



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

42 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, Ciif	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
MALLOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANNESSE, 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
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>	Rossmere	
<i>Vacant</i>	Rupertsland	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 18, 1993

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. George Hlckes (Point Douglas): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Gertrude Flett, Susan Head, Elaine Richard and others requesting the Family Services minister (Mr. Gilleshammer) to consider restoring funding for the friendship centres in Manitoba.

* * *

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Carroll Henderson, Lloyd E. Besselt, Adam Stupak and others requesting the Manitoba Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) to consider conducting a plebiscite of Manitoba farmers as soon as possible on the issue of removing barley from the jurisdiction of the Wheat Board.

* * *

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Saada Mohammed, Steven Verbaly, Askalu Nedele and others requesting the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) consider restoring funding of the Student Social Allowances Program.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Lathlin). It complies with the privileges and the 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 55,000 children depend upon the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS several studies have pointed out the cost savings of preventative and treatment health

care programs such as the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS the Children's Dental Program has been in effect for 17 years and has been recognized as extremely cost-effective and critical for many families in isolated communities; and

WHEREAS the provincial government did not consult the users of the program or the providers before announcing plans to eliminate 44 of the 49 dentists, nurses and assistants providing this service; and

WHEREAS preventative health care is an essential component of health care reform.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-94 budget.

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Clif Evans). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

Mr. Clerk: 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 55,000 children depend upon the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS several studies have pointed out the cost savings of preventative and treatment health care programs such as the Children's Dental Program; and

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WHEREAS preventative health care is an essential component of health care reform.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-94 budget.

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Maloway). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

Mr. Clerk: 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 55,000 children depend upon the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS several studies have pointed out the cost savings of preventative and treatment health care programs such as the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS the Children's Dental Program has been in effect for 17 years and has been recognized as extremely cost-effective and critical for many families in isolated communities; and

WHEREAS the provincial government did not consult the users of the program or the providers before announcing plans to eliminate 44 of the 49 dentists, nurses and assistants providing this service; and

WHEREAS preventative health care is an essential component of health care reform.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-94 budget.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Ms. Wowchuk). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

Mr. Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the Canadian Wheat Board has played a vital role in the orderly marketing of Canadian wheat, barley and other grain products since its inception in 1935; and

WHEREAS the federal Minister of Agriculture is considering removing barley from the jurisdiction of the Wheat Board; and

WHEREAS this is another step towards dismantling the board; and

WHEREAS, as in the case with the removal of oats from the Wheat Board in 1989, there has been no consultation with the board of directors of the Wheat Board, with the 11-member advisory committee to the board or the producers themselves; and

WHEREAS the federal minister has said that there will be no plebiscite of farmers before the announcement is made.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Manitoba Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) to consider conducting a plebiscite of Manitoba farmers on this issue as soon as possible.

* (1335)

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairperson of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery, where we have with us this afternoon from the R.H.G. Bonnycastle School twenty-eight Grade 5 students under the direction of Melaney Vermeylen. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. Vodrey).

On behalf of all honourable members, I would like to welcome you here this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Churchill Rocket Range Status

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in the 1991 Speech from the Throne, the government stated the Churchill Research Range is a provincial priority for our government.

Unfortunately, yesterday we received confirmation that in spite of the fact that private interests were willing to put some \$600,000 into this investment, an investment that is competing with locations in Alaska for the siting of rockets for environmental and communication purposes, it will not receive funding from the Western Diversification project.

Mr. Speaker, it is crucial for Manitoba to win this competition against other northern locations, such as the proposal in Alaska, and certainly we have always supported the priority of that site and the activity of the community to get that project going.

I would like to ask the government, in light of the denial of the funds from the Western Diversification Program, what is the status of the proposal and the priority of the government as articulated in the Speech from the Throne in '91?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, as the news service report indicates, we understand that the Department of Western Diversification has rejected the request for \$60,000 in funding.

We as a government, of course, are very, very supportive of continuing to work with the community of Churchill to find any and all avenues in which we can provide economic activity, whether it be through our Arctic Bridge program to try and employ greater use of the Port of Churchill, whether it be through our efforts in tourism or whether it be through our efforts with respect to this particular initiative.

We do have an offer on the table, I believe, from the REDI program that was put forward making our commitment. I have personally had discussions with representatives of the private sector funding, including Mr. Richardson.

So we are totally supportive of this. We are disappointed in the response of Western Diversification and, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that we will attempt to carry this further to convince the federal department that this is indeed a very worthwhile project.

Churchill Rocket Range REDI Program Funding

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the government signed an Order-in-Council to participate in a joint feasibility study on the environmental components of this project. This Order-in-Council was signed in '92. It expired March 31, 1993.

The contingency on the Order-in-Council was for the community itself to raise the equivalent of the \$75,000 the government had pledged. They, in fact, raised and pledged over a hundred thousand dollars for this environmental process which is a part of the feasibility, the other feasibility study, of course, being the \$1.2-million proposal with Western Diversification.

I would like to ask the Premier, in light of the fact the money has not flowed from the provincial government after being committed in the Order-in-Council, what is the status of those funds for that environmental review process which has had a partnership with the community through their own fundraising activity?

* (1340)

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, I can indicate to the Leader of the Opposition that the approval for the money from the REDI program is in place and, indeed, it was at the request of the applicant that the money be held until such time that there was some confirmation of the Western Diversification funds.

As a government, we are prepared to flow this money and support the project because it is, in our view, a very worthwhile project.

Churchill Rocket Range REDI Program Funding

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, on April 22, 1993, the Premier committed his government again to flowing money under the REDI program for economic development activities and includes proposals up to a million dollars for projects that will make good sense for the Manitoba economy outside the city of Winnipeg.

I would like to ask the Premier, in light of the fact the Western Diversification Program has said no, the community of Churchill has said yes and the private sector has said yes, will the provincial government say yes and get this project going, this

feasibility study going and finally get this project going in northern Manitoba?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) has indicated, the provincial government has already said yes.

VLT Revenues Employment Creation Programs

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, Winnipeg social allowance caseload has risen almost 85 percent between 1990 and '92. There were over 17,000 cases in April of this year, and three out of five single mothers live below the poverty line.

In December of 1991, Premier Filmon said his government would work co-operatively with all levels of government, and I quote, on any programs designed to eradicate poverty with respect to the children of our province.

Is the Minister responsible for Lotteries now prepared to use some of the VLT funds raised in the city of Winnipeg to work with the city and the federal government to implement work programs that will help move social allowance recipients onto the workforce, off the welfare rolls, as was recommended by the City of Winnipeg last year?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Foundation Act): First of all, it is a little premature to look at where video lottery terminal revenues from the city of Winnipeg will go, when they are not going to be installed in Winnipeg until September of this year, Mr. Speaker, and we have already indicated that the capital costs of video lottery terminals will have to be paid before money flows to the City of Winnipeg.

We also announced through the budget process that 65 percent of video lottery revenues will go directly toward deficit reduction for all Manitobans, so we can leave more money in the pockets of Manitobans to determine how they are going to spend that money themselves, rather than having government take that money in taxes.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to work with the City of Winnipeg. We have made a commitment to the City of Winnipeg as we have to rural Manitoba, and we will live up to that commitment.

Ms. Barrett: I cannot believe that it is too early to start planning for something that is going to start

rolling in in September. That is exactly what this government has done throughout its time in office. It has not planned.

VLT Revenues Employment Creation Programs

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Family Services talk to his cabinet colleagues as they begin the planning process, whenever they begin the planning process, if they begin a planning process, to invest some of those funds from video lottery terminal revenues, put it back into the city of Winnipeg, put it back into programs designed to help social assistance recipients off the welfare rolls and onto the productive workforce of this province?

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, the member is aware that we annually look at our rates and have adjusted those annually for recipients throughout the province. We have also brought in many other enhancements we have had the opportunity to discuss through the Estimates process, and we will work with all municipal councils as we have them adjust to the new levels of assistance.

I can assure the member that there are many issues in social allowances that my colleagues and I will be looking at.

* (1345)

VLT Revenues Economic Development Projects

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): I would like to ask the government, any particular minister who has begun this planning process, if social assistance recipients will be eligible for the economic development projects that will be implemented by the Province of Manitoba, or will it only be large corporations that will be eligible for this money?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Foundation Act): Mr. Speaker, indeed, money for economic development in the city of Winnipeg will, ultimately, result in more jobs.

That will mean that there is a good possibility that many social assistance recipients will be hired through a process of increased economic activity.

Churchill Rocket Range Western Diversification Funding

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, I was interested in the Premier's response to the Leader of the Opposition's (Mr. Doer) question about the Churchill proposal.

I am wondering if the Premier, given that he has had the discussions he has had with people about this project, can explain why Western Diversification felt and I quote: "... there is a very low probability of the study leading to a commercially viable development of the spaceport ..."

Why did they write it off prior to doing the study?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite will just wait until he has a chance to be out on the hustings seeking a federal seat, he can ask that question of the federal government. He clearly knows that this is—[interjection] No, I did not suggest that he would be elected. I said when he is on the hustings, he can ask the question.

It is a federal department that has made that quote. He should be asking them, Mr. Speaker. I want to know whether or not he has already phoned Western Economic Diversification to ask that question.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Premier's advice and he is correct. He is not the minister responsible for Western Economic Diversification. However, he did profess knowledge about this project in his answer to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer).

I would like to ask him a second question. I have here a letter from the lawyer who says that WED's negative decision was plainly politically motivated and centrally based. I am wondering if the Premier can add to those comments. Is this something that he believes?

Mr. Filmon: No, Mr. Speaker, I cannot add to those comments.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, one does not need to spend a lot of time talking to businesses in this province to have them tell you they feel that Manitoba is being ill-used by the federal government.

