leader just spent a fair bit of time expressing her concern, pointing to areas that she felt should have been handled differently. She expressed her concerns in terms of her priorities.

I invite the opposition to challenge us on what they see as the priorities. If they are so bold as to do that, let them lay out some alternatives. There has not been one reasonable alternative come from that side of the House, not one. I listened carefully. There was not one reasonable alternative that was presented by the second opposition, not one. I am a little hard of hearing on one side but I heard every word almost that the member for—

An Honourable Member: Almost.

Mr. Cummings: Well, yes. One occasionally lets his mind drift during the middle of a 40-minute presentation.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we have seen some rather interesting turns of events in this House since the budget has been presented. Over the last number of weeks, when some of the rather difficult decisions we have had to make have been presented to the public, we have seen the spectacle of members opposite standing up. In one particular

case, the member representing Flin Flon talking about wanting to bring forth concerns about protecting the basic infrastructure and the economy of this province at a time when literally millions are being spent and being supported by this government to make sure that the mining industry in northern Manitoba has an infrastructure of which to ship to for their smelting activities and, at the same time, saying that we are not protecting the economic infrastructure.

At the same time, ever since we came into government—and the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) will want to praise us for this. If he looks back over all of the previous budgets to this one, we have protected the rate of growth and cost for education, health and social services. Every one of them have grown at a rate that far exceeds inflation. Every one of them have been protected for the people of this province. He is unwilling or unable—and that is more likely the case—to recognize that the reality is that we now have to deal with the real responsibility of what continuing and burgeoning deficits can do.

A very simple analogy, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that every time there is a half-a-million-dollar deficit in this province—

An Honourable Member: Half a billion.

Mr. Cummings: —half a billion, another \$50 million worth of expenditures is added annually to the bottom line of the budget of this province. Fifty million is five times the cost of running the Department of Environment, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am really disappointed. I thought maybe the Environment critic for the official opposition or for the Liberal Party would want to discuss in some portion of this debate what is happening in terms of dealing with environmental issues in this province. They are afraid to realize that this government has struck a balance and they will have to explain to their electorate what it is that they would do differently. Certainly their Leaders have not yet shown what that route is other than to increase the deficit.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what would they do? Would they completely eliminate the Department of Natural Resources? I doubt it. Would they completely eliminate the Department of Justice? Of course they would not. They have to start making some important choices, and as we see some economic strength return to the province of

Manitoba and to other provinces across this country, then we can begin to deal with what is the ongoing cost of carrying the debt.

I look around and I have one piece of information that I have garnered over the last couple of years, what I think demonstrates rather dramatically what happens to a province such as ours when we allow the debt to grow, when we borrow indiscriminately and when we do not recognize what the worldwide impacts are on the cost of the bottom line of this province.

You know, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) was in cabinet—I am not sure if he was a member of the Treasury Board—when some of the loans were floated in Japanese yen. The member for Dauphin, I am sure—I know he was part of the government and I suspect he was part of the decision—when at one time the Province of Manitoba borrowed money in Japanese yen. When we came into government and subsequently began to face the real costs of paying some of these loans, we realized that all of a sudden that someone over there had not contemplated what would happen when the value of the Canadian dollar changes or the value of the foreign currency begins to increase. [interjection] Well, he may be proud of the fact that he was spreading it around, but does he know what he was spreading around? I think not because by the time we were able to pay off that loan, we were paying the equivalent of 28 percent interest, and he is proud of that record?

* (1530)

An Honourable Member: That is spreading it around?

Mr. Cummings: He may have been spreading it around, but in that spreading were the blood, sweat and tears of the people of this province. Madam Deputy Speaker, the member for Dauphin is getting a little uneasy about having this type of information put on the record, but if he was half as smart as he would like to portray himself, he would have realized that they should be more conscientious about recognizing what they did to this province during those inflationary years leaving us with a debt that is now driving us to these decisions. [interjection]

The member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) says add it all up and average it. What he does not recognize is exactly the point that I have been trying to make and that is that he will not contemplate the fact that Manitoba is part of a worldwide economy and the

decisions we are being driven to make today are as a result of occurrences in financial markets here and around the world, not only financial markets but the real markets of the trading of goods and the growth of societies around the world.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is very well and good to talk about that general picture and where do we go, but we have to here, day to day, make the decisions that will put this province in the best position to deal with those problems and to put us in a proper footing for going forward in the future. In dealing with that, there are very few options that go beyond reasonable levels of intelligence. Now I am not so sure how that reflects on the previous administration but, if they wish to listen for a sec, let us talk about alternate forms of income.

We have the members opposite violently opposed to VLTs and, in many respects, putting forward arguments that they expect members of society want them to put forward but, when we have that money now to put against the deficit, all of a sudden they are saying, well, that is not the priority of where it should be put. It should be put into other decisions.

Every one of the decisions—[interjection] Well, I cannot put on record what is being said around here, Madam Deputy Speaker, but I guess I have managed to either bore or drive out a number of members who are not of the party of the government.

As a representative of a rural riding, Madam Deputy Speaker, I hear a lot of people saying that rural Manitoba, in many respects, has had to start making a lot of self-disciplining decisions within the last six to seven years. When we look at one of the challenges that this province has had, it is to make sure that the basic growth areas and the basic industries of this province are in fact stabilized, are in fact positioned to compete in the worldwide market in which we all operate. Whether we are operating in a niche market or not, it is still reflected upon by the events that happen around the world.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when I talk to my friends, my colleagues in rural Manitoba, by and large they recognize that the impact of the GRIP program that was implemented under the leadership of this government in co-operation with Ottawa is the one element that has inserted some level of stability into the economy of rural Manitoba. It is on that basis that they now look forward with some

confidence to being able to reap the benefits in the next year or two of some strength in the markets and some stability in the sale of the products they are putting forward. We only need to point to the cattle industry, the hog industry. They are doing very well. They are now starting to put those dollars back into the economy.

The \$50 million that that costs the government annually was the cost of being able to make sure that industry was stabilized, not the cattle industry specifically, not the hog industry specifically, but the rural agricultural cultivated acreage that we have in this province. The people who are the tenants and the owners of those lands were able to look with some confidence to their banker and re-establish themselves in a changed world situation.

That is the kind of discussion that there has not been one member of the opposition who has been willing to enter into discussion on—not one. They may criticize whether or not the payment is sufficient on a particular class of land. They may criticize whether or not the payment is sufficient north of a certain line in the province, but not one of them wants to enter into the debate about whether or not this has meant anything to the stability of the economy of this province.

It is only an example of how rural Manitoba integrates with the rest of the province, because the same tenets hold true in all of the other industrial and technological areas of this province and how we position ourselves to take advantage of the markets in which those industries will need to develop and grow.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we look at the initiatives. The members opposite are quite anxious to point to the Economic Development Board, point to the Economic Committee of Cabinet, and they say, what are we accomplishing? Where are we going? I suggest they have the blinders on about the things that are occurring in this province, just the same as they had about the implementation of GRIP in this province.

Manitoba has established itself with some stability in the technological areas of competition on the same basis that they have established themselves to be able to compete favourably with rural economic initiatives. [interjection] No, that was a thumbs up. The member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) cannot tell one digit from the other, I do not think. It was a thumbs-up sign. I am sure he would

recognize that if he were to contemplate it. It was not a one-fingered salute. It was the thumbs up.

Madam Deputy Speaker, again, I ask, where are the alternatives that the opposition is prepared to present? Where are the alternatives? The member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) says he is going to go out to McCreary next week and use my name in vain and point to the things that I should be doing on behalf of that part of the province. I would challenge him to provide the whole list of what we are doing for this province, not a selective reading, as he is prone to do.

I digress, but I have to acknowledge that we had a little fun at his expense in Grandview the other night. That is something for which he will probably want some retribution. Yes, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) and I actually had a very receptive audience. We quite enjoyed ourselves at the expense of the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman).

Madam Deputy Speaker, broadly viewed, I am very concerned about the type of criticism and publicity that the members opposite would like to levy against what I believe has been a budget that is characterized by fairness and equity. [interjection] The member for Dauphin says, well, you have 20 minutes left. Perhaps he would like me to point out a number of the other discretionary areas that he has been unwilling to deal with.

When government is faced with decision making that has reached the point of where the income that government can expect to receive is not growing at the rate which we, in this society, have been used to finding in our wallets, if you will, at the end of the day, finding in the coffers of the province, then the setting of priorities and the choosing of particular approaches to delivery of service is more than a challenge in terms of what programs will be delivered and what programs cannot be delivered. It is also a challenge of how you fairly manage the programs that do continue. [interjection]

Madam Deputy Speaker, the constant twitting of the member for Dauphin does not provide much enlightenment for the people of Manitoba, because during the years, when they had those buoyant incomes, did they do anything to restructure the administration of government? Did they do anything to economize the delivery of programs? Did they do anything as the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) did delivering a new \$50 million program with the same or less numbers of

employees out there. They never even dreamed about it.

* (1540)

When I compare what has happened in this province to what is happening in the province to the west, which is presently being administered by the NDP party, and the decisions that they are making as a result of the agricultural catastrophe that has come down around their ears, they are being compounded beyond belief. The members of this province who are involved in the industry that I am talking about are in far better position to deal with the problems that they are facing with their bankers than the members to the west will be under what is presumably a caring and sharing NDP administration.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when the people in the Swan River valley and the people in the Grandview look to the west, they are not looking with envy. In fact, let me talk for a moment about the social side and the services that we delivered, and I had some comments from a number of members about daycare, about child care alternatives. One of the people of my acquaintance who works very long and hard on behalf of the daycare institutions in rural Manitoba had occasion to go to Saskatoon and speak there about what was happening in Manitoba and how they were managing and how they were delivering programs. That person when she came back said to her friends and colleagues: I was happy to get home. When I saw what is happening in the neighbouring province, it was like returning to heaven.

That was the comment of the lady who works in the daycare program. She said there is nothing but despair. Nothing but despair. That is what happens when the budget does get out of control. [interjection] The member opposite says that is the legacy of the previous government. Of course, it is. I did not just fall off a turnip truck. I am talking about the debt of these provinces and what happens when you do not deal with it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, before I step on my notes here—[interjection] When he fell off the truck, he got run over. Is that what happened?

This government, this province has put a lot of money, more money on a percentage basis than any other government in Canada towards daycare and towards the improvement of the situation in foster care services. For the members of the

opposition to now stand up and talk about the fact that we have had to put some limitations on that growth is totally unreasonable—totally unreasonable because they are not looking at the larger picture. They refuse to look at the larger picture. They want to pick on individual small programs and say, look what has happened here, look what has gone wrong here.

All they have to do is look at the larger picture and they will see. They will clearly see that the much needed basis of infrastructure is being maintained in this province, and it will be to their chagrin, Madam Deputy Speaker, their chagrin in the long run that this government has done a better job of protecting those services than any government in the recent history of this province. I stand by that comment.

Again, Madam Deputy Speaker, I have spent some considerable amount of time working with people in the services to the mentally handicapped, community service groups, and they all acknowledge that if the dollars have to be saved, if the dollars have to be put to priority use, they will acknowledge that they have to go into the area of service. They need not go into the service of lobbying; they need not go into the service of broad structure to support a lobbying group across the province. The dollars have to be prioritized for the service of those who need it the most.

They will question and they will argue and they will yell and they will shout and they will complain about whether or not we chose those priorities correctly or whether we added enough or whether we subtracted too much, but at the end of the day the people of this province will acknowledge that the services that are in place in this province, the ones that the people of this province truly value and want protected, will be protected for the future generation.

I take some considerable umbrage at the comments that came from the second opposition today during Question Period about equating of dollars with educational opportunity. Having spent a number of years working with the educational community as a trustee, I believe that people of this province do not necessarily equate, nor should any of us necessarily equate, the quality of education with the volume of dollars that is attached to it. There is not one teacher in my acquaintance that would not acknowledge that the job they do is more directly related to the support they get in terms of the backing of decisions that they make, in terms of the support that they get from the community, in

terms of the support they get from the administration on the decisions they make—there is not one teacher of my acquaintance that would not acknowledge that this is what makes the most difference in how effective they are in teaching the children in today's schools. The efficacy of today's schools is—

An Honourable Member: How about if they put 40 kids per classroom? Does that have an effect?

Mr. Cummings: The member opposite says, what happens when you have 40 kids in the classroom? Madam Deputy Speaker, the support systems through the schools need to be in place. The teachers need to know that they are important to society. They need to know that they are important to the parents whose children they are teaching. They need to know that they are important to the community in which they are working, but they do not equate that with the bottom line that they get in their pay cheque every day. They equate that with their dedication to their job.

Not for one moment would I suggest that they should work for free, but I would never accept the argument that the member opposite puts forward, that if the teachers do not receive an increase in pay every year that they will not continue to provide the services to the children in the classroom. I have far too much respect for the teachers of this province to even entertain that type of an argument. [interjection]

The member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) says, cut their wages and see how their morale is. That may be the way in which he wants to portray it to the public. I have talked to a number of people in the educational community. I have talked to friends and acquaintances who are totally dedicated to the service of the educational people of this community, and they will indicate that we all have to be part of the solution on how we deal with the problems of this province.

If the educational community are not the leaders in how we deal with those problems, then we will have even more problems in our society in dealing with it in the long run. Their thinking, their advice, their leadership is needed and cherished every bit as much as anyone else in this society, and the reflection that the member opposite puts forward on how teachers view some of the decisions that have been made is a total misrepresentation of the value and the quality of the people we have out there in the trenches and the job that they are doing. The

messenger is over there. The message that I am getting coming directly from the teachers is the opposite to the one that he is trying to portray.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the same thing is true in the Civil Service. The same thing is true in the health care field. The same thing is true in all levels of responsibility in our community.

I continue to meet people day after day after day who are saying, we want to be part of the solution. Contrary to the vision of the people opposite who are busy portraying everyone out there as being opposed to having some solutions to the direction of this province and how we will manage affairs in this province, day after day, I hear people saying, what can I do in order to make this work better?

It is very interesting that I have, on a continuing and ongoing basis, members of the staff in my own particular department saying that they believe that this has been a fair and equitable way to deal with some cost containment in the department, and they are prepared—[interjection] Well, if the members opposite are referring to these people as looking for promotions, I think that was the implication of one of the comments over there—a complete misrepresentation of the attitude of the public, and they are the ones who will pay the price. They will pay the price because they do not understand the depth of understanding and knowledge that is in the public.

* (1550)

The public recognizes with a greater sense of reality and urgency what needs to be done in this province as opposed to those who sit over there with their heads under their desk.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I heard the word "scapegoat" being thrown out over there. Obviously, the selective thinking of the members opposite is not going to be receptive to the idea that there are a large percentage of people in this society who recognize that the protection of what is good in this society is more important every day when we see what is happening around the world. If we do not protect what is good in this society against the ravages of interest and the ongoing cost of the debt that we have had, then I will not be able to look my grandchildren in the eye when they come back to me and say, you had an opportunity to do something about it, old man. Why did you not take the opportunity?

The members opposite had the opportunity and they squandered it. They threw it away. They ignored the reality of the world they were living in. They have buried their heads in the sand and refused to accept reality.

When we look at the concerns of people across the province, they are parallel to the concerns of the people across the country. Canada has a reputation as one of the most caring, compassionate and welcoming nations in the world. In order for us to maintain that stature, in order for us to be able to maintain the services to the community which they have come to expect, we need to be able to have the funds to do it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the member opposite says we have done worse. Well, I think the one thing he has forgotten is if you look at the tax levels in a number of other countries, you see the results of not dealing with the issue, and you can point very simply to the GST. You may not like the GST. You may resent it. You may not like the administration, but there are a number of countries out there where the GST equivalent is 20 percent, 21 percent, 23 percent. Do they not read? Do they not look at the larger picture? Do they not know that this is what has had to occur in other countries?

They only believe that we can continue selling our raw materials and our natural resources until they are gone. Well, we cannot continue on that route any longer. We need to be able to develop a society that is not just dependent on our raw materials and our natural resources, but is dependent on the intelligence, the ingenuity and the resourcefulness of the people who live there. That is what we need to do when we look at the budgets of this country. We have to have confidence in the people that are resident in this country and what they will do with an opportunity. We have to create those opportunities by not strangling them with more taxes.

More taxes will simply put them in a position where they will, as they began to do under the increasing taxation regime that they see in some parts of this country, they begin to say, why should I care? Why should they care?

Madam Deputy Speaker, looking at the economic opportunities that our young people are going to be faced with, and I know it is hard to talk even to my own children about the fact that they have to manage their affairs and husband their resources

for future requirements, but, nevertheless, they are ready to accept the challenge to deal with that.

The educational opportunities in this province are enormous. When the members opposite talk about what is happening in terms of educational opportunities, particularly in our community colleges, and they point to statistics that seem to indicate something other than what is really happening—they point to statistics that say something different than what is really happening, and they say, look, you have gutted the community colleges. That is what the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) just said.

That is what the member for Dauphin says, and if he believes that, then he is going to be the laughing stock of the constituency of Dauphin, because that is the exact opposite of what is happening. The people who are looking at the community colleges for challenges and for opportunities for their young people are finding that the courses that are available now are the courses they need, the courses that are relevant to the future of this province, relevant to the future of the young people who want to go forward and earn a living and be contributors to this society, and they are now having an opportunity to get the type of education that is relevant.

After all, Madam Deputy Speaker, we were faced, believe it or not, with a situation where there were welding instructors on staff who did not have classes. There were hairdressing instructors on staff who did not have classes, so we were out selling the fact that we needed more people in particular classes because we had room there. That was being driven by the availability of staff more than it was by the demand for the job. That is the balance that needs to be struck. That is the difference that the people of Manitoba are demanding today from their leaders. That is why they believe that the decisions that we are making, while they are difficult, will lead us into better economic times.

I pointed to the agricultural industry and the fact that they now are pointing to some strength. I can sleep soundly at night because I know that the decisions that we put into this budget, every one of them was canvassed carefully. It was canvassed with a view of making sure that the basic and needed infrastructure was protected, and I believe the people in this province will accept this budget.

Thank you.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Deputy Speaker, as I rise to speak today I would like to begin with the Bible and then move on to the budget and apply some of the insights from the Biblical passages to this budget. I am doing so in response to a quotation that the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) showed me a few days ago and which the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme) quoted in Question Period just the other day. I think he was probably using the revised standard version of Ecclesiastes, Chapter 10, verse two, and I quote: "A wise man's heart inclines him toward the right, but a fool's heart toward the left."

It is interesting that they chose the revised standard version that was translated initially in 1881. I would prefer to use the Jerusalem Bible of 1966 which says: "The wise man's heart leads him aright, the fool's heart leads him astray," or the new translation of the Bible by James Moffat of 1926 which says: "A wise man's sense will keep him right: a fool's mind leads him wrong," or today's English version which is much more recent: "It is natural for a wise man to do the right thing and for a fool to do the wrong thing."

I just happen to have the King James version with me as well: "A wise man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart is at his left."

What we really need here is some exegesis so that the members opposite can understand the true meaning of this passage, not the surface meaning that they would like to convey to us. The author of Ecclesiastes observes that the sage's understanding tends to a favourable outcome in contrast to the fool whose inner disposition brings ruin. This chapter praises wisdom over folly, and there are many more proverbs in this passage which recognize the superiority of wisdom. The author does not intend to teach that there is a physiological difference in the body of fools and wise people, rather he refers to their conduct.

* (1600)

The fool believes that everyone he meets on the road is a fool. That is another proverb from Ecclesiastes. Verse 12 says: "The words of a wise man's mouth win him favour, but the lips of a fool consume him." Ecclesiastes 9, verses 17 and 18: "The words of the wise heard in quiet are better than the shouting of a ruler among fools. Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good."

Socrates who lived from approximately 470 to 399 B.C. said: "The beginning of wisdom is the definition of terms." Well, how do we define wisdom and how did Ecclesiastes define wisdom? Well, wisdom to the Hebrews is superior to mere knowledge for it includes also knowledge in conduct, ethical and religious. Wisdom in Ecclesiastes means the need for wisdom in social and religious affairs. Wisdom is defined as that faculty of common sense that enables one to distinguish between what is to one's advantage and what is harmful.

Well, let us apply this to the budget and ask ourselves, what is it about this budget that is to one's advantage and what is it that is harmful? What is good about this budget and what is harmful? I would like to do that in the context of my constituents in Burrows and apply it to the people whom I represent here. I would like to do that in a number of categories. [interjection] The member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) is encouraging me to do this honestly and I will. I would like to talk about how this budget applies to taxpayers, to the unemployed, to seniors, to children and students, and then wind up with some conclusions.