Has the Premier protested this decision to the federal government?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, given that the decision was just communicated as of the news media today,

as I said in response—[interjection] It was communicated as of the news reports today. That is what I said. [interjection] The same way as you did. You did not ask the question on May 5. You did not ask the question on May 11. You asked the question when it was in the media.

Mr. Speaker, as I said in response to the first question from the Leader of the Opposition, I intend to pursue this with Western Economic Diversification.

Osborne House Management Review

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, very serious concerns have been raised regarding the management at Osborne House. In fact, it is more than just concerns. These are shocking revelations which the Minister of Family Services, the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), the opposition critics and the media have received.

The problems have to do with a very serious style of management operations which affects the running of Osborne House and staff turnover, and also very serious charges regarding the way that women who are there to receive shelter after leaving abusive relationships are treated.

Since the Minister of Family Services was aware of this a year ago, I would like to ask the minister, what has he done as a result of being made aware of these allegations a year ago?

* (1350)

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): There are two issues here. One is an issue of staff management relations, and I am pleased to let the member and the House know that the YM-YWCA has hired an external agency, the Manitoba Institute of Management, to interview staff, undertake an issue identification process and develop a plan for the resolution of these issues.

On the service side, we had preliminary meetings yesterday to discuss service at the shelter, and as of today, we have a program specialist who is working with the shelter to look at these service issues.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Speaker, the minister did not tell us what he had done since he knew of these revelations a year ago. It took the minister a year. Now, finally, the YM-YWCA is acting.

Can the minister tell us if this review will be made public and if the recommendations will be made

public, so we can ascertain whether or not the minister is going to implement the recommendations resulting from a review?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The member misunderstands the relationship. The review is being done under the auspices of the board to deal with staff who work for the board at Osborne House. They have hired an external agency to conduct this, and we will be receiving that information when that review is finished. I believe they have put some time lines on that, so the review will be completed in the next six weeks or so.

We are working on the service side with the agency and have put into place a program specialist, and we are also working on a service and funding agreement to assure that services are being provided within the shelter.

Mr. Martindale: I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services: Why would he agree to a review commissioned by the YM-YWCA when three internal reviews have been done in the last eight years, none of which have resulted in correction of these problems? The problems have continued.

Why will this minister not authorize an independent review with recommendations made public to this minister and to the Legislature?

Mr. Gilleshammer: There are a number of changes that have taken place.

The member has received information from some staff and former staff of Osborne House, and I am satisfied at this time that the board is acting responsibly to put into place an external review to develop a plan for the resolution of these issues. I am prepared to allow the board to work with their staff to bring that resolution about.

Property Tax Credit Impact on Seniors

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

This last budget was not a fair budget. A disproportion of the burden has been placed on the shoulders of the poor, the disadvantaged and the senior citizens of Manitoba. The \$75 cut in property tax credits is especially hurting lower income people, including senior citizens.

My question to the minister is: Exactly how many seniors will be affected by this move and, precisely, can the minister tell the House, what is the estimated

total increase in the property tax burden that will be transferred to the shoulders of senior citizens?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, when I brought the budget down, or before I brought the budget down, I said that every Manitoban would be impacted.

With respect to the \$75, we always said that the ability-to-pay principle was a very important one. We said the government's ability to pay was obviously important, and we had to reduce some of the support we had provided under the property tax credit line, but, furthermore, we said individuals' ability to pay was also very important.

That is why we restructured the tax credit program, because we had basically the richest in the country. As we have said before, seniors with incomes under \$23,800 will receive a portion of the \$175 and, indeed, those under \$15,000 will secure the entire \$175 benefit they have grown accustomed to.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have not diverged in any way from the path we said we would be bringing, and that was practising fairness with respect to all Manitobans.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Well, I was talking about the property tax credit, Mr. Speaker.

School Tax Assistance Program Impact on Seniors

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Another unfair move was the cut in Pensioner's School Tax Assistance. That again, was very unfair.

So my question is: What is the estimated total amount of the reduced provincial credit expenditures resulting from the cut in benefits available under the Pensioner's School Tax Assistance Program, and, again, how many senior citizens will likely lose their school tax benefits?

* (1355)

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Well, again, Mr. Speaker, I cannot answer that question specifically because we know the global saving provided. The impact was roughly around \$40 million across all of the property tax credit changes.

But, again, Mr. Speaker, I do not think the member for Brandon East would want us to go into all the tax forms and try and determine what level of income seniors have specifically, so as to be able to provide

him with the specific number count he would like me to provide.

But I can tell him that the impact globally in all tax credit changes is around \$40 million, and I tell him, I know full well that seniors will not mind as much, as long as they see good government decisions on the spending side leading to the types of comments that came forward yesterday from the Dominion Bond Rating Service.

Mr. Speaker, I know full well that seniors in this province fully understand the state of circumstances of the province and are prepared to support this government, as long as they see a balanced approach on the spending side.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, the senior citizens of this province are afraid of the health cuts that are going on by this government.

Municipal Tax Bills Information Pamphlet

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, my last question to the minister: Why did this minister fail to mention the tax credit reductions or eliminations in the information pamphlet that is going out with the municipal tax bills?

This omission has caused a lot of confusion and consternation among property taxpayers who are now receiving their municipal tax bills. Why was the minister not forthcoming with this information?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): I happen to have the pamphlet, and it spells out very clearly and precisely the support that is available by way of tax credits in the 1993 year.

Mr. Speaker, it says, and I quote: Who is eligible? The Manitoba government offers assistance of up to \$175 toward school taxes greater than \$160 on the principal residence of eligible persons 55 or more years of age.

Mr. Speaker, it is clearly spelled out. Anybody can read it. As far as the new process whereby, now, seniors are going to have to go through the tax form, we have had to do that because of the new income definition which now treats every dollar earned—every dollar earned—equally, regardless of the source. [interjection]

The member asks did I sign it. Certainly, I have attached my name to it. I have read it and I indeed endorsed it, Mr. Speaker, before it went out.

HIV Infections Blood Transfusions

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, the House of Commons subcommittee on blood and HIV has reviewed the issue of HIV-contaminated blood and blood transfusions which were performed during the—[interjection]

Mr. Speaker, my question is, as a result of the tainted blood, over 1,000 Canadians contracted the HIV virus. The report emphasized the possibility that there are still some HIV-infected people who contracted HIV disease during this time.

Can the Premier tell this House when the Department of Health will have a proactive approach to trace all those people who have the possibility of having contracted HIV disease during that period of time?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I will take that question as notice on behalf of the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard).

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell this House if during the next ministers' conference of provincial and federal governments, the government will support the proactive approach of having one unified system for blood transfusions throughout the country to make sure that the safety and effectiveness of blood transfusions are maintained as recommended by the Canadian Hemophilia Society?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I will take that as well on behalf of the Minister of Health.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell us if the government of Manitoba will support all those patients who have contracted the HIV during that period of time?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I will take that question as notice on behalf of the Minister of Health as well.

Terry Stratton Lobby Efforts

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Premier admitted that Tory fundraiser Arni Thorsteinson was appointed to the Hydro Board to replace Terry Stratton who had been appointed to the Senate.

On Wednesday, May 12, the Minister of Finance—and my question is to the Minister of

Finance—confirmed that he gave in to lobbying at the last minute by the Central Air Carriers Association of Manitoba to cut the 7 percent sales tax on the purchase and repair of commercial aircraft.

I would like to ask the minister: Can he confirm that Senator Stratton participated in this lobbying?

* (1400)

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): The member makes two assertions, both which are patently false.

First of all, it was not a last-minute given. I had been in conversation with the air transport people, Mr. Speaker, for at least the best part of a year trying to find out whether or not there was a process of providing some relief that would make them more competitive with jurisdictions to either side of Manitoba.

The second question dealt with Mr. Stratton. I can indicate fully that Mr. Stratton was not in any way part of that lobby effort. As a matter of fact, I did not even know Mr. Stratton was actively involved with any aspect of the aeronautical industry.

Air West Ownership

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, the minister just said he was not aware that Mr. Stratton was involved in the air industry.

I would like to ask the minister: Can he confirm that Senator Stratton owns Air West, a charter aircraft which directly benefited by the reduction in the 7 percent sales tax?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I cannot confirm that because that is new knowledge to me. I was not aware of it.

Government of Manitoba Public Access

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a letter from Mr. Thorsteinson requesting money, input and ideas from me as a member of the business community.

My final question is to the minister, Mr. Speaker. The question is this: Who gets access and who gets listened to more by this government, Tory bagmen like Terry Stratton and Arni Thorsteinson or the mothers and children of this province who now have to pay PST on baby bottles and baby supplies?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, every single Manitoban is important to this government. Every single Manitoban has a voice that is heard by this government.

I know that New Democrats pick their friends and choose only their class of people whom they want to listen to. I know that their union bosses are the ones who come into cabinet and tell them what to do and how to do it. This government listens to every single Manitoban equally.

The Green Plan Red/Assiniboine Rivers

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, the federal government's Green Plan says there is also concern about water quality in the Red River and Assiniboine River, particularly near Winnipeg, Manitoba. The cumulative effects on water quality of the many industrial, agricultural and municipal activities that take place in these river basins is poorly understood. Better information is needed to determine priority areas for preventative and remedial action.

It then goes on to talk about a proposed joint study between the provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan to look at the Red River and Assiniboine River basins.

My question is for the Minister of Environment. Given that this Green Plan has been proposed for quite some time, why have we not heard about plans for this study happening before major projects like the Assiniboine River diversion which is going to have an effect on both water basins?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, there has been discussion in this area ever since 1988 and earlier. It is a problem of a number of decades in terms of the water quantity and quality that we have in our prairie rivers.

The fact that there have been ongoing discussions for a number of years about bringing Green Plan money to the province to deal with what is one of our most important resources should not come as any surprise to the member.