First of all, the vast majority of my constituents in Burrows are certainly taxpayers. In spite of the fact that there are large numbers of poor people, and poor people are over-represented in the constituency of Burrows, I am sure that the vast majority pay taxes. In fact, as a result of the Minister of Finance's (Mr. Manness) budget, more people are going to be taxed rather than fewer, in spite of the fact that many of them are low-income people.

Why is that? Well, the reason is that we have numerous tax increases, and all one has to do is to look at the minister's Estimates of Revenue of the Province of Manitoba to see some of those. For example, the gasoline tax—revenue is estimated to increase from \$136 million to \$152 million; the retail sales tax—revenue increase from \$581 million to \$630 million; and similarly, the other large increase in revenue, of course, is from lotteries. So if you look near the end of the Estimates, you see that lotteries estimated revenue is going to go up from \$66 million to approximately \$83 million.

Speaking of wisdom and folly, I think there is great folly in depending on revenue from lotteries for the government, because we know that, although now it is increasing, it is not dependable, that if the recession gets worse, if the economy gets worse

and people do not have money, the revenue the minister is counting on could easily decline.

We also know that it is folly for a number of other reasons. We know that the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) are aware of the fact that families are spending money on lotteries and on gambling of different kinds and, as a result, having to come back to social assistance workers for a second issue or for emergency monies, because they have spent their money on gambling.

In spite of that, this government is encouraging it by building two bingo palaces, for example, in the city of Winnipeg, which is surely going to make playing bingo even more attractive than it is now and more attractive to people who cannot afford it. I think in the long run that is folly.

This government has said many, many things about taxation, and I would just like to quote some of them. For example, on April 8, 1988: Eventually the Tories would be able to eliminate other punitive provincial taxes, Mr. Filmon told the business group.

August 22, 1988: During the most recent election campaign, we promised Manitobans that we would not increase their personal income taxes for at least four years—Premier Filmon.

June 9, 1989: Because we have shown our confidence in the private sector, they are responding with the kinds of full-time jobs that we must have—Premier Filmon.

Election campaign, Leaders' debate, August '90: Our commitment is to not raise taxes—Premier Filmon, another promise broken.

September 3, 1990, rainy day fund: We are ensuring that revenue shortfalls are not made up at the expense of health care or through increased taxes to Manitobans—Premier Filmon, two more promises broken.

In fact this government is raising revenue through health care fees, direct fees and through increasing taxes to Manitobans. Two promises broken in one sentence.

Throne speech response after majority, October 23, 1990, quote: We have had growth levels in both investment and in actual growth that are amongst the highest in the country. That has happened as a result of changes that we have been making. We will continue to make changes to keep taxes down

to ensure that our deficit is no higher than it needs to be—Premier Filmon, another promise broken.

Promise on taxes and budget response, November 1, 1990, quote: I am particularly proud that once again we were able to avoid any increase in personal income taxes this year in the budget. I am committed to fulfill our pledge to keep taxes down throughout our term in government. We intend to keep that promise—Premier Filmon, another promise broken.

March 8, 1991: The long term is that we have got to keep the deficit down and keep taxes down so the economy can recover and grow strong again—Premier Filmon.

An Honourable Member: Did they go down?

Mr. Martindale: Did the deficit go down? No, the deficit went up every year. Did they keep taxes down? No. Revenue is increasing from taxes, and the number and the variety of taxes are increasing, and the number of people they apply to are being broadened, and that the economy can recover. Is the economy recovering? No.

March 11, 1991: We will work with the opposition parties to keep taxes down and to keep the deficit down so that we can indeed be an attractive climate in which to have investment and job creation in the future—Premier Filmon.

Have they kept the deficit down? No. Is this an attractive climate for investment and job creation? Well, it might be an attractive climate, but they are not doing anything about the governmental role and responsibility in job creation or investment.

March 19, 1991: Mr. Speaker, we are going to do everything in our power to keep taxes down in this province, because we believe that is the way this province will grow, and over the past three years we have made steady progress in improving our province's finances. Who said that? Premier Filmon. Have they kept taxes down? No.

April 25, 1991: This province cannot bear any more taxes. Who said that? Premier Filmon. Did they keep that promise? No. We recognize that the first thing government wants to do to encourage economic growth is to step aside, get out of the way and let the people who really take risks and make investments do their thing—Premier Filmon. Are they stepping aside? Yes. Are they doing nothing? Yes. Are people taking risks and investing in Manitoba? Not very often. Not very many.

December 17, 1991: We decided at that time, 1988, that the best thing we could do was to make the economy more competitive by getting us out as much as possible of these deficits and, as well, starting to work on the taxation side—Premier Filmon. Well, is the economy more competitive and are deficits going down? No, the deficits are going up.

Filmon's last budget speech, March 20, 1992: Manitobans know that what we are doing by consistent, by relevant policy matters, by keeping the taxes down, the deficit down, and building a stronger foundation, will position us better for the economic recovery and the growth that we know will happen. Well, I guess it was not short-term growth from '92 to '93. Did they keep taxes down? No, they raised taxes. Did they decrease the deficit? No, the deficit went up. Gee, the same day we have got three or four quotes here.

At the Conservative convention Premier Filmon said: And despite the short-term pain, all Manitobans are better off.

The Filmon government strategy has been simple. By keeping taxes down and controlling the deficit, the investment would grow and growth would be created. That is their strategy. Has it worked? No.

I found a wonderful quotation in the *Parliamentarian* about budget debate in Westminster. This is from the *Parliamentarian* of January 1993. The Right Honourable Kenneth Baker said at Westminster: "... future Treasury forecasting should be given no more validity than that accorded to a crystal ball in a gypsy's tent." I think that applies equally well to this Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), because his deficit projections are way out, his revenue projections are way out.

* (1610)

I regret that the member at Westminster referred to gypsies. I think it is a pejorative reference. I have gypsies in my constituency. I visit with them. They are fine people. However, it is a quote that I think bears some relevancy here since it refers to a Finance minister with a crystal ball. I am referring to a Finance minister whose deficit projections are way out and whose income projections are way out, and he should be using—maybe he is using a crystal ball instead of a calculator. [interjection]

The member says that his expenditure forecasts are right on. Well, we are glad to hear that. In fact, one of the things that this minister has been projecting is great increases in social assistance, and every year those projections come pretty close to the mark because every year more and more people are on provincial social assistance and, indeed, the costs do go up and up and up.

So what is happening to taxpayers in Burrows constituency and, indeed, to all taxpayers? Almost everything that I am talking about here in terms of taxpayers, the unemployed, seniors, children, students, applies to those people, regardless of where they live in Manitoba. So what is true of Burrows is true of the province. So we see we have tax hikes. We have the property tax hike. We have fuel tax hike. We have harmonization of the PST and the GST, which will bring in large amounts of revenue. In fact, I suspect that the figures that I was quoting for increased retail sales tax revenue, which is up from \$581 million to \$630 million, my guess is that probably most of that is being raised by harmonization of GST and PST, unless, of course, this minister thinks that the economy is in recovery and the result is that his general sales tax revenue will be way up. I doubt if that is going to happen.

Secondly, I would like to talk about the unemployed and the lack of job creation on the part of this government. Recently, there was a church and community inquiry into unemployment. One of my constituents presented a brief to this inquiry on February 25, 1993. This was a very interesting person, because this is someone who was gainfully employed, someone who worked for a major grain company in Winnipeg in a clerical or a secretarial position and found herself unemployed in 1984.

She went back to school. She was unsuccessful in getting the career position she wanted and ended up in 1991 on social assistance. One of the programs that she took part in which I think this Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) should force the City of Winnipeg to change or alter is the community home services program of the City of Winnipeg. I presume that the province is jointly funding this with the federal government because it is a city employment program for people on social assistance. However, it is considered a training program, so they do not have to pay the minimum wage. Instead of paying \$5 an hour, they pay \$4 an hour.

People are doing things like cleaning houses. I am told by the people who have been working in this community home services program that there is no training, that they are sent out to an address and told this is what you are going to be doing. I think that is really exploiting the poor and in this case people who want to work, people who are on city social assistance who would rather be out cleaning houses than sitting at home feeling sorry for themselves.

I would like to raise this in Family Services Estimates and ask the minister what he thinks of this program which I think is taking advantage of social assistance recipients and see if there is anything that this minister can do about it. After all, he has the ability to standardize social assistance rates and cut off benefits for people on city social assistance; thereby, perhaps he can have some influence in making improvement to a program instead of passing regressive legislation. Well, the very least that they should do is raise it to the minimum wage.

My constituent who presented this brief, Donna Ansell, says, "I have gone through a gamut of emotions in the past couple of years." I wanted to use her brief to point out how people feel when they are unemployed.

She says of her emotions, "They have been disbelief, envy, anger and frustration just to name a few. Right now the biggest problem that I am having is realizing that there is nothing wrong with me and that I am not stupid, uneducated et cetera.

"I am not going to apologize for sounding cynical, because I am."

We have a large number of people in Burrows constituency and across Manitoba who are unemployed. This does terribly devastating things to them as persons in terms of their self-esteem or their lack of self-esteem, their lack of pride and the lack of self-confidence in their own abilities mainly because they have been trying to find jobs and have been unsuccessful.

In fact, I have had people call me about some of their attempts to find employment. Someone phoned me and said they were applying to be a lineman. I cannot remember if this was with MTS or Manitoba Hydro, but they found out that 150 people applied for six positions. Thirty of them were interviewed. This individual was not hired because he already had an electrician's certificate so he felt that he was overqualified and therefore turned down. I was told that the Lotteries commission

advertised for part-time evening and weekend jobs at the new bingo palaces and had 5,000 applicants—5,000 applicants for positions at a bingo palace, probably unskilled jobs.

There are many, many people out there who want to work and do not have the opportunity and, yet, what do we see in this budget? We see almost no references to jobs, no references to job creation and no initiatives by this government in terms of direct job creation. That is one of the reasons why the Leader of the official opposition has said in his amendment that we regret that this government's inaction on job creation means more hardship for many thousands of Manitoba families.

I believe that this government is undertaking regressive measures which are actually going to increase the number of people who are unemployed and make them less employable in the future.

The best example of that is the elimination of the student social allowance program. I understand that the students, when they enroll in this program, who are on social assistance and then have been part of the student social allowance program, their income is \$30 less when they are going to school than on social assistance. Why would this government eliminate a program which is actually cheaper than having people on social assistance?—unless of course it is to offload it to the City of Winnipeg, because what is going to happen is that if they cannot somehow afford to continue going to school they will apply for city social assistance. The rules are that if you are on city social assistance, you cannot be going to school. The reason for that is that on city social assistance, you must be available for work and looking for work, and you cannot go to school and be looking for work at the same time.