Assiniboine River Diversion Federal Environmental Review

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, the idea is that you do studies and research and plan before—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This is not a time for debate. The honourable member for Radisson, with your question, please.

Ms. CerlIII: Mr. Speaker, given that the federal Environment Act and the Green Plan mandate federal involvement in an assessment of this kind of water diversion project, what rationale does the minister have for screening out this project from a federal assessment?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am puzzled by the member suggesting that I would have either the authority or any desire to screen out federal involvement. That is a federal responsibility. They have a responsibility to make the decision on whether or not there will be federal involvement in any aspects of this review.

Mr. Speaker, it has been stated a number of times in this Chamber that we are proceeding with our review. We have kept close contact with the federal authorities. It is ultimately their decision whether or not they want to be part of the review, whether or not they wish to do their own review or whether or not they may choose to screen it out.

Ms. CerlIII: Mr. Speaker, I realize that the minister should be making that information—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This is not a time for debate. The honourable member for Radisson, with your question, please.

Ms. CerlIII: Mr. Speaker, this is a serious matter.

I would ask the minister to be accountable and tell the people of Manitoba what is the rationale that the federal government has given to this minister as to why there would not be a federal environmental assessment as mandated by the federal environment legislation on this project.

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, the member insists on implying that I have the decision-making authority as to whether or not federal authority is in or out.

Point of Order

Ms. CerlIII: My point of order to clarify the question is, what—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member does not have a point of order. That is a dispute over the—[interjection] Order, please. That is a clarification.

Mr. Cummings: Well, if she finds her lack of understanding of the process embarrassing, then she does not have to like the answer, but the answer is, this jurisdiction does not make the decision as to whether or not the federal authorities are in.

Misericordia Alternative Action Group Recommendations

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, the Misericordia alternative action group has recommended an extensive series of community-based alternatives in mental health prior to the closing of the psychiatric beds at Misericordia. Throughout the mental health field, there is uncertainty over the resources being placed in the mental health field, and they may not be in place prior to the closing of the beds.

Will the minister assure this House that he will consider the recommendations of the Misericordia alternative action group and other groups which include such things as co-ordinated crisis services, community support and housing prior to the closing of the beds at Misericordia Hospital?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I will take that question as notice on behalf of the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard).

Misericordia Alternative Action Group Recommendations

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary to the Minister of Family Services: Can the minister advise this House whether he has put in place recommendations of the Reid inquest, the Russick inquest and groups like the Misericordia alternative action committee that call for a cross-departmental approach to mental health?

Hon. Harold Gillieshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, we put in a number of processes following the Reid report. I would be pleased to indicate those to the member today.

One of the concerns identified in the Reid report was the lack of co-ordination between the agencies in the city of Winnipeg.

We centralized the Child and Family Services agencies two years ago to be sure that this co-ordination and communication was in place. We implemented a standard on the reporting of firearms and other weapons, requiring Child and Family

Services agencies to document and report actual or potential use of weapons in case situations and to inform the police where there are reasonable grounds to believe there is a threat to the safety of any family members.

We are also in the process of implementing a Child and Family Services Information System which is a province-wide computerized information system designed to track the progress of children and families throughout Manitoba's child welfare system. The service involves all the mandated child welfare agencies in Manitoba.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Speaker, the minister has answered in general.

I would like to ask the minister in my final supplementary: Does he support the recommendations, together with the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) and other ministers, of the Misericordia alternative action group and other groups calling for an overall co-ordinated approach?

The minister has only dealt with some segments. He has not talked about economic support, housing, et cetera.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I would take that question as a matter of notice.

* (1410)

Osborne House Management Review

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Family Services.

The minister has known about the difficulties at Osborne House for almost a year. He said earlier in this Question Period that he had a planning meeting yesterday.

Can he tell us what he has done for the other 364 days?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, I reject the member's assertion that there have been representations made to the minister over the last year. We have had a couple of complaints that have come to the department.

The question of the staff-management situation with the shelter is being handled by an external agency that has been hired by the board. I am comfortable that they have put in place a process

that will lead to the resolution of the issues between the staff and management.

Program Specialist

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in response to a ministerial question from the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), the First Minister (Mr. Filmon), as is his wont, yelled across the House—does not trust the YM-YWCA.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to know if the Minister of Family Services does trust the management of YM-YW. If he does, why did he make the decision to put a program specialist into the Osborne House situation?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, our department deals with many community-based boards, not only in the city of Winnipeg but across the province of Manitoba, that do tremendous work in managing the various agencies that provide service to clients who are part of this department.

The board has put into place a process to deal with the issues between staff and management. We are concerned on the service side because issues have been raised on service. That service is in place and is continuing. We have had preliminary discussions with the management of the shelter. As a result of those discussions, we are having a program specialist work with the management and staff of the shelter to ensure that service in fact is in place.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, the function of Osborne House is to provide service. Obviously, the minister has decided there are sufficient difficulties at Osborne House that it is necessary to put a program specialist into place to resolve those difficulties before the consultant makes the report.

Why did the minister decide yesterday that this program specialist was necessary when he has had information about this for some time now?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, the staff from our department are not intended to replace the staff. In meetings with the management and staff, there are issues that need to be resolved, and if the department can be of assistance, we are doing so with the staff from that area of our department.

VIA Rail Bayline Service

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, transportation issues are of major importance in northern Manitoba and in this particular case in terms of bayline communities.

There is ongoing concern about the future of the bayline that affects communities such as Ilford, Pikwitonei and Thicket Portage that have no other links whatsoever. That was particularly compounded by the federal budget in which the response from VIA Rail has been that they will not be able to provide existing service with those particular cuts.

I would like to ask the Minister of Highways and Transportation if he has received any assurances of long-term service on the bayline from the federal government arising out of the cuts that took place to VIA Rail following the federal budget.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, no, I do not have those assurances. We are trying to negotiate and talk with the VIA people. We have correspondence with them.

My staff is working with them, but I cannot give that assurance at the present time, though I am trying to get that assurance.

Port of Churchill Shipment Guarantees

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, one of the other concerns is in terms of the bayline and the Port of Churchill.

I would like to ask the minister if he has received any assurance in terms of any shipments out of the Port of Churchill this year.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I do not have that assurance either.

I do not think I have enough time to explain exactly the process that we are in right now which I outlined under my Estimates in terms of what I think is—I am hopeful of what will happen with the Arctic Bridge concept that we have developed with the Russians, with the committee that has been struck and the consultants who have been hired.

I am hoping there is going to be some positive information coming forward relatively soon in terms

of what the future holds in terms of grain movement through the Port of Churchill.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, there is a great deal of concern up north. I do hope there are going to be some assurances.

VIA Rail Bayline Service

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): My final question is to the Minister of Highways.

I would like to ask the minister if there are any contingency plans, given the fact that many of the communities along the bayline do not have any other access, have no all-weather road access, have only winter-road access.

Is there any contingency plan in place? Are there any moves to further reduce the bayline service that would provide alternate all-weather road access to those communities?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, the road considerations are not one of the options that we are looking at at the present time.

We are still holding the federal government and VIA Rail responsible for the commitments they made, that they would provide services to isolated communities in the North. It is on that premise and principle that we are working with them.

Transcona-Springfield School Division Transportation Privatization

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, as a result of the recent provincial government's budget, the Transcona-Springfield School Division had their funding cut back by some 3 percent.

Since that time, the school division has had to apply for noncharitable status so that they can receive monies from members of the community to allow them to continue their operations. Since that time, the school division, as well, has moved toward privatization of their student population in the community, Mr. Speaker.

My question for the Minister of Education is: What plans does this Minister of Education have to protect the students who are being transported within the school division, now that the school division is looking at privatizing that service?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, again, we have

discussed the funding which has been made available to schools in this province, and I would remind the member that \$777.7 million is still a very large commitment of funds.

With the funds which flow from the school funding formula to school divisions, boards will be making decisions. They will be making decisions, and I believe that they will attempt to make the best decisions representing their community areas.

Mr. Rold: My supplementary is to the Minister of Education.

Can the minister indicate whether or not the school division has the authority to privatize this service and whether or not the school division actually indeed owns those buses, or is it the Department of Education that owns that equipment?

Mrs. Vodrey: I will have to get back to the member regarding the information for his particular school division in terms of ownership of the buses.

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

Nonpolitical Statements

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, do I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Gimli have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Helwer: Mr. Speaker, it is with extreme pleasure that I rise today to ask all members of this House to congratulate the town of Gimli, the Manitoba Sailing Association and the Gimli Yacht Club for being awarded the 1994 World Boardsailing Championships in Gimli.

This announcement was made today and will result in as many as 500 athletes from over 80 countries coming to Gimli for this world-class event which is tentatively scheduled to run from August 28 to September 5, 1994.

Mr. Speaker, in the world of sailing this is a major announcement and is something Manitobans and specifically the people of Gimli should be very proud of. Some facts for the House—this is the first ever world championship in an Olympic event to be held in Manitoba.

Gimli will be hosting the largest Olympic windsurfing event in history. This is the first ever combined Olympic and windsurfing world championship.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt the Gimli area is one of the premier areas for boating. Lake Winnipeg is the 11th largest lake in the world. There are over 4,500 square kilometres of water in the south basin capable of hosting any major international sailing event.

The town of Gimli has over two kilometres of easily accessible beach. There is a wide harbour breakwater that is perfect for spectators and TV crews. Gimli has a 300-member yacht club that can provide critical volunteers and regatta management expertise.