It is a very regressive measure, and why are they doing it when this program is cheaper in terms of the amount of money given to individuals than it would be if they were getting social assistance? I think the only reason could be that they are offloading it to the City of Winnipeg. [interjection]

Well, we heard this same kind of argument from the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) yesterday or the day before. I think that argument does not hold water, because it is next to impossible to either get three jobs to put oneself through school or to earn enough money from part-time jobs to put yourself through school if

you are a full-time student, because (a) the jobs are not there, and (b) they do not pay well enough to put yourself through. As my colleague from Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) points out, the tuition fees were much cheaper when some of us were in university.

* (1620)

Next, I would like to talk about the implication on seniors in Burrows constituency and elsewhere. I believe this is the biggest single hit in this budget and probably the most regressive facet of this budget, and that is the changes to the property tax credit. There is a change of \$75, but there is also a change so that the minimum, instead of being \$100, is \$250. Now there are many people in my constituency who are only paying \$100 in property taxes, and they are immediately going to be paying \$250.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

This is not something that is income tested. This is something that is going to hit them regardless of their income. We are really talking about people on fixed incomes, many of whom are people who have paid off their mortgages and, for some of them, their only source of income is old age security and the guaranteed income supplement, especially when it comes to widows who may not be getting any other kind of pension income. We believe this is going to hit thousands of people, and it is going to affect them adversely.

The second program that is adversely going to affect seniors are the changes to home care and the new health care fees that are a result of this budget. People may not realize that this is happening to them today or it is happening to their neighbours today, but when they get sick and when they receive the services of home care, then they will find out about these new user fees.

Some of them are hidden. Some of them, for example, will be the cost of installing equipment. For example, if you install bars beside a bathtub or a toilet, you are going to have to hire somebody. It might cost you \$150 to install those bars. That is not the kind of thing that this government is talking about, but that is the kind of charge, that is the kind of health care user fee that our constituents are going to be faced with, and many of them cannot afford this. This is going to be a hardship for them.

Next, I would like to talk about the effects on children, because I believe there are many, many effects on children. Of course, we are already

aware of some of these because many of those regressive measures were already announced in the Family Services Estimates. So, for example, we see increases in child care fees, an additional fee levied on children.

This government talks a lot about sharing the pain and about tough decisions, but they do not consider anyone's ability to pay. Many of these increases apply across the board to everyone. If someone is on social allowance, where are they going to get the money? If they are a student going to university, where are they going to get the money? We know what is going to happen. They are going to drop out.

Now, maybe that is this government's goal. I do not think that many of the members in this cabinet believe in child care, so they probably do not care if children are forced to drop out. I think there is a total lack of analysis in these budget decisions. I do not think they studied the effects on children. I do not think they studied the effects on parents who are employed. I do not think they studied the effects on parents who are in university, to see what the effect would be of increasing a fee, because if they did, they would find out that the effect is certainly going to be that parents are going to withdraw their children. Some of them, therefore, will not be able to continue being employed, and some of them will not continue going to university.

So this government would rather pay people to stay home and collect social assistance than pay them to be in the workforce or pay them to be in university. That is what they are saying to these people. We do not care if you stay home and collect welfare. We would rather have you do that, because maybe it is cheaper, I do not know.

The parents are saying, we realize that education is the key to our future. We want to stay in university or community college or a private business college, because we know that is our key to getting a better job and being self-supporting and getting off these subsidies. This government does not really believe in that, so they increased the fees. People will take their kids out, and they will drop out of university or out of community college or out of a private college.

I have been getting phone calls from parents in all three. Instead, they will sit at home and many of them will not be able to get jobs, and they will be on social assistance. The people who are working part time, which is a growing segment of our population, putting their children in child care part time, if they

have to withdraw, if they lose that subsidized space, if they get a full-time job or they get another job, they are not going to get back in.

In fact, this government has been quite deceitful because in—[interjection] Well, I do not find it in the book, Mr. Speaker. However, if the members opposite are offended by my use of the word "deceitful", then I will withdraw it as a courtesy, but I still believe it is true, because what they did in their press release—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would like to remind the honourable member for Burrows, and I indeed did thank him for withdrawing that comment of his, of being deceitful, but generally when we withdraw a comment, we do it unqualified. Now, at this point in time, I will ask the honourable member to withdraw said comment, unqualified.

Mr. Martindale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will make an unqualified withdrawal.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the honourable member for Burrows.

Mr. Martindale: The point I was trying to make, Mr. Speaker, is if you look at the press release of this government, of this Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), it says, we are going to reduce the number of subsidized child care spaces from 10,000 to 9,600, and they used the word "spaces."

Now, a few weeks later, the policy is being implemented. We have letters going out to child care directors. It is not saying "spaces." It is saying "cases." The way it is being explained to me is, these spaces are sometimes not filled up with one child, but two or three children who are sharing part time, and that there is a big difference between the number of spaces and the number of cases. Well, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) shrugs his shoulders. Maybe the Minister of Finance is not aware of it, but I am sure that the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) is aware of it because the letters are going out over his name, and we will find out the details to this in Question Period or Family Services Estimates.

So what the government is doing is they are saying one thing in their press release and doing another thing when they put it into action. What this government is doing is they are giving the impression, oh, this is not so bad, but when we see the effect when it is actually applied in child care centres there are many, many more people who are

losing their place in child care, many women who are employed part time, and if they do not have child care they are not going to stay in the labour force.

That is the last thing that this Minister of Finance wants is to have more people unemployed, more people ending up on social assistance, either in the city or the province, and making his labour statistics look worse, and that is the effect of this policy. I believe it is wrong, it is stupid. What they should be doing is continuing to ensure that people can stay in the workforce so that they can pay taxes so that the revenue of this government goes up, not down.

But this government is thick. They do not understand that. They do not realize that if people are not working and they are on social assistance they are not paying taxes. That does not make any sense to me. That does not make any sense to us on this side.

What else has this government done? Well, they have decreased the rates they are paying to foster parents and the foster parents have reacted, and they have said, we are not going to take any new children; and the government says, oh, we will find foster parents, presumably through Child and Family Services. But what have they done to the Child and Family Services budget? In the City of Winnipeg they have cut the budget and so we have the director, the CEO, Mr. Keith Cooper, saying, our staff is understaffed. They are overworked and now we are going to lose thousands of hours because of enforced layoffs. How can we provide the service?

So I asked the minister in Question Period, who speaks for the Department of Family Services, the Minister of Family Services, or the CEO from Winnipeg, Mr. Keith Cooper? Because one is saying, oh, we will find more foster family homes and we will provide the service. Everything is taken care of, it will all be there. We do not really need the family foster care association of Manitoba, we will do it through our agency. And what is the director of the agency saying? We are overworked, we are understaffed and we are going to lose thousands of hours of staff delivery time because of the forced 10 days layoff. So once again, this government is doing something that might be penny wise but pound foolish. I think the costs in the long run are going to be greater because some of these children are going to end up in motels and hotels. We have already seen the cost of this as provided by the foster care association. They estimate a minimum

of \$220 a day which is much, much greater than the foster family rate.

What other effect will this budget have on children? Well, another effect will be for children whose parents are on social assistance because this government is broadening the base of their tax system. They are saying that the sources of income that used to be exempt, like social allowance, will now be included as income. They have also reduced funding for social assistance by 2 percent. So these people are going to be worse off, and the situation is already bad.

* (1630)

I mean, where are these parents going to save the money? Are they going to take it out of the food budget? Are they going to go to food banks more often? Are they going to take it out of a clothing budget? Are they going to take it out of the rent budget? I am quite sure they will not be taking it out of the rent budget, because many people are using their only discretionary money, money for food, personal needs and household needs to top up their rents so that they can get better accommodation. This is the reason that we have moved an amendment.

There are many, many reasons, but these are amongst them. For example, in Clause (c) our Leader said, we regret that as a result of this government's callous and unfair cuts in government services for education, health care, social programs, such as the reduction in the Children's Dental Program in rural and northern Manitoba, home care cuts and reductions for schools and universities, Manitobans are losing their hope for the future.

The last category I would like to look at is students. We believe that students, probably all students, are being negatively affected by this budget. For example, we have the elimination of the student social allowance program, a very regressive measure. We have clawbacks and cuts to university budgets. We have clawbacks and cuts to the public school system, therefore all students are being affected by this. We have seen—

An Honourable Member: It is a contribution.

Mr. Martindale: This government does not want to be honest. They do not want to say, this is a tax increase. They called it a contribution. I believe that is a direct quote from the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard): This is your contribution to—I presume a

contribution to reducing the deficit. They will not admit that it is a tax to help reduce the deficit, a user fee on health care. So we believe that all students are being asked to sacrifice for this government's ideology.

Now the members opposite, the government members, are always saying to us, well what would you do? How would you increase revenue? What would you do differently? So I have some suggestions. [interjection] The government members are cheering, but they will not like my examples. They will not do anything about them.

From time to time, this Premier (Mr. Filmon) and this government criticizes the federal government, and it usually has to do with jobs that are not coming to Manitoba or something that they disagree with because it is more popular in Manitoba to criticize the federal government than to not criticize them. We know that from time to time they are willing to criticize, but let us see if they are willing to ask for something, see if they are willing to put in a request to get the federal government to change the way they collect revenue so that Manitoba might get more.

One example is the lifetime capital gains exemption. For example, it is down to \$100,000. That is a change. It used to be \$500,000. But the cost to the federal government in 1988 was \$855 million and \$985 million in 1989. That is lost revenue. So if this government thinks that they are not getting enough money under federal-provincial equalization payments, why do you not ask the federal government to change and get rid of the capital gains exemption?

We know that the total cost of this, since the Conservative government brought it in, is billions of dollars. Now, some of that goes into job creation, but there is really no requirement that people create jobs in order to get the benefit. Much of it has gone into purchasing art and yachts and other things that appreciate in value that people do not have to pay tax on, and I do not think there is any justification for that whatsoever.

Another example would be the 21-year extension to private family trusts. We do not even know how much money that is. The federal government estimates that billions of dollars are in private family trusts. We know that the Bronfman family trust alone is \$70 million and it has not been taxed for the last 21 years. That was a Liberal policy, by the way,

of the last Liberal government in Ottawa, and now the federal Conservative government is going to extend it for another 21 years. So if this government says we are not getting enough money from Ottawa—in fact, Ottawa is calling back money from the Province of Manitoba—and if you want to change that, here are two suggestions where you could ask the federal government to change their tax laws, so they would have more revenue to pass on to Manitoba.