Gimli has more than enough space to house and feed the hundreds of athletes and team officials who will be attending this event. Race organizers have over 27 years of race management and expertise and over 21 major national-international events under their belts.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is safe to say Gimli is second to none as a race venue. The world became aware of just how good Gimli is for sailing when it was used as a major sailing venue during the 1967 Pan Am Games. Now, through the 1994 World Boardsailing Championships, Gimli will once again be showcased to the rest of the sailing world, which will only further enhance this area as a prime sailing spot. As well, with hundreds of athletes, team officials and spectators converging on Gimli, the local economy will certainly benefit.

Today, there is no doubt the bid was successful because of the tremendous community effort shown by all partners in this bid. Today, I invite all members in this House to join with me in celebrating and congratulating the town of Gimli, the Manitoba Sailing Association and the Gimli Yacht Club for being awarded the 1994 World Boardsailing Championships.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable Minister of Agriculture have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to be able to make a nonpolitical statement today to congratulate the Kiwanis Club of Winnipeg for the annual sponsorship of the 4-H leadership public speaking contest.

Mr. Speaker, I had the occasion to hear those young people at noon hour. The Kiwanis Club has sponsored this since 1947, exceptional young

leaders out of rural Manitoba, a tribute to the over 2,000 people who were leaders in the 4-H program of Manitoba.

The three finalists today of the 11 people who came to Winnipeg on Sunday were Lauren McNabb of Minnedosa who spoke on literacy, Tammy Gillis from McCreary who spoke on AIDS, and Sharon Hunter from Greenridge who spoke on suicide. Not only did they show leadership, they talked about serious problems that we face in life today.

The winner, Mr. Speaker, was Lauren McNabb from Minnedosa. I would like to congratulate her. I would also like to congratulate one of the judges, the Leader of the Second Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs).

* (1420)

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Crescentwood have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Ms. Avls Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to join with the Minister of Agriculture in congratulating the young people who participated in the public speaking competition and also in saying thank you to the Kiwanis Club who have always been very good sponsors of the 4-H and youth program.

Mr. Speaker, I think all of us know of individuals who have gone through the 4-H and youth program, I am sure many who are in this House today, a former Premier of the province of Manitoba who was involved in the 4-H and youth program. It is certainly an excellent program to develop leadership skills, public speaking skills, a sense of community and a sense of teamwork.

I am only sorry that I was not able to be at the events today to hear these public speakers, but I again wish them well on behalf of my caucus. I am sure that they will go on to bigger and better things. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Swan River have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with the other two members in congratulating the Kiwanis Club in sponsoring the 4-H public speaking event.

I have been involved with 4-H clubs for many, many years, and our children went through the program. I recognize the importance of this club. I would hope that we would continue to have this club

flourish in Manitoba, and with the number of leaders that we have to provide the leadership for our young people to take on the roles of leaders in this province in the future. It is a very important service that plays a very important role for young people.

I had the opportunity this year to attend several achievement nights, and saw the tremendous work, the skills that young people learned through this job, through this club. I give my highest respects to those leaders who give of their time so willingly to help these young people.

Also, I attended a public speaking event as well, and was very impressed with the skills that these young people have learned through the leadership of the club again, and it does nothing but enhance their ability to take on their role as they become adults in this province and take on leadership roles.

Congratulations to the Kiwanis Club and my best wishes to all young people who have the opportunity to take advantage of joining 4-H clubs.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Motion presented.

MATTERS OF GRIEVANCE

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): In fact, I am pleased to be able to speak today, Mr. Speaker, under the one time in the session that I am guaranteed to be able to speak when I rise on my grievance.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that is ironic because only last night I was not able, after a number of attempts, to receive recognition in participating in a major debate in the Department of Agriculture. [interjection] Well, I hear howls from across the way, but members opposite should understand that one of the most fundamental rights of a member of this Legislature is the right to speak out on behalf of his or her constituents, and I plan on doing that today.

What is happening, Mr. Speaker, with this government, is that it is increasingly showing signs of arrogance, and I think what happened last night is indicative of that. In Estimates, where we have a limited number of hours set aside for consideration

of departments, we saw the spectacle yesterday of a government filibuster on a motion, which is a traditional motion to reduce the minister's salary, where the government spoke for three hours solid, where members in the opposition, such as myself, were unable to participate in the debate. That is not only not the tradition of this House, it is not parliamentary, it is not democratic, and it is not acceptable to the opposition in this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, this government has to understand that our parliamentary system is based on respect, not just of the will of the majority, the temporary majority that governs in this House, but also the other members, the members of the opposition, the other members of this House.

It is interesting because I look back at— [interjection] Well, it is interesting the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) talks about 4-H. I wonder how many of those participants in the competition he was talking about would have agreed with the government that refuses to allow members of the opposition to participate in debate. I wonder how many of those 4-H individuals would understand—in fact, I know they would understand the concern of members of this House.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that there will be specific opportunity to deal with this matter when the Committee of Supply again resumes in terms of points of order, indeed, of potential other procedures that may be used.

I want to say that I consider it unfortunate that the only way in which I can speak without having to run into that tyranny of the majority is in grievance. Once a session, Mr. Speaker, it is the time when I can stand in my seat, and I can speak.

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that members opposite take it so lightly. Perhaps some members who served in opposition would recall some of the concerns that were expressed by members of the opposition in those days in terms of the operation of committees and recognition of speakers and objectivity of chairs of committees and of speakers. They were concerns that were raised then.

I took the opportunity to look back at some of the concerns that were raised by such former members as Sterling Lyon and Brian Ransom and indeed, some of the same sitting members, Mr. Speaker. I looked back at some of the previous debates in this House and concerns that were expressed, and indeed I will be raising some of those matters as

precedent when I have the opportunity to deal with this matter in a more substantive form.

But I want to say to members opposite, to members of the government, that they should be very careful in terms of what they are doing because this House operates on the basis of rules, yes, but it also operates on the basis of co-operation.

I would say co-operation begins by recognizing the traditions of this House in terms of allowing members of the opposition to speak, in this case, on a motion that we introduced ourselves. And we will deal in terms of the procedural matters that were dealt with whether or not we have a decision on that particular matter.

I think common courtesy would have shown yesterday that even if members of the opposite had been, to my mind, in error, recognized that they were showing the courtesy of allowing members of the opposition to speak at that particular point in time. This House operates as much on common courtesy and co-operation as it does on the rules, and that is my concern.

We have a government that is increasingly ignoring our rules and ignoring any sense of co-operation, and I think that is unfair and it is unfortunate.

I sometimes wonder, Mr. Speaker, the degree to which this government will go. I found it rather interesting in Question Period today when the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of this province, in response to a question about the continuing clear evidence of blatant patronage on behalf of this government, a blatant unfairness that it deals with its political friends one way and it deals with other Manitobans another way, talks about the NDP, when it is a government, appointing its class of people.

What did the Premier mean by its class of people? You know, we have already seen his federal counterpart now, or presumed federal counterpart-to-be Kim Campbell, whom he supports, talking about people that disagree with the Conservatives, big enemies of Canada. I mean, now we are getting this new definition from the Premier. The NDP with its class of people. What class of people, Mr. Speaker? Nothing but a school class here.

I mean, what class of people? What is it, lower class, working class, middle class? Perhaps in the ivory tower view of Tuxedo, perhaps in the Premier's

view, we are all beneath the class of the Conservatives but I reject that.

I found the comments of the Premier today to be indicative of the kind of elitism that we see in Kim Campbell, the kind of elitism that is rampant in the Tory party, and it is unacceptable.

The NDP speaks for all people in this province, and that kind of comment from the Premier is indicative of the restricted, narrow-minded, elitist view of the Conservative Party. And I say —[interjection]

* (1430)

Mr. Speaker, members opposite say, speak for yourself. I am saying what the Premier said. If you want to speak you should speak to the Premier. He was the one who made those comments in this House.

You know, it just amazes me that this government does not understand what is happening out there. The First Minister (Mr. Filmon) today made those comments. Then we had the spectacle of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) talk about the provincial budget and how everybody was having to sacrifice and pay their share.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I mean, where has this Minister of Finance been since he announced the budget? Has he gone into the diners and the coffee shops to see who is paying that expansion of the sales tax as he calls it? Well, if he had, he would have found out that the people on limited means, average Manitobans are paying those increases. Go to Dubrovnik, you do not pay it on a \$20-\$25 meal. That is the reality out there.

Now, we see the First Minister talking today in response to the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) about seniors. Is the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) not aware of what he is doing? I mean, does he have to pick up a newspaper and read it on the front page before he understands that he is penalizing the seniors of this province, particularly those in—not even modest accommodation, we are talking about people living in very, very modest houses in poor areas, in rural communities in houses that are not worth a heck of a lot to begin with. Why? Because many of those seniors are of modest means.

This Minister of Finance goes and says to the people in Tuxedo, you have to take a reduction of \$75 on your property tax credit. Well, whoop-de-do, Mr. Speaker, \$75 is going to really hurt people in

Tuxedo living in \$150,000, \$200,000, \$250,000 houses. That is going to be real tough, you know. I mean, they are going to have to cut back pretty severely. I am just trying to think what might happen. There might be some terrible things. It might mean one less meal at Dubrovnik. How terrible! They may have to cut back in other ways. They may not be able to get the Mercedes washed as much. I mean, let us get serious. How is it going to impact on people in Tuxedo? Are they going to be hurt? I mean, they are going to have to get a \$1,425 suit instead of a \$1,500 suit. Let us be serious. People are not going to suffer.

Transpose that with a government that turns around to people who are paying limited taxes to begin with, Mr. Speaker, because the house they live in is of limited value, and the land they are living on is of limited value. Seniors who spent their entire life working strictly to survive, to pay the bills. It is interesting, you know, I remember the Premier was saying that you do not know what the income of the people in those houses is going to be that are going to pay that extra \$250. Well, you know, I do not know who the Premier has been talking to, but I have not heard of a lot of millionaires living in these houses. Millionaires usually like to live in quarter-of-a-million-dollar houses. They do not like to live in houses worth \$10,000 or \$15,000 or \$20,000 in areas of modest means, in rural communities with depressed property values. There is usually a relationship between big houses and big property tax bills and income.