I have another suggestion. This one has to do with Manitoba. The headline in the Free Press says, "Corporate tax arrears climbing." I believe this is from April 3, 1993: "Manness blames recession, denies going easy on Tory friends." What do we find? I will quote, "Manness, on the eve of delivering a bad-news budget Tuesday, said in an interview that the recession has caused tax arrears to climb in the province over the last 12 months to \$11.5 million."

And why is this? Well, it is because businesses are collecting money and not passing it on to the government. It is not coming out of the businesses' pocket; it is coming from their customers' pocket, but they are not passing it on. And where is the money owed? For example, "Retail sales tax: More than \$9 million is owed by businesses that collect sales tax from customers but have not forwarded the money to the province. That figure has grown from nearly \$8 million a year ago." So the amount of money is going up. The tax arrears are going up. Where else is the money coming from? "Payroll tax: \$1.65 million was owed by companies as of the end of February." That is actually down. Maybe they are getting tougher with the payroll tax. The corporate capital tax, \$1.8 million is owed, up from \$1.58 million.

When you suggest to the Minister of Finance that he hire more staff to collect it, he will not.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I believe that this budget is going to perpetuate a trend in our society to have haves and have-nots, that there are going to be more people who are going to be have-nots at the bottom, and fewer people at the top who are haves and fewer people in the middle who are less well off than before this budget. I think this is detrimental to my constituents in Burrows and to many, many other people. I would like to conclude with a quote from the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, on their report, Profile on Poverty: On the Impact on Children: "If none of this is enough to

influence policy makers to get serious about the problems of poverty, perhaps the anger of the poor, which can quickly turn to violence, should be taken into account"—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. Harold Neufeld (Rossmore): Mr. Speaker, in 18 days it will be exactly five years since I entered this august Chamber. Of those years I spent four years in cabinet and on Treasury Board. Anybody with reasonable intelligence should be able to pick up something that he might think or she might think will improve the credibility of the politicians and the government. I do believe I am reasonably intelligent, although that may be open to some debate, as will some of the suggestions I might have for you this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, over the years I have probably, and my family will probably in the future, my children and my grandchildren will probably contribute more than most to the government coffers. Unemployment insurance, to which I contributed for some 35 years, I will never collect. The old age security, which I have contributed to, and there was a time when there was a separate line on the income tax return for that, I will never collect. I expect by the time my children get to collect their Canada Pension Plan there will be nothing available for them. So I do believe we have to do something in order to make Canada, and Manitoba in particular, a better place to live.

I would like to think we should be less concerned about casting blame on how we got here and more concerned about how we are going to get out of here. We should learn from the past and not dwell on it.

Mr. Speaker, let me give you a few points that I think are important to improve the credibility of politicians, and I do believe they need improvement. First of all, I would like to see an eight-year term maximum for all politicians. I would like to see the conflict-of-interest guidelines strengthened. The guidelines that we have today mean absolutely nothing. I have filled out guidelines for five years now and it does not mean a thing. Placing one's asset in a blind trust is a joke. It seems to me that you show me someone that leaves his life's savings in a blind trust to be run by another, I will show you someone who is soon to lose his life's savings.

* (1640)

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that we should have a pension plan. I can see no reason to have a pension plan whose benefits are twice the amount of the best pension plan otherwise available to Canadians. I would like to see a salary level equal to the salaries received by the member of this House prior to coming into this Chamber. Otherwise, what greater conflict of interest can one have than to know one must be re-elected in order to maintain a lifestyle? I will grant you there should be a minimum and there should be a maximum.

Mr. Speaker, I have already said there should be a maximum and there should be a minimum, but I do believe you can have no greater conflict of interest than to have to vote in a way that is going to get you re-elected.

Let me speak a little bit about this budget that we have presented. Mr. Speaker, deficits are not a product of this year's Estimates. Deficits are a product of many previous years' budgets and Estimates. The reason for that, of course, is that programs with a cost base have to be maintained at that base, at least, it seems to me, by most departments, and it is in order to reduce that base, we must get into the departments and make sure that the programs are being delivered as efficiently as possible. We do not have that today.

I would like to see a maximum borrowing authority by government, and I would like to see that maximum borrowing authority in terms of the amount of interest that may be charged in the budget in any one year. In other words, the interest could never exceed a percentage of the tax revenues collected. It is through increased borrowings that in the end we will be put into a position of not being able to carry out the programs that we wish to carry out.

Mr. Speaker, I became involved because I thought I might improve the conditions that might otherwise exist for my children and for my grandchildren. I was naive when I came into this Chamber. I believed that politics would be left at the campaign office. Sadly, that is not the case. I do not believe I have become a polished politician. I do not consider myself a politician; I hope I am not a politician. I believe I was elected to represent all the residents of Manitoba and more particularly in Rossmere, and I will represent them regardless of their own political affiliation.

All too often when I have been approached I have been told that the individual has been a Tory all his life, and for some reason then expects a decision or for me to work for him or her in a way that I might otherwise not work if they were not Tories. I have run into some difficulties, within the last week as a matter of fact, by telling people that I would work for them regardless of their political affiliation, and do not ever come to me and tell me to work for them because they are Tories. I do not carry a Tory card, so I am not a politician. I will work for those for whom I think have a cause and those who deserve that cause to be worked on.

Some Honourable Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Neufeld: Being naive, Mr. Speaker, when you come into this Chamber, it can give you some grief, and I did bleed. At one time I said I am going to get out of here before my grandchildren can read because they think I am a nice guy. [interjection] They are very bright, and it is possible that they are now learning to read, but we are keeping the papers away from them.

I have not always agreed with members of my caucus, and I think my caucus members will agree that I have not always agreed, but I think we have a respect for one another. I mentioned to a couple of colleagues yesterday that I would be speaking, and they said, have you got something good to say? I said, well, everything I say will not be something you agree with. They said, well, we will be surprised if it did. That is all.

Let us talk a little about the budget. Before we do let us talk a little bit about last year's, I guess we call it, a projection, do we? First of all, the Stabilization Fund is not a revenue amount that I would like to see in the Estimates. I am in full agreement with levelling out. I am in full agreement with taking monies from the good years and applying them against the years that will not be as good, but I do not believe that it should be an item that is used to reduce a deficit in any year.

Have a separate schedule to show what we are doing, but the deficit should show up so that—because as I said earlier, deficits are a product of the previous year's Estimates. If that is our base point and if we start with that point, we have to be in a position to not increase—if we increase those expenditures, we have to increase the revenues even more than the amount of the Stabilization Fund transfer has been, so we require new revenues. So

I would like to see a separate statement prepared. I am in full agreement with long-term budgeting, as you might expect I would be with my background as an accountant.

I would like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that the Finance minister has indicated in his budget that, and I will read: "In the medium term, this situation is not expected to change. In fact, total program expenditure will continue to decline 1% in 1994/95, and remain flat through 1996/97." That is good news.

I look at the forecast for '92-93, and I see at the bottom \$562 million, \$200 million of which is a transfer from the Stabilization Fund. Much has been said about that, and I agree that it is not an item to be considered as having reduced our budget because budget deficits are expenditures. Over and above that, we have an extraordinary liability shown here as \$67 million.

Then I read Note 2 on that same page, and it says, in 1992-93, the federal government changed the methodology for determining population numbers used for calculating transfer payments. This change has resulted in the province owing the federal government \$167 million, of which \$100 million pertains to prior years, which tells me that while the \$100 million may not be this year's deficit, there is another \$100 million in debt that was not there in 1992, March 31. You might say that the deficit this year was not 562, but indeed it was 862. That is the difference between last year's debt and this year's debt.

The good news is that expenditures for 1993-94 have not risen above the 1992-93 forecast expenditures, and that is, I do believe, good news because that sends a signal that we are going to make certain that we are going to control the expenditures for next year and years to come.

* (1650)

Next year's budget stands in here at \$367 million, of which \$30 million is a transfer from the Stabilization Fund, which I have already indicated I will not accept as a reduction of the deficit, so our deficit is in fact \$397 million, \$60 million of which is a reduction from the lottery fund, and I do believe that lottery and VLT monies should come into general revenues and be treated by government as general revenues and distributed as they see fit. I think that transferring money or a percentage of certain revenues to other jurisdictions or other

committees abdicates by government the responsibility it has to spend the money it receives.

I think that when we talk about deficits we should never forget that deficits are future taxes. I heard one gentleman on television the other day, the day after the budget came out, and he said, the past generations have benefited from the taxes that I am going to pay, and that is absolutely right.

I think that is a sad indictment upon our generation to confer such a debt on the future. If you look at the additional debt that will be carried by Manitoba, other provinces in Canada, for 1993-94, it is estimated by someone who knows better than I to be in excess of \$65 billion. That represents approximately \$2,500 per person in Canada, or for a family of four, \$10,000 additional debt.

I have to ask: How long can we keep this up? When do we say no? It is true there are many programs deserving of funding, but how long can we keep it up? Once broke, we cannot provide any of the programs or any of the services that we are now providing. Once we cannot borrow any longer, the game is over.

I refer you to page 5 of the budget, and even though we have held or are holding expenditures down for next year, we have since 1988 increased the Health budget by \$504 million. That is 38 percent. That is five years, 38 percent, \$504 million. Since 1988, we have increased the Education budget by \$259 million, or 34 percent. Since 1988 we have increased the Family Services budget by \$247 million, or 60 percent.

Fast figuring tells me, that is about a billion dollars, and I ask you, if we are going to increase it by a billion dollars every five years, as the opposition would have us do, how long will it be before we are broke? How long will it be before we can no longer borrow? Not very long, I suggest to you.

I believe the overall expenditure increase of \$1 billion represents roughly a 20 percent increase in spending in five years, and that means that in 20 years or so or less, we will double our budget. Can we double our revenue? We know we cannot, so we have to start making choices. We have to take priorities.

We cannot continue to tax because we want industry to settle in Manitoba. We want our elderly to stay in Manitoba, and more particularly, we want the elderly who pay their own way and who indeed contribute to the tax regime to stay here and spend

their money here and pay taxes here. The elderly with money are mobile, and you will not keep them here if you continue to tax them.