Mr. Speaker, fine, the Premier can say, well, it is not income-related, and we can deal with that. There are ways within the property tax credit of dealing with income-related, but this government is now saying to the seniors, the many seniors, you have to pay \$250, \$260, \$270 more. So the person in Tuxedo loses the \$75 and does not get to go to Dubrovnik that one extra time. Where does the \$250 come from in terms of the senior citizens?

An Honourable Member: Only those that can afford to pay.

Mr. Ashton: Only those that can afford to pay. Well, Tory Ministers of Finance here who try and talk socialist lines here. Some socialist the Minister of Finance is when people in Tuxedo are faced with a \$75 increase in their property taxes and people living in those small houses, in those modest houses, are going to be paying \$250. That is not ability to pay. That is just straight Tory unfairness,

and the Minister of Finance knows that—ability to pay. Well, we will judge that by the fairness of Manitobans. We will ask them who should have been hit with the \$250 increase, and I guarantee you if the Minister of Finance takes the time to get out of this building and talk to some of those seniors that are going to be impacted by this, some of the people faced with the \$250 increase, he will find out what they think about it.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line with this government, as I said, we see the elitism and we see the arrogance. It is not just in the way they are dealing with matters before this House, it is in their actions as well.

What I find incredible, what I find particularly incredible is even when we get into specific debates on bills, we find again that even then the government cannot get it right. I take Sunday shopping. We had the incredible spectacle of the minister responsible for the bill trying to suggest that somehow the opposition is responsible for the bill not being before a committee.

Well, I wish someone would turn the oxygen on on the other side because I think the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) is hallucinating here. I do not know where he has been since December. We passed the Sunday shopping trial period into committee through second reading in December. Is this January? Is this February? Is it March? Is it April? Even with the weather being like it is, I mean it may seem like it is February or March, but it is May. It is May the 18th. [interjection] Well, the Minister of Finance says we have already gone through summer and it is winter again. I mean, it may seem that long, but it has been a substantive period of five months.

Mr. Speaker, I suppose someone might say, well, perhaps the government was just too busy. Perhaps other matters dominated in the session, but we did not sit the latter part of December and into January and February. We did not sit in that period of time. So did they call the bill to have public hearings? I mean, I know we would like to have hearings across rural and northern Manitoba.

I must say I was disappointed but not surprised, the government did not want to go out. The bottom line, and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) should know this, is they had plenty of time to go to committee, whether it be in this building or anywhere else, and they did not. Now, the Minister of Industry,

Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson) has the nerve to go out and say to the media that, well, it is really the opposition that is going to decide when this bill goes to committee.

There are various words that could be used to describe that, most of which are unparliamentary. Let me just say that the government opposite has lost leave of its senses. It is a stranger to the truth. It has not been telling the truth on that issue and it is indicative of the kind of attitude we are seeing increasingly from this government.

Well, Mr. Speaker, are these just isolated incidents? Have there been other incidents? We are seeing increasingly in this House when Manitobans disagree with the government, what does the government do? I remember a time when Sterling Lyon—and here I go again, saying this, but it is true—there was someone that if you disagreed with him, you had a protest, he would not send out somebody else on his behalf or send a letter saying, we do not have anybody available to go, I am too busy, like the current Premier (Mr. Filmon) has done repeatedly. [interjection]

Well, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) says, the good old days. One great thing about Tories is every time they get in government they are worse than the one before. This government has had the dubious distinction of making Sterling Lyon look like a martyr, but I am not talking about specifically that. I am talking about the fact—and I was president of the student union at the time when 20 percent in tuition for fee increases took place, and when cuts took place to funding. [interjection] No, I did not carry a coffin. That was a year after. We had 4,500 students and staff and faculty on the front steps of the Legislature.

What happened, Mr. Speaker? The Leader of the Opposition came out, well, actually the Liberal member, Lloyd Axworthy came out and spoke, followed by Ed Schreyer who was then-Leader of the Opposition, and then finally, guess who came out? Was there somebody coming out reading a regret letter? Did someone come out and say, we are sorry, the Premier is hiding in his office; he cannot come out.

We stood there and we went, Rufus, Rufus—that was his middle name and we thought we could get his attention—and guess what? We got his attention. He came out; he spoke to the 4,500 people there and invited us up to his office

afterwards, and we presented a petition with 15,000 people. In the end we had a follow-up meeting even with the Conservative caucus at the time. When I say we, it was collectively in terms of students, faculty and staff.

* (1440)

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): That is when we decided we did not want you at a caucus meeting.

Mr. Ashton: Well, believe you me—the Northern Affairs minister said about deciding that he did not want me in their caucus—I mean, I have never voted Tory, never will in my life, Mr. Speaker.

I made up that decision a long time before then, but they certainly helped out, because, believe you me, in the back of my mind I always used to think that when Tories got in, they would do things like this, cut back on education, cut back in terms of working people and cut back in terms of northerners.

You know what happened, Mr. Speaker? I saw it up close, that is exactly what they did. That was then and this is now. The more things change, the more they stay the same, but with a few significant differences. This government now is doing the same sorts of things that Sterling Lyon did, cutting back in education, impacting on students. In this case, they are cutting student aid, something that Sterling Lyon never did.

We are seeing it in other areas. We are seeing it particularly with—I remember a Minister of Northern Affairs who said at the time that welfare was cheaper than job creation. Well, that is still the philosophy of this government. They would much rather see the welfare rolls go up, as we have seen today, than have people put to work. They will not even work with the City of Winnipeg, with an innovative program that would get people working in the city instead of sitting at home on welfare because they are unable to get employment.

Mr. Downey: Are you advocating we do away with welfare?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Northern Affairs says, are we advocating doing away with welfare? I told him, I am not a Tory nor have I ever been. If that is his philosophy, let him state it. But the bottom line is, what I am advocating is people are able and willing to be able to work. It is absolutely criminal that in the province of Manitoba right now there is not enough work for the people out there

who want to work, and the people are ending up on welfare.

I talk to people every day in my constituency when I make my rounds and talk to my constituents, as I do on a regular basis. People are saying to me: I am on welfare right now; I have never been on welfare before in my life; I do not want to be on welfare; I am not eligible for UI because my UI has run out, and I want to get work.

I have talked to people in many remote communities who work as long as they can in the year for two, three, four or five months.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Start a business.

Mr. Ashton: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance says start a business. With what?

Mr. Manness: With what?

Mr. Ashton: With what? I mean, if you are on welfare, try going to the bank to get a loan.

(Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Mr. Manness: Energy.

Mr. Ashton: Start a business with energy.

Mr. Manness: With the sweat of your brow.

Mr. Ashton: With the sweat of our brow—well, I do not know which planet the Minister of Finance is from, Mr. Acting Speaker, but I am talking about communities. I will take him into Thicket Portage, Ilford or Pikwitonei, communities that at least the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) has visited, I know certainly in the case of Pikwitonei.

Mr. Downey: I have been in them all.

Mr. Ashton: Been in them all, fair enough. These are communities with three-day-a-week rail service, with no tax base. There are people who do have businesses, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Those were boom communities 50 years ago, they were boom communities 25 years ago. People have been working the last 25 years on commercial fishing. You cannot get much more into small business than that. But they are suffering. Transportation prices are down. The transportation subsidy was decreased. There are problems with the Freshwater Fish Marketing board that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is perhaps not aware of, but the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) is certainly aware of, if he has been in any

of those communities and talked to commercial fishermen.

Mr. Acting Speaker, it is not a lack of effort, it is not a lack of background in the workforce. There are many people in those communities. There are seniors, there are elders in those communities that worked 30 years on the railroad, but their kids cannot work on the railroad because there are not the jobs anymore. They have been cut back. The maintenance crews are down to two and three people in those communities. There used to be 100, 150 people based out of Pikwitonei.

I had the opportunity to talk to an elder just recently. He remembers the day when that was one of the boom towns in northern Manitoba, as was Thicket Portage that became the staging ground for Thompson.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the bottom line is those communities, when they have had the chance, have worked and worked hard to build the communities, and worked hard to build a lifestyle for their communities. But what is happening now, the Minister of Finance says start a business. As I said, with what? This is what the government does not understand.

These people in the communities do not have the financial resources to do it. The banks will not lend anyway in most of the communities—that is a common complaint. The bottom line is they are having a tougher time because of this Minister of Finance and this Premier. You have cut back the Children's Dental Program; you have cut back in terms of youth programs in those communities, the only programs that were providing jobs; you are cutting back in terms of student social assistance; you are cutting back in terms of the bursary program.

This clobbers communities such as the ones I am talking about, Mr. Acting Speaker. You know, I do not know in the community where the Minister of Finance lives, if everyone could just say, well, I am going to start up a small business and go to the bank and do it. I very much doubt it because I am sure even in his own community, he knows there are many people who would not be able to do that.

But, you know, Mr. Acting Speaker, what I find particularly insulting about the comment is many of the people in the remote communities in particular, as I have said, have been trappers, have been fishermen, have made their own living and continue to do so, continue to hunt and trap and fish.

Mr. Downey: The environmentalists put the trappers out of business.

Mr. Ashton: Well, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) says the environmentalists put the trappers out of business. Indeed, the Green Peace with its distorted and completely unfair and sensationalistic campaigns in Europe has certainly had its indent in terms of those communities.

But the point I am making to the Minister of Northern Affairs is perhaps he should explain to the Minister of Finance, given the chance, people in those communities have set up small businesses, the ultimate small business—living off the land, the ultimate small business—selling the furs that you catch or trap, selling the fish that you get, and increasingly they are being hit in those particular communities.