I have done some research on the taxation regime in other areas. It will not take much to allow someone to take up residence in Florida, for example, pay the \$5,000 a year in health premiums and live there for six months and one day on their tax savings. Now, how do you keep them here if they ordinarily would stay there for six months and less one day, and add two days to it and become residents for tax purposes of the United States, and they can live there for six months on their tax savings? It does not take much.

Keep on taxing and you are going to lose the people you most want to keep, the ones that are contributing towards the tax regime, the ones that are contributing to the welfare of the province.

I know that from the opposition benches we will not get too much credit for the budget. I also know that from the government benches you will not get too much criticism. I do believe that I am adding a more balanced approach to this. I hope I am.

If we take the advice of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), we will never spend enough. If we take the advice of a number of the—[interjection] Well, if that is not the case, I am sorry because that is the impression that has been left with me, and my hearing is still pretty good.

I have seen so often, in answer to questions in this House, a minister standing at his seat and talking about how much more money we are spending on that particular—as justification for the question that has been asked, and I do not think we will ever spend enough so that is to me not an answer that should be given. The answer should be what we are doing and not how much we are spending.

All too often, the opposition, and the media pick that up, equates spending to program either reduction or improvement. If we spend less, we must have cut our programs. That is not necessarily so. Efficiency, good management can lead to reduced cost of delivering programs.

I do believe, Mr. Speaker, that we cannot do this alone. I have mentioned earlier that we should work together and not dwell on the past. I think we have to work together. I do not think that government on its own can right the financial position we are in.

Government must, in the area of health, have the co-operation of not only doctors in hospitals but also patients. Patients must understand the cost, and patients must understand that, when it is not absolutely necessarily, they should not take the time and the money of medical services. Doctors should understand that they need not use every piece of equipment at their disposal in order to examine somebody if it is not necessary. It is unfortunate, I think, that all too often they are doing this out of fear of the judicial system. If they do not use every piece of equipment that is at their disposal they could end up in court, and they are concerned.

* (1700)

I think in terms of education there is no reason that I can see that we cannot earn our own way through college. When I was of that age there was no help from government. We paid our own way. We found ways to make the money. We had to. Mr. Speaker, I worked. Anybody can. They have to want to.

I will tell you a story. In our family there were five children. My father's highest income year was \$5,800. We all worked. We worked together. My mother did housekeeping for others. She did sewing for one reason only. My father took second jobs for one reason only. To help their kids get an education.

I worked as unskilled labour at the minimum wage in a machine shop. I worked on a section gang of the CPR. I worked as a molder at Anthes Foundry, now Ancast, and I worked as an assistant shipping clerk in a school supply house. [interjection]

The member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) asks, what were the tuition fees? Tuition fees cannot be related to the tuition fees of that day. Tuition fees have to be related to the monies you earn now as opposed to the monies we earned then. I earned 25 cents an hour, and my tuition at that time was \$265 a year. So relative to the cost of education the wages were probably less than they are today.

Mr. Speaker, I have something here that I would like to read to you: I have been a student. I worked summers on the railway. I paid my way through university and college. I am proud of the education that I got, but I paid for it. I went out and found my own job, and I paid for my education. I felt very privileged to be able to have that education, to have the taxpayers pick up 85 percent of the cost of the education.

That was spoken by Premier Mike Harcourt. So it is not just the hard-hearted Tories who think that way.

I get a little tired when I hear about hard-hearted Tories, noncaring, heartless. I have to say, and I will say it here, I have probably given more of my time and money to help people who are less fortunate than I am than anybody else in this Chamber. So I am tired when I am told continually that we are hard-hearted.

I heard the Leader of the Liberal Party talk about restructuring, and I knew I had seen that term used before, and it was. I found a special report, President Clinton outlines principle for revolution in government: Today the President has asked Vice-President Gore to lead a revolution in Washington that will change the way government does business. The American people deserve a government that treats them like customers and puts them in charge by providing more choices, better services, less bureaucracy and a good return on their investment.

It goes on to say: There is time to demonstrate that government can be as frugal as any household in America. America's most successful companies restructured to meet the global competition by eliminating unnecessary layers of management.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, we have many layers in government that could be eliminated.

I said before, I will say again, the Manitoba government Civil Service is overstaffed by a minimum of one-third. We could do, therefore, with one-third less staff. We all know how much savings that would create.

I do believe we have started in the right direction. I think the Finance minister has sent a signal to the bureaucracy that he is about to take more drastic action. I am happy, too, that we now have a secretary to the Treasury Board who understands government financing. I am only hopeful that his political masters will allow him to take the steps necessary to put us in a better position.

If you do not think there is too much staff in government, take a look at the paperwork that comes out. As backbenchers, we get an awful lot of paperwork. Nobody has ever, to my knowledge, thought about following the paper trail. What happens to the pieces of paper that are generated? [interjection]

I am glad the member for Ellice asked that.

Ms. Avlis Gray (Crescentwood): I am Crescentwood.

Mr. Neufeld: I am glad she asked that. Crescentwood, pardon me.

An Honourable Member: What did she ask?

Mr. Neufeld: She asked where the ideas come from.

Those ideas build empires. That is where empires are built. All they have to do is convince management one level up that whatever they are going to do, whatever paper they are going to generate is important. All that manager has to do is convince the person one layer ahead of him that it is important and both of them get raises because they move into higher categories. So there is absolutely no brake on increasing staff. Indeed, if you are going to get ahead in the Civil Service, you have to make certain that you increase your staff, because that is the only way you are going to get promotions.

An Honourable Member: Where does the buck stop?

Mr. Neufeld: Well, that is the way it works. I am sorry.

Let me talk briefly about Education. Let me talk briefly about the costs of some of our education. I am amazed that we will spend millions of dollars transporting children to school and then spend additional millions to build them a gym so that they can get some exercise. I think that is incredible.

Mr. Speaker, I will talk a bit about Family Services. When I was in Treasury Board, I asked what the cost of group homes was. From the bureaucracy you will get only a total number of so many million dollars to maintain a group home. I say, I do not know from millions.

There is a group home across the street from my mother's house. My mother takes them baking. There are six boys living there. There are house guests. I said, tell me what that group home costs us, that one group home. It is run by the Children's Home of Winnipeg.

I should mention that we used to have a home in North Kildonan. We still do. It was called Knowles School for Boys—I used to play hockey and football against them when I was young—but the government of the day felt that was not the right environment for young boys so they moved them into group homes in residential areas. They moved so many boys into

group homes that we had to go to Saskatchewan to get more boys to fill up Knowles School for Boys, and that is the truth.

* (1710)

Now, I will tell you what the group home—six boys, across the street from my mother on Cheriton Avenue in North Kildonan, \$346,489. That is per boy \$57,748.17, so I have two children, what do I get? I do not get 57—that is pretax. [interjection] I asked you first. The member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) asks me, what do they do with the money? Mr. Speaker, that is my question exactly. What do they do with the money? They have some 24 homes like this. It is a nonprofit—I get the mumbo jumbo from the bureaucracy. So let us not say we do not have waste. The Children's Home of Winnipeg is a nonprofit organization and they charged \$57,748 per child to be in that home. Now explain nonprofit for me.

There has been much talk today about foster parents. A foster parent gets, without special needs, approximately \$600 per month per child and that is after taxes. That is spendable income. In order for anybody to get \$600 a month after taxes they have to earn about minimum \$840, \$850. If they have two children that is \$1,700 a month for keeping those children. We had two children and—I think I am as well off as most people—we could not afford to spend \$1,700 a month on the children, so explain to me why we must pay that much money for foster homes.

Volunteerism—we have killed volunteerism through a proliferation of government projects. Service clubs used to do an awful lot of work for the needy in the community. I know I was a member of several service clubs. I was a member of a community club. We raised our own money; in various ways we raised money, but now what happened? Government says we have to look after it and government says we have to look after these clubs for one reason only. They want votes. It is all for votes. I suggest to you volunteerism has been killed by a proliferation of government grants to various organizations.

I do not believe in grants of any kind. I have said this before. I do not agree with grants to industry. I do not agree with grants to organizations who for one reason or another feel they need the money. I certainly do not agree with grants to golf clubs. When I ran in 1988—I am a past president of

Rossmere golf club—and Vic Schroeder who was then the member for Rossmere gave them \$60,000, they had not been paid out and they asked me whether I could increase that if I were elected. I said, if I am elected you better have your money in advance, because I am going to vote against it. I do not believe that is what the grants were intended for, and I take nothing away from those of which I am a member.

The member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) asked: Will you vote against the budget? I said earlier that I think that I am here to criticize where I think criticism is necessary, and I am here to credit where I think credit is necessary. I have said, Mr. Speaker, that I agree with the direction we are taking in trying to hold down expenditures. I vote with the budget, because it came down under my threshold, which I had set for myself by some \$3,000.

An Honourable Member: What was your threshold?

Mr. Neufeld: \$400,000.

I cannot hear the member for Crescentwood. I would appreciate if she would speak up. [interjection] Revenue generation. Mr. Speaker, the member for Crescentwood asks very good questions. She asked: What would I do for revenue generation? My view is that until you have your expenditures under control, no amount of new revenue will ever be enough.

It is the same in my family. It is the same in the businesses I was in. It is the same in government. We do not raise new revenue until such a time as we have our expenditures under control and that includes the expenditures I mentioned earlier. That is, we have to be as efficient as we can.

I will say another thing, Mr. Speaker. Before we start cutting programs, we must ensure that every one of our programs are delivered as efficiently as possible. We do not cut programs for the sake of saving money. We cut programs when we have got to the point where they are delivered efficiently, and then if we do not have enough money we may have to cut, but first things first.

There are a few more items that I would like to bring up. I want to mention a few items that are on the revenue budget: No. 1, and I have mentioned this to my colleagues in cabinet when I was in cabinet when I was Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro, the budget calls for \$45 million in water rentals. Mr. Speaker, \$45 million on water

rentals is taxes. It taxes users of Manitoba Hydro. Under what justification can we charge water rentals? The water comes from Saskatchewan. The water comes from Minnesota. The water comes from Ontario. They do not charge us rentals, but for some reason Manitoba Hydro gets to charge a rental. That is one thing.

The other thing is, again, something dear to my heart. The Manitoba Mineral Resources has been stripped of \$16 million this year and the Manitoba Mineral Resources have a mandate. The Manitoba Mineral Resources has monies and \$16 million has been stripped out of their surplus and that will interfere with the mandate that Manitoba Mineral Resources has, I believe. Unless we are prepared—[interjection] No, it is not illegal. The member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) says it is illegal, and Mr. Speaker, it is not illegal.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): No, I was asking. I do not know that.