Mr. Manness: Not by my taxes.

Mr. Ashton: Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, the Minister of Finance says not by my taxes. I can give him a list of Tory initiatives that have hit northern communities. We can start with the \$50 user fee for northern patient transportation, we can go on to the child dental program that provided the only dental care many of those children have ever received and ever will receive, because most of the people never have had and never will have insurance. When you are a trapper, you do not have dental insurance. You are not like other people in other occupations.

I know the Minister of Finance representing a community with many primary producers, many farmers, who do not have insurance either, should understand that. So those are two things that have been hit right off the bat. They have cut back in terms of income security. The student social assistance program and also the payments going to people in the communities. They have cut back currently in terms of job creation programs in those communities.

They have eliminated any ability in many communities to provide summer jobs because of the requirement of matching funds, something that was available in terms of the CareerStart. They have cut back in terms of the Community Places Program that had provided some significant opportunities in terms of building facilities in those communities. What have they not cut back? They are even cutting back in terms of education funding into those communities in terms of frontier schools.

I mean, these are communities, Mr. Acting Speaker, that have limited resources to begin with, and the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) knows that, and they are being continuously hit. So the Minister of Finance says they have not been affected by any of his taxes. I mean, who does he think are paying the increased provincial sales tax on baby supplies and meals under six bucks?

It is people who have limited means to begin with in many communities and in my own communities. If he wants to come to Thompson and he wants to come with me to any of the restaurants in Thompson and come in and see who is paying that amount, it is not the people who go and pay the \$10-\$12 dinners and the \$15 dinners and the \$20 dinners, most people cannot afford that on a regular basis. The people who are getting penalized by his taxes are the people on limited and modest incomes, so I point out this, because increasingly the fact is that this government is elitist and it is out of touch.

* (1450)

It is interesting because there is a relationship between all of these factors. I talk about the federal Conservatives, and I find it interesting. When times are tough for Tories, we get people like the minister for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae), who suggested that the Manitoba party, the Manitoba Conservative party, Progressive Conservative party, whatever the heck it is called now, Manitoba PC party or a Tory by any other name, suggested, change the name. I remember that.

What is the member for Brandon West doing now? He is running for the federal Conservative party. Does that surprise anyone in this House? Here is an MLA that wanted to change the name of the provincial party—those rotten federal Conservatives, he said, that rotten Brian Mulroney, that rotten bunch of cabinet ministers, they have done such terrible things for Manitoba. We should disassociate ourselves.

What is he doing now? He is running for the federal Conservatives and what are they standing for? Every single one of the policies that was adopted by the federal Conservative party is being maintained by what—by Kim Campbell and John Charest. It is the same bunch. They are rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic, Mr. Acting Speaker.

By the looks of it, I think Kim Campbell is throwing some of the deck chairs overboard. I think at the rate

she is going, she is going to jump overboard herself with some of her most recent comments.

We are seeing now Kim Campbell make statements about the Catholic church that have not been heard in this country since the turn of the century, the turn of the century—[interjection]

I do not know if the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister) is aware of the comments that Kim Campbell has made about the Catholic church and the Pope—[interjection] Well, take out of context. It is hard to take a comment out of context talking about papist demons—papist demons.

How do you take that out of context? She is an Anglican, and if he wants to get the copy of the exact statement that was made. I cannot even repeat some of the things she said in the House about people that are not members of political parties. She made some very disparaging comments about people who are not members of political parties. You have someone who, just last week, said that people who do not agree with the Conservatives on the deficit are enemies of Canada—enemies of Canada.

Well, you know, I am just wondering who is going to be left, Mr. Acting Speaker. She is talking on the 80 percent of people who do not agree with Tory government policies, she is taking on Catholics, she is taking on people that are not members of political parties. Well, I ask the question, who is left once you eliminate all of those people?

What it is, it is the Tory party of the 1890s. It is the Orangemen, it is the elitist version of the Conservative party and I do not even believe, in fact I know, that many members in this House who are Conservatives do not subscribe to that view of this province or this country, but this is Kim Campbell. How many of them are going to vote for Kim Campbell?

This is a question I ask, because is no one going to take a stand and disassociate themselves from these elitist comments? Is no one going to say that it is not acceptable in the 1990s to talk as if we are in the 1890s with the Orange Lodge and anti-Catholic statements?

This is not northern Ireland, I mean, talking about papist demons. As I said, it is not just the federal leader. Why did the Premier today talk about the NDP and its class of people? Does that not indicate very much certainly an insensitivity in terms of what was said in terms of words but it sends wonderful

signals. [interjection] Well, perhaps the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister) can explain what the Premier said about the NDP and its class of people. What is its class of people? What is our class of people?

You know, I represent people in my constituency and when I come to this House I represent everyone, whether they vote for me or not, that is part of the democratic process. One of the nice things about the community in Thompson, and I think anyone who has been in Thompson will know that, including the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), we have our disagreements at election time. We probably put up more election signs per capita than anybody else does in the province and believe you me, neighbours argue with neighbours and friends argue with friends and members of family argue with members of family about politics. More often than not in between the elections, we have our disagreements but we have a lot in common as well.

The 11 or 12 years—[interjection] What I am saying, Mr. Acting Speaker, is that when you come to this House, what you do is you talk in terms of representing the interests of all Manitobans, not talking about the NDP and its class of people. I have raised this with the Minister of Northern Affairs who said that the problem with northerners is they do not know how to vote right. I mean that was probably a more neutral version. At least in that case, the Minister of Northern Affairs—and I disagreed with what he said—at least he was defining it in terms of how people vote.

We know—we just saw the last budget—we saw the 10 out of the 11 friendship centres just happened to be located in NDP ridings, the 11th was in Portage, and I know the member for Portage has analyzed how the people serviced by the friendship centre vote. I know he has made various comments, but I do not want to get into his comments in terms of that, because it is on record in terms of that.

Are we really at the stage, Mr. Acting Speaker, when we determine the politics of this province by the NDP and its class of people? What does that mean? Does the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger) know what that means? Perhaps the Minister of Highways and Transportation was not in the House yesterday.

If the Minister of Highways and Transportation was in opposition now—and he will be in opposition

again soon enough—he would have been howling. He would have been the first one on his feet, when this government, on a motion introduced by the opposition, filibustered and refused even as a common courtesy to allow myself or other members of the opposition to speak even when it was pointed out, Mr. Acting Speaker, that three government members had been recognized in a row, each speaking the full amount of time, not one single opposition member.

I have a message to the Minister of Finance and this relates specifically to what happened last night, what has happened on matters such as the Sunday shopping bill, and more generally the kind of attitudes that we are seeing brought forward in this House, Mr. Acting Speaker.

This government is going to have to learn the lessons about the functioning of this House. It is going to have to recognize that it cannot be arrogant, that co-operation and consultation go a heck of a lot further than confrontation. They are going to have to—[interjection] Well, the reality. They are reality and if this government insists on the kind of activities we have seen, the kind of arrogant statements, the kind of tactics we have seen in this House whereby they are denying, they are filibustering in Estimates and actually denying opposition members the right to speak in the normal rotation, the normal custom of this House, that is fine.

They can do that all they want, Mr. Acting Speaker, but they should not come to us and ask for co-operation on other matters. You cannot have it both ways, as members of this House like to throw back and forth to each other, particularly on the rules.

If the government House leader wants to talk about co-operation in this House, he had better practise what he is preaching. Co-operation starts with respect for the rights of opposition members to speak in this House.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the government House leader could have stood in his place and said perhaps an error had been made and by courtesy, as could have any of the members that were recognized, could have said that perhaps the other member should be recognized. That has been done on many occasions.

I have risen on occasion, Mr. Acting Speaker, whereby in error a Speaker has recognized myself and not a Liberal member or not a Conservative

member that should normally be recognized in the normal rotation, and I have sat down. I have given up my right to speak on that occasion, spoke at a later time. I have shown that courtesy.

Let us not forget that yesterday what we saw was not just once. We saw it happen twice. I did not get up on the first time because everyone, Mr. Acting Speaker, can make mistakes, but when one clearly indicates one's wish to speak, which I had done—when I rose afterwards to indicate that. When we were in Estimates even, whereby the member for Portage could have after two minutes sat down, I could have spoken at that time. He could have risen again. There is no limit in Estimates, other than the particular limit on that one time you are speaking. He could have spoken 10 times afterwards.

I say that indicates a lot about this House. We will deal with it in terms of the decisions of the Chair when we get into the committee. We will deal with that. We have grave concerns about the decisions that were made and have been made on matters of this kind. It also impacts in terms of the operation of this House as well, Mr. Acting Speaker. It is a question not just of chairing and decisions that are made by a Chair. It also reflects on decisions made by this government.

It is interesting. I mean, I was looking at some of the precedents in this particular case. I went back to 1982, to Points of Order raised then by Sterling Lyon. Mr. Acting Speaker, by the way, if you look at the index, that was the 1982-1983-1984 session. Some of the members of this House will remember it well. I remember some of the key issues in that session. It is going to be interesting to see, as we proceed through this session, and with the attitude of this government and with some of the issues that are being debated, whether history is going to repeat itself 10 years later—December 1982.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I really do not understand what the government intends to achieve by its actions in this House. They can filibuster. The Premier was in Education Estimates yesterday. The Premier has to go to Education Estimates to ask questions to the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey)? The Premier could not ask them in cabinet?

An Honourable Member: He has a right to know.

Mr. Ashton: Indeed, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) said, he has a right to know. It is too bad he does not know, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Actually, the only thing that may be positive out of this, he may find out just what a mess there is in the education system right now by asking questions of the Minister of Education. What a spectacle. We now have the Leader of the party, the Premier, asking his own minister questions in the public forum that we have in terms of Estimates. Mr. Acting Speaker, indeed how embarrassing.