Mr. Neufeld: No, I do not think it is illegal, but it interferes with the mandate that Manitoba Mineral Resources may have—that I know they have—which is to do exploration work in the North, which is to leverage more monies out of corporations for exploration work, which is to operate mines if they find one.

So, Mr. Speaker, I do believe that I disagree with that, but on balance, I think that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) has done something. I know that he has agonized over it, and he has done something that I did not think he could do, and I will support it.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I find it to be a very interesting position to be in to rise to speak on the budget after the member for Rossmere (Mr. Neufeld) has put his very interesting comments on the record. Yes, as the member for Rossmere says, he always does put interesting comments on the record.

There are some ideas he shared with us that have a certain ring of truth to us on this side of the House, but I certainly disagree with much of his analysis of where we are going and how we got here and what we should do.

Mr. Speaker, we are now speaking on the sixth budget of this government, but what the government is saying in its comments, in its answers to questions, in its press releases and all its discussions about this budget sounds like we are

talking about the first budget of this government, because what the government is saying is we cannot live beyond our means, we have to tighten our belts, we have spent too much, we cannot tax anymore, and those are all, No. 1, very traditional Conservative statements that have been made by Conservative governments in Manitoba, throughout Canada and throughout North America and Europe.

But they are not statements, I believe, that should be made after five budgets of this Conservative government. This Conservative government is now into its sixth budget where they have gone from—when they took office almost exactly five years ago, when the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) opened the books, he discovered a \$58.7 million operating surplus.

* (1720)

(Mr. Jack Penner, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Mr. Acting Speaker, the Minister of Finance talks about figures in this House, and excuse me, after six years and the inability of this government to come up with accurate figures up to and including just today, I do not think we need to listen very carefully to what the Minister of Finance is saying.

The current budget, the sixth in this government's long history of disastrous budgets, projects—I use the word "projects" carefully because a budget is a plan and it never can be a certainty. As we know, Mr. Acting Speaker, from the history of the past five budgets of this government, these figures, it is lucky that it is not carved in stone because there will be changes and most likely in the wrong direction. This budget projects a deficit, or the misunderstanding at the end of this fiscal year, of somewhere over three-quarters of a billion dollars. We are not sure whether it is \$762 million or \$862 million, but well over three-quarters of a billion dollars. This is from a government that says, we must live on a budget. I find it very, very interesting.

Where are we at the beginning of the Budget Debate on the sixth budget of this provincial government? Well, I can tell you where we are in Manitoba. When comparing Manitoba's economic growth rates on, I believe, about 17 criteria, our critic for Finance, the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), has shown that in every category, except for manufacturing shipments and in the unemployment rate, we were outperformed by the Canadian average. Yes.

For another example, the increase in average weekly wages lags significantly behind the Canadian increase. This is from 1988, when the government was first elected, to 1992. One of the important things about average weekly wages is that the average weekly wages paid to the workers in the province of Manitoba have a direct bearing on the amount of tax, both income and sales, generated to the Province of Manitoba in revenue. When you have an average weekly wage that is significantly lower than the Canadian average, of course, you are going to have a decrease in taxation revenue.

We had an enormous population out-migration. If you do not have people working, they leave. They go where they will have opportunities not only for jobs, but where they will have opportunities for training for jobs, where they will have an opportunity for upgrading. [interjection]

The member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer) states that we have an aging population. Yes, Mr. Acting Speaker, we have an aging population, but the population of the country as a whole is aging, and still we are lagging behind the rest of Canada.

Our share of gross domestic product was smaller in 1992 than 1988 and smaller than the Canadian average. Total employment, labour force, retail sales, housing starts, manufacturing employment, farm cash receipts, investment, building permits and total construction all were lower than the Canadian average.

We do have, however, a couple of records that we cannot be proud of. Our child poverty rate is the highest in the country; our unemployment rate is one of the highest in the country. So we are at the top of the list in several items.

What I would like to do is go through the five headings that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) used in speaking about his sixth budget. Those headings are: Living on a Budget; Preserving Priorities; Creating Conditions for Growth; A Shared Solution; and Toward a Stronger Manitoba. [interjection]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Order, please. I am having very great difficulty hearing this speaker. I would ask all members, if they want to debate, please do so outside of the Chamber.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Acting Speaker, the first heading is Living on a Budget.

I have discussed a little bit in my earlier remarks, my opening remarks about the inability of this government, over five budgets and again in their sixth budget, to live up to that very nice homily, one which has been honoured in the breach rather than the observance by this government and one which, when the New Democrats were in power, was honoured far more closely than this government has been able to do.

The first paragraph in Living on a Budget talks about the parallel between families and governments and saying: When, in families, spending overtakes income and there is no way to earn more, habits must be changed and family members asked to do more with less. Governments are not immune to this reality.

Mr. Acting Speaker, governments may not be immune to this reality, but it certainly is not true that like in a family all members of the Manitoba family are being asked to share the burden fairly. That is absolutely not true. I will discuss that again as I further go into my speech.

The member for Rossmore (Mr. Neufeld) shared something that I was going to talk about too. He said this was a positive thing. I am saying it is a negative thing. Again, in the Living on a Budget section, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) says that in the medium term, this financial situation is not likely to change and for the next fiscal year he is projecting program expenditures to continue to decline by a further 1 percent.

Mr. Acting Speaker, when I heard this on Tuesday in the Budget Address, I was not sure if I had heard correctly. I am sorry to say that I did hear correctly. This government has decreased program expenditures by 2 percent, year over year, for this budget and is saying that they are going to do it again by 1 percent next year. That is going to mean again further program cuts to the people who are least able to deal with those program cuts.

How do I know that, Mr. Acting Speaker? Because I have six budgets behind me to prove that. There has not been a change in the corporate tax except an increase for small businesses. There has not been any additional monies taken from the most profitable corporations in this province. Nor has there been a change in the income tax structure that would ask those who are most able to afford it to give more. No, we have seen tax changes that are

regressive not progressive and expect to get more bad news in next year's budget.

The second area that the Minister of Finance talked about was Preserving Priorities. He identified the priorities as health care, education and family services.

* (1730)

Mr. Acting Speaker, the Minister of Finance has not preserved the priorities. There have been massive program cuts in those areas of priorities and in other areas. I will not go through the entire list, but in health care alone, Pharmacare cuts equal 14 percent. We have talked about the home care cuts.

We have talked about the "contributions" that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) is asking those least able to afford to give to the government for such extraneous items as colostomy bags, crutches, bars to enable people to live more safely in their own homes. This is not a contribution; it is a regressive tax grab from the people who are least able to afford it. The concept of a contribution is something that is donated voluntarily. This government talks about the decline in volunteerism, and then they use the word that is connected so closely with a voluntary act, a contribution, to describe a tax grab against the least able to afford it in this province.

The health administration overall in the Department of Health has increased by 3 percent, well above the inflation rate, when the Women's Health division has been decreased by 9 percent. I will be very interested to find out, in this area and in others, what impact or what input the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Mrs. Mitchelson) had in these kinds of program changes.

The entire health program has shown a major decrease in programming with one glaring exception, and that is the \$3.9 million contract being given to an American healthcare consultant to come up to Manitoba and tell Manitobans how they should spend their health care dollars—\$3.9 million plus \$800,000 that the two teaching hospitals in Manitoba, Health Sciences Centre and St. Boniface, will be forced to give to Connie Curran and her associates for air fares, living expenses and per diems while she is here.

There is no question that changes need to be addressed in our health care system. There is, however, a series of questions about the American consultant—[interjection]

Mr. Acting Speaker, if the Minister of Health has such wonderful things to say, why does he not get up and put them on the record?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): I did yesterday. Where were you yesterday when I put them on the record?

Ms. Barrett: Well, then, Mr. Acting Speaker, would you please ask the Minister of Health to be quiet and listen to what I have to say?

Mr. Acting Speaker, the unconscionable contract awarded without tender to Connie Curran and her associates from Chicago to come here to Manitoba to put into place a concept called Total Quality Management which, by the way, is more and more being called into question by the very organizations that once espoused it, including hospitals in the United States, but the idea that this non-Canadian corporation was asked to come in and do an analysis of the health care needs of the province of Manitoba in Canada just does not make any sense.

There are groups, individuals and organizations in this country which have grown up and which understand and believe in the five concepts of universality in our medicare system, that could have been, and should have been, consulted, instead of going to the United States for a contract, for a person who has no understanding about the ideals and the principles behind our medicare system, and whose basic goal, we believe, is not to strengthen the medicare system as we know it, but to further Americanize it so that we can—[interjection] Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to suggest that it is not the opposition benches that are making fools of the Legislature, the legislative process or of the government process, but this budget and the five that preceded it by this Conservative government, each one of which budgets have devastated more and more the quality of life for Manitobans in this province.

The third area that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) talks about is creating conditions for growth. Well, to use, I guess, a farm analogy, our fields, if you want to talk about conditions for growth in the province of Manitoba in 1993, are similar to the fields of Manitoba and Saskatchewan in 1933, when there were no crops. There was dust and devastation. It is not an organically sound or rich earth that the province of Manitoba has in order to create a climate of growth.

earth that the province of Manitoba has in order to create a climate of growth.

I have to take a little bit of exception to one of the comments that my Leader made in his remarks yesterday. He said that this government had no vision, it had no strategy and it had no plan. Well, I will agree with two of those statements. This government has no strategy and no plan, but, Mr. Acting Speaker, this government does have a vision, a vision that has been stated more and more clearly through the last five budgets and is crystal clear in this one. That is the traditional, old-fashioned, outdated, trickle-down economic theory of the neo-Conservatives.

The vision that this government has is a vision that is as outdated as its plans, has virtually no relevance to the society that we are dealing with. It shows that this government says, we do not believe that government has a role in this economy. We do not believe government has a role in our society. We believe that government should do as little as possible, and, Mr. Acting Speaker, this government has followed through on that vision for six budgets now. The men, women and children of Manitoba are reaping the whirlwind of that vision, if you will.

* (1740)

Mr. Acting Speaker, it is not a vision, it is a nightmare, something De Quincey would have seen in one of his opium dreams. The fourth category, the fourth section of the Minister of Finance's (Mr. Manness) budget is a shared solution. Well, I mean, really, this is the height of hypocrisy. This is not a budget that shares the solutions. Members of my caucus have put on record and will continue to put on record the kinds of things that this budget does, the kinds of people who are being asked to share among themselves the entire burden of this budget.

There are an enormous number of cuts, and I will not go into all of them. I will say that we started off with 56 organizations whose entire provincial funding was cut. Now the Minister of Finance said at the time that this was because they were advocacy groups that were not providing services, that were not duplicated by the provincial government or other organizations.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) knows better. If he did not know better, then his ministers, such as the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Downey), the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr.

Ernst), particularly the Minister responsible for the Status of Women and the Minister of Culture (Mrs. Mitchelson), and most particularly the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), and the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) were derelict in their duties in not bringing to the attention of the Minister of Finance the fact that these agencies were providing services that are not duplicated elsewhere and will lead to further problems for the people of Manitoba, and, frankly, will have an immediate effect as the Minister of Family Services' budget already shows an immediate effect of an enormous increase in the social welfare rolls.

This is not a successful budget. I have already talked a little bit about the changes in the home care. I think that as the budget unfolds and as the impacts of this budget are felt by more and more Manitobans, this area is going to be one that is going to come back to haunt this government.

The \$3.9 million contract to Connie Curran for "health care reform," the 56 agencies, the disgraceful actions in dealing with child care in this province, the changes, the absolute unfairness of asking parents who are fully subsidized by this province's child care subsidy system to pay an additional \$1.40 a day or over \$700 a year per child for child care is unconscionable.

These are, by definition, a family who is fully subsidized is recognized or should be recognized by the government as not being able to, out of their own financial resources, pay for the child care fees. So what does this government do? It does not make a sliding scale or based on ability to pay, it just issues a flat tax of \$1.40 a day on each subsidized family.

Not only that, Mr. Acting Speaker, but the child care centres themselves have no discretion as to whether they are going to collect this money or not. They have no discretion. If they do not choose to collect this money because they know their subsidized families cannot afford it, their grant from the government will be reduced by that same amount.

This is not a budget of a caring government. It is a budget of a petty, vindictive, mean-spirited government, and it is one in a long line of budgets like that.

The Child and Family Services agencies, not only did this government two years ago, in the middle of the night, over a weekend, unilaterally make a major

change to the whole concept of how child and family services will be delivered in this city, they did it after they had said just a week earlier that they were continuing to negotiate with those Child and Family Services agencies and that they anticipated being able to work out arrangements. Then they unilaterally destroyed the six independent, individual, locally controlled Child and Family Services agencies, one of which, Child and Family Services of eastern, had been an independent agency for over 60 years.

They did this, they said, because this one unified Child and Family Services agency could provide better service. Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, the CEO—a very corporate-sounding title, I might add—of the new Child and Family Services agency now says something that we told him he would say two years ago. I wish we did not have to say we told you so, but we did, that with an almost 5-percent decrease to Child and Family Services agencies and 27 percent of Manitoba's children living below the poverty line, the Child and Family Services agencies in this province, and particularly Winnipeg Child and Family Services, is faced with a 13-percent jump in the number of children who needed service over the last 18 months.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the Manitoba Coalition on Children's Rights is looking at the possibility of suing this government for noncompliance with the U.N. declaration on the rights of the child that they signed with a great deal of fanfare. I certainly hope that the Manitoba coalition goes ahead with that because it is imperative that the people of Manitoba are made aware and this government is called to task for that ridiculous fight against children. It is a battle. We are in a war, and you know who the victims are? They are the women and children of this province, and they are the poor people of this province.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

This is not only an arrogant and mean-spirited budget, but I tell you, Mr. Speaker, that it is a misogynistic budget as well. I will explain for the honourable members opposite what the term misogynistic means. A person who is a misogynist is a person who is against women. This budget in many, many areas impacts very negatively on all the women of the province of Manitoba, but most particularly, the women of the province of Manitoba who are least able to cope with the problems that have been largely a result of consecutive federal and provincial Conservative budgets.

I could talk about the fact that the standardization of social assistance rates affect women more strongly than they do men. I could talk about the fact that those 27 percent of children in the province of Manitoba who are living below the poverty line are largely living below the poverty line because their parents, who are largely single mothers, are poor.

Child poverty is not a difficult concept to understand. Children are poor because their parents are poor and, in Manitoba, their parents are women. What has this government done in the education field? They have cut back the social allowance for education. This elimination of a program that Manitoba pioneered has a disproportionate impact on the women of Manitoba. When you cannot get a job and you cannot get training and you cannot get your education, you are going to remain poor.

I think my own personal anger is focused most severely on the elimination of the Flin Flon/Creighton Crisis Centre and the 10 percent reduction in the grants and other supports to the rest of the shelters in second stage in transition housing programs in this province.

This is a government that two years ago said, trumpeted loudly by the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae): Manitoba will be a zero tolerance province; we will not stand for domestic violence. Mr. Speaker, this government just cut an entire shelter, and it is not a shelter that is found in the city of Winnipeg where there is another shelter two blocks away. This shelter is in The Pas. [interjection] Yes.

I would like to ask the members opposite, particularly the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), the Minister of Justice and again, most particularly, the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Mrs. Mitchelson) where they get off thinking that an organization that has provided service to the women of Flin Flon for 10 years can be eliminated? Well, in the 1993 version of let them eat cake, the minister says, let them go 140 miles to The Pas. We are regionalizing the services.

Mr. Speaker, anybody who knows, and I happen to know that the staff person directly responsible for the Division Family Dispute Services in this Department of Family Services is very knowledgeable about the whole issue of shelters and resources for women, and I cannot believe that she recommended to the government this action. I

am convinced that this is an action that has its roots in two causes: No. 1 is again the bottom line—three causes: No. 1 is the slavish devotion to the bottom line; No. 2 is, again, the misogynistic tendencies of not only this budget but the previous five budgets of this government; and No. 3, the fact that the people in Flin Flon and The Pas do not vote right, do they, Minister of Native and Northern Affairs?

An Honourable Member: Well, if that is your view.

Ms. Barrett: No, it is not my view, in response to the question from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). It is not my view that the people of Flin Flon did not vote right. Nor is it my view that the people of Pembina did not vote right, or the people of Lac du Bonnet did not vote right, or the people of Steinbach or Portage did not vote right. I do not happen to agree with the choices they made, but I would certainly never, never [interjection] give away their right to choose as the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) says, nor would I punish them for the way they chose to be represented.

* (1750)

You take a look at the organizations that were cut back, the 56 community groups that were cut back, and you look at the program cuts. You look at the contribution of the Northern Transportation Allowance that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) implemented last year. You look at the cutbacks in the Department of Family Dispute Services. You look at all of those things and they impact most negatively on people who are not only least able to pay for it but in many cases people who reside in constituencies that are represented by non-Conservatives. I am just raising that as a possible connection. It sounds pretty good to me.

One other area before I give the government some suggestions as to other changes that might have been able to take place is in my new critic area of Multiculturalism. One of the organizations whose support was eliminated was the Manitoba Intercultural Council. The minister and I will have several opportunities in this session, I am sure, to go over in more detail her reasoning for, No. 1, the elimination of the support for that organization, and No. 2, her promise to bring in legislation repealing that organization.

This organization provided a venue for the multicultural and ethnocultural groups in this province to have an arm's-length relationship with the government. It allowed for them to advocate

and advise the government on issues of multiculturalism and issues that were important to their community. With the elimination of the Manitoba Intercultural Council, all that is left for the people of Manitoba to deal with issues such as immigration and racism, and English as a second language at all is the completely politically appointed Manitoba Multicultural Secretariat and the Manitoba—[interjection] Excuse me, but would the Minister responsible for the Status of Women and the Minister of Multiculturalism (Mrs. Mitchelson) like to tell me that there is a single staff person in the Manitoba Multicultural Secretariat that is not an Order-in-Council appointment? They are not appointed from the community.

Mr. Speaker, last weekend the minister attended a portion of a conference, an Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba conference, that was a remarkable conference that had two remarkable women as guest speakers. Glenda Simms is the chair of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, and Rosemary Brown is a well-known social activist and political activist and former member of the British Columbia Legislature as a member of the New Democratic Party.

They provided a remarkable framework for the discussions of that workshop over the weekend, as did the workshops, et cetera. The Minister responsible for Multiculturalism (Mrs. Mitchelson) came to the Saturday luncheon and said, and I quote: We need a strong and united community voice against racism.

I would suggest to the Minister responsible for Multiculturalism that the way to have a strong, united community voice against racism is not to eliminate the one independent organization that could provide that for the entire multicultural community in the province of Manitoba.

I know that my time is growing short. I am going to end my remarks by quoting from a columnist that this government really does not like very much, and that is Frances Russell in the Winnipeg Free Press. These are some suggestions, some choices that Frances Russell had that this government could have followed in order to eliminate some of the abominable cuts that they made: Mr. Manness did not have to include a number of social assistance calculations of tax credits for low-income individuals. He could instead have collected the \$1.8 million in outstanding taxes owed the province by corporations. Those are not new taxes. Those

are taxes that this government has legitimately and legally the right and responsibility to collect from corporations—\$1.8 million. It is still sitting in those corporation coffers earning interest for those corporations, not being used by the Province of Manitoba.

He did not have to eliminate the student social allowance program. He could have collected the \$1.65 million in payroll tax owed by companies. Now, these payroll taxes are owed by nonsmall businesses—\$1.65 million. Again, those are legitimate, legally owed monies to this government which have not been collected.

Instead of taking the home care cuts, he could have eliminated the payroll tax exemption for businesses with three-quarters of a million dollar payroll. Three-quarters of a million dollar payroll in these days is not a small business. He could have not eliminated the children's dental service. You know what he could have done instead? He could have collected the \$9 million in retail sales tax revenue owed by business—again, a legitimate, legal tax owed by corporations to the government.

In the case of the retail sales tax, as the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) has so accurately pointed out, this is money that should have only flowed through to the Province of Manitoba. So the next time the government suggests that we in the

opposition do not have any ideas about different choices they could have made, let them refer to my comments today.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I end my comments on this budget.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, before we call it six o'clock, I would like to indicate that I will be moving a motion adjourning the House until Tuesday, April 13, 1993, if I have the support of the House, which is Tuesday, and also indicate that Tuesday's sitting will be Monday hours, so that we will then have an evening sitting.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Downey), that when the House adjourns today, it shall stand adjourned until Tuesday, April 13, 1993, at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to change Tuesday to a Monday for sitting hours? Is that agreed? [agreed]

Motion agreed to.

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

The hour being 6 p.m., this House now adjourns and stands adjourned until Tuesday, 1:30 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 8, 1993

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