* (1500)

Mr. Acting Speaker, I must admit, when I was a government member and a backbencher, as has been the Minister of Highways and Transportation, I must admit that I did ask a few questions to the minister, similar to the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose).

Puffball questions are standard, Mr. Acting Speaker. That is the term that is often—softball. Actually, I pointed out the T-ball season started up. The backbenchers on the government side have to T it up, and then the minister or the Premier gets up there and knocks it out of the park. It quite an entertaining process.

Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, now we have the Premier of this province asking puffball questions, asking softball questions to his Minister of Education.

An Honourable Member: Was she answering? Was she giving him the right answer?

Mr. Ashton: I do not think she was giving answers.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Premier is practising for the inevitability that if he sticks around beyond the next election, he is going to be back being Leader of the Opposition. He is going to need some training on asking questions, because that is the way they are headed politically.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude my remarks today by saying that the arrogance and the elitism that we are seeing in this House, the insensitivity to the opposition is something we deal with as opposition members. [interjection] Well, in terms of threats, there is no threat in explaining the reality to the minister. If they expect a filibuster in Estimates, we will make up the time that they are trying to take away from members of the opposition in concurrence. We will make it up on grievances. We will make it up in whatever way we can. This opposition is not going to be bullied by this Conservative government.

It goes beyond that, because when we speak we do not just speak on our own personal behalf. When we speak, we speak on behalf of our constituents. I am going to speak out on behalf of my constituents who, for the information of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), are being hit by his taxes. I am going to speak out against the inherent elitism that we are seeing from Tories federally and provincially, indicated even in Question Period today. We are going to speak out against Premiers that talk about NDP and its class of people, against potential future leaders of the party federally who talk about people based on their religious persuasion or in terms of not agreeing with their politics, that they are enemies of Canada or involved with papist demons.

That kind of conduct is suitable for the 1890s. This is the 1990s, Manitobans expect better, and we will be speaking out against this kind of elitism that we are seeing on a daily basis from this government, whether it be in terms of the way they deal with this House, deal with members of the opposition, or deal with members of the public. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on a grievance regarding the proposed Assiniboine diversion and the government's inability to stand up for the environment of Manitoba and work to have the federal government follow their legal mandate for a federal environment review.

The more I learn about this project, the more I am convinced that an environment review would find that this project is not good sense in environmental terms. It is also not good sense in economic terms for the long-term development of rural agriculture in the province, and, certainly, there are a number of questions that could be asked about the politics that are being played with respect to this diversion.

It was interesting and annoying today in the House in Question Period when we again asked for some kind of explanation about why there would be no federal environment review on this project, why the government of Manitoba has rushed ahead with only two months warning and lead time to set dates already for June for the Manitoba Clean Environment Commission process.

We know that they are rushing ahead to try and get this development up and going before the federal election, before there can be any organized court action. This is a tactic that has been used over and over again in Canada, where developments are

pushed through with bogus environmental assessments or no assessment at all by the proper jurisdiction. Then, after the fact, they are challenged in court, once they are already constructed, either totally or partially constructed. Again, this government has to be taken to task and held accountable for misleading the public about whose responsibility it is to protect Manitoba's environmental interests.

It is interesting that with this project again there is no talk of sustainability. They know very well that this is not environmentally sustainable and is not a sustainable approach to agriculture and rural development.

They know very well. That is why the sustainable rhetoric has been dropped even from the Premier's (Mr. Filmon) comments on the budget, from all the Premier's speeches, all the talk when we first began this government's mandate for this term when they talked on and on about sustainability.

Well, it is interesting, Mr. Speaker, that we do not hear that anymore, and it is because they know from projects like this that it is simply rhetoric. It has been simply an attempt to shroud themselves in the current jargon that they think is going to make them popular through the media and through nondetailed scrutiny by the public.

This project, I would suggest, is putting this government in the deepest hole that they could be digging for themselves. They have opposition again from members in their own caucus. There is opposition throughout southern rural Manitoba against this project. I think that there are various reasons for that.

I think that some of the opposition is coming, not from serious environmental concerns, but only because this has become a battle over water. We are going to see more and more of these kinds of battles over water into the future, and this is only the beginning.

One of the important reasons for the grievance today is that this government, in collusion with the federal government, is not living up to the federal environment legislation. The federal legislation is very clear when it says that there are certain criteria that trigger a federal environment review.

This project fulfills all of those criteria under the federal environment act. This project has some \$62 million or more of federal money from the PFRA

going to it, and that is one reason why there should be a federal environment review.

When we asked the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) what rationale they have for not complying with that legislation, they try and play this game of making it look like we do not understand what we are talking about. But it is very clear, and you do not have to have very much analysis to understand that the federal act says that there should be a review when there is federal money. This project has money through the Department of Agriculture.

Note as well that this government is claiming that this project is not going to benefit food companies and irrigators, and yet we look at where the money is coming from, from the federal government, it is coming from the Department of Agriculture. Well, why is it coming from the Department of Agriculture if, as the government says, this project has nothing to do with agriculture? It is not going to benefit farmers irrigating potatoes in southern Manitoba.

Now, those are legitimate questions that we would expect an answer to, but we never get any clear answers from this government on this project. They are simply going to try and use all of their monetary power, all of their legislative and jurisdictional power to force the project through before we can have the proper assessment.

Now, there have been threats of taking this project to court, and I know that there are some national environment groups that are going to be looking at that. But the reason that they have a case is because the federal act is so clear in saying that this project should have a federal environment review.

* (1510)

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

Another reason for that is that it is on a navigable river. And it is amazing, when you look at the demands that have been placed on this river, the Assiniboine River, over the years, when you go and look at how much the water level has dropped and how much this flow has been reduced on the Assiniboine River.

Mr. Manness: I get my water from the Assiniboine.

Ms. Cerilli: The Minister of Finance says that he gets his water out of the Assiniboine. I do not know where his home is on the Assiniboine River, but I

would suggest that his water quality is going to be affected no matter where.

One of the things that we are asking for—and I do not know if this government understands this—the concept of a basin-wide review, because this project is going to affect wells in the area. It is going to affect the wetlands surrounding the Assiniboine River. We want to look at what is happening in this entire river basin, because not that many years ago there was a much smaller number of lagoons and other polluters putting effluent into this river. Now there are more lagoons and more industry.

This government does not seem to understand the idea that you have to look at all of the impacts on the river as well as this proposal to take off more water from the river. They will say, oh, it is only 20 cubic feet per second and the river can handle it. This government should also know and consider that already the allocation of the water from the Assiniboine River is greater than the total flow. So people downstream around Portage la Prairie are already using water that has completely been used once already, and it could be used by the plant at Simplot, with Ayerst using more water, a tremendous amount of water for its operation. We are already using more than once more than the flow that is available in the river.

The other reason that is a clear indication of why there should be a federal review on this project is that it affects directly aboriginal lands which border the river. The quality and the value of those lands are going to be affected by this project. It is interesting, you know, that Long Plain Reserve is now not upstream from the diversion itself—and I will get to that point in a minute—but that there are communities that are going to be affected from decreased flow on the Assiniboine that already have serious water shortage problems.

One of the reasons that there is so much concern about this project is the government goes ahead and puts out policy booklets about developing water policy, but then they go and construct projects like this which go against it. One of the policies in documents such as highlights of the provincial government initiatives on water strategy policy application document would say that there should not be transfer of water between basins and there should not be transfer of water to one area at the detriment of another area. That is what one of the serious concerns about this project is. This government will go ahead and will continue to

maintain or try to maintain that the water from this project is simply going to the parched area in the Carman-Winkler area. They have used bogus population projections to try and justify this.

What the problem is, and they will not come clean on this and admit what is happening, is that the water—[interjection] Even if it is, even if we give them the benefit of the doubt and the treated water being pumped now from Portage la Prairie to the southern area of Manitoba, even if it is going to be used for human consumption and potable water for that area, then all they are allowing to happen is for the irrigators in that area to continue to deplete the aquifer for irrigation purposes. So, in effect, we still are having water transferred from one region of the province to the other region of the province, not for potable use, but to benefit the private irrigators.

I have letters from McCain Foods and from farmers in the area commending the government on this project and talking about how important it is to develop irrigation in this area. We know that what is happening is the potato industry is trying to consolidate its operations as close as possible to the border and to the markets in the U.S.

It is a problem when we have these kind of strategies going ahead irrespective of would-be water policy that is being stalled from this government, and there is no attempt to conserve water and to deal with the poor infrastructure in that southern Manitoba area before we put millions of dollars into these type of water-transfer schemes.

We talked before, Madam Deputy Speaker, about the similarity of the Pembina task force proposal for the Assiniboine diversion with the South Hespeler report from the mid-'80s and how that report was clearly and openly indicating that this water diversion was for irrigation purposes. This government has gone on to deny that there is any relationship between these two proposals, but it is very clear when you look at them that this project for the Assiniboine diversion is exactly the same as the first of four or five stages from the South Hespeler strategy.

When we continue to ask from this government that they be accountable, that they be clear and up-front with people of Manitoba, and if they are deciding to not follow the law, if they and the federal Minister for Agriculture, Mr. Mayer, are going to go ahead and ignore the federal environment act and not have the proper environment review on this

project, that they at least have some accountability and realize their responsibility for some explanation which would only comply with the requirements under the environment act for why it is that this project is being screened out.

I think that we are going to have again another project just like with the office building at Oak Hammock Marsh where after the fact there are court challenges. I would suggest that there are at least three very strong cases for why this project would not hold up in court, and we could see that happening once this project is on the way.

We are asking that they be up-front now and at least have some explanation for why this project is being screened out of the federal assessment. That is, I would think, a reasonable request. If you are going to make decisions to not follow the requirements for the federal environment review, at least have some public explanation.

An Honourable Member: The feds make that decision.

Ms. Corliss: We understand that it is the federal government making that decision. That raises another point, but there should be some explanation, and there should be some explanation in Manitoba, to Manitobans, by Manitoba's government to deal with the legitimate concerns.

It is interesting, the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Driedger) raises the issue that this was a federal decision, but whose decision was it? It is a decision made by the PFRA under the Minister of Agriculture who is giving the \$62 million or so for this project.

So here we have the proponent or funder of the proponent for the project also making the decision to screen out the project from the federal environment review process. If that is not the biggest conflict that there could be on such a development, then I do not know what else could happen, to have the same minister funding the project that is responsible for saying yea or nay to a federal environment review. If that is not ridiculous, I do not know what is. It just goes to show what a whitewash the Conservatives can make of any kind of attempt to have some environmental safeguards for development.

* (1520)

There are a number of other irregularities with this project that have already occurred. One of the irregularities that is another good reason why this project would stand up in court to a very legitimate

challenge—and again this could happen, hopefully it will not happen once the project is already developed, but this court challenge likely will happen once the provincial assessment is begun—and that is the way, the irregularity is the way that the proponent, the Pembina Valley Water Co-op, in the middle of the environmental assessment, has changed the project. I have with me the two Environmental Impact Statements for the Pembina Valley regional project.

Now, the first statement as anyone could see is, I would say, almost two inches thick. It goes into great detail about the various habitats surrounding—[interjection] Well, to some detail, I would say it does not go into great detail because a lot of the research for the habitats is not available because the research is not being conducted because of lack of funding, but it talks about the existing water supplies. It talks about existing water demand. It talks about these bogus population projections.

It has charts that show the various communities and their populations and their water use. It was released December 1992, and that is not that long ago. It would give someone, if they got this then, the chance to review it and start to prepare some kind of response in preparation for an Environmental Impact Statement.

It is interesting what happened with this, is even though this report which is—how many pages, many pages, I am looking to see. [interjection] No, I am doing all right [interjection] I would say this report is over 400 pages, Madam Deputy Speaker, including all the appendices. It goes into some detail in describing this project. Then we had, February 1993, an addendum which radically and dramatically changed the project to having the diversion from the Assiniboine River to connect to the Boyne River which, I would say, would even be worse than what is happening now.

This addendum, Madam Deputy Speaker, is merely 21 pages long. With an addendum that so dramatically changes the project to be so minimal and that we are expected to simply allow this to happen, we have asked if there is any kind of legal consideration that it is not acceptable or legal to, in the middle of an environmental assessment, so dramatically change a project and not have any more background information.

The area being affected by the diversion has changed. The project has been changed radically,

and we would expect that it should go back to the beginning of the environmental assessment process and that there would be a new report that would give the same kind of detail and the same kind of overview of the new project, and that there would again be a chance for people to have the same amount of time to review that report and prepare for the assessment, but that is not what this government has chosen to do.

They have simply allowed the project to be changed in the middle of the assessment process, and they have set hearings in June. I have raised concerns about the fact that there is only less than two months available for people to prepare for when the hearings were called. There is also the concern that has been raised about how some of the area farmers are concerned about the timing of these hearings as well.

With respect to the hearings and not having the federal process, there is also the problem, not only that there will be no time for the kind of preparation that we would like to see, but there will not be any financial support for interveners. With the kind of data that needs to be collected when you are talking about this kind of water transfer, we want to make sure that we are going to have professionals who have the opportunity to spend a large amount of their attention preparing for the hearings.

I am concerned that that is not going to happen, and I think that that is one of the reasons why we are not having the federal review. It is because, if there was a federal review, then there would be intervener funding, there would be full-time research done to prepare. I think that that would give a far closer scrutiny and far better information to show the kind of effect that this is going to have on the Assiniboine River basin. I think that that is part of the reason why they are not having the federal review.

The other thing that is interesting about these projects and some of the irregularities about them is the way that we have members opposite on the government's side who insist on throwing their support publicly behind these projects before they have had the proper environmental assessment. The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) is particularly noted for this. He has done it over and over again with a number of other projects where he gives his support.

I do not know if these are projects that are benefiting colleagues that he has or what have you,

but again the Minister of Natural Resources has done this on the Assiniboine diversion and has even gone so far since then as we have seen on other projects, where he has had to publicly make statements retracting that support and trying to backtrack and say that he is not publicly supporting and endorsing the project before it has had the proper assessment.

Particularly, coming from a Minister of Natural Resources this is of great concern. It just shows the kind of attitude that this government has towards these assessments. They do not think that there should be a legitimate time period so that people can closely look at the environmental effects. They simply see these environmental impact assessments as something that now has to be dealt with, and I think that phrase has been used before by members opposite, so that they can go ahead and do what they would really like to do anyway. I know that there has to be some agreement between the provincial and federal governments for their not to have the proper federal review.

* (1530)

The other thing that comes to mind with respect to this project, and it could be another good reason for there to be so much opposition for it, similar to the Charleswood Bridge, similar to other things that this government supports spending money on in this time of, as they claim when it is convenient for them, economic problems, is the choice for them to support and subsidize these kinds of megaprojects and the kind of money that goes to support them, which is going to industry, at a time when that money should be going to provide the services that government is meant to provide, such as education and health care and support for people in the community who are disadvantaged.

When people say, well, we all have to tighten our belts and we do not have any money, I will point to projects like this, where governments spend millions of dollars handing it over to private individuals and corporations so that they can maximize their productivity and maximize their efforts, and that takes money away from education opportunities, health care, services for seniors, young people, child care and all those things that one thinks that government really is meant to do.

That just goes to show the bias, again, that this government has. I think a lot of them simply do see government as an opportunity to take tax dollars and

divert them into industry, into often industry that is going to benefit their colleagues. I do not think it is any accident that the beneficiaries of this particular initiative are in Conservative constituencies. It would be interesting as well if we could do the checking and see what kind of support McCain Foods and Kroeker Farms gives to the Conservative party during election time and otherwise. It would not surprise me at all if there is that kind of relationship that has developed, and that is why we see the kind of urgent speed in setting the environment hearings quickly before the federal election.

I think that, no matter how much cash the government is securing by this project, they are losing support. They are losing support from this project. They are losing support in areas where I would say they traditionally have had strong support.

I think that it is environment issues generally which are going to start having people realize, and this is one of the first, this kind of choice that is being made here. These are the kinds of projects that are going to start swaying support away from the Conservatives as we see happening now, because the economic side of this project is not benefiting a lot of the rural people in rural areas.

This is the kind of project that just benefits the corporate, elite, powerful individuals that run the corporations like McCain Foods. It is tying individual producers into these irrigation schemes which are very expensive, and it uses market forces by tying these producers into corporations by requiring that they have irrigation for their crops.

It uses the market forces to do this, and then it becomes very difficult for these operators to be able to no longer farm in that manner. What ends up happening is all of these communities will end up being held hostage to these industries which tie them into very expensive irrigation—[interjection]

The Minister of Natural Resources is talking about how there is no pollution in North America and how profit and a clean environment go together. Well, particularly in irrigation, this government does not want to look at the effects of large-scale irrigation on communities. You can look at some of the places that the minister is referring to when you look at the increase in salinity of the soil, when you look at the increase in the use of chemicals that is required

when you use the kind of massive irrigation that is used here.

It is interesting to me that the government is so rigid in its approach to this style of farming that they do not look even at other styles. They do not even look at other styles of irrigation. I have heard that there is a different kind of irrigation, drip irrigation, that would use less water because the irrigation does not just spray the water into the air, where more of it is just evaporated and where there would be water more closely and directly put into the soil.

All of these are considerations that I hope will come forward during the assessment. I think, if we start to look more holistically through our environmental assessments, we will see that, even if this project is going to be used at this time for drinking water in the southern Manitoba area, it is setting up the opportunity to continue to use the aquifer to deplete the aquifer for irrigation.

It is interesting at the same time that this is going on that more irrigation permits are being given out in this area, that \$2.8 million is being spent on another reservoir scheme to trap water for irrigation.

I would think that the government has a very narrow and limited view of what kind of diversification could happen in rural Manitoba. With projects like this, the issue also becomes control over our natural resources, control over agriculture and the misuse of public money to hand over that control to private industry.

One of the things that I also think is important to talk about with respect to the Assiniboine diversion is the City of Winnipeg's concerns and the amount of water that is required to flow through the city of Winnipeg, so its sewage can be properly dealt with. The sewage plant in the west end in the city of Winnipeg has serious concerns I would think about having decreased flow coming through the Assiniboine River and the city of Winnipeg.

It is interesting that now we have the provincial government admitting that they are remiss in not setting some hearings for this important project in Winnipeg when there has been, I think it is, unanimous passing of a resolution by the city by our councillors, our duly elected council, to raise concerns about the developments. Some of the councillors outright oppose this project for some of the reasons I have explained, but the resolution asked for the proper federal review or at least a joint federal-provincial review.

* (1540)

It is interesting that this government could so easily ignore the concerns that have been raised by the City of Winnipeg. There are a number of the members opposite who represent constituencies. I have even had some of their constituents call me expressing their opposition to this project. I know that a lot of those individuals, I think, who have been supporters of this party and this government, and this project is changing that.

It is not just the project itself, which I have said before, but it is the way that they are handling it, the way that they will simply disregard the concerns of the City of Winnipeg. Their focus is diverting water into that Winkler and Carman area and the city of Winnipeg, oh, well, it seems they are not too concerned about those.

It is interesting, the member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae), I wonder if he is in support of this project. There are other members across the way where their constituencies are on the Assiniboine. I wonder how they justify this project to their residents who probably even have houses right on the Assiniboine River itself.

Madam Deputy Speaker, how much time do I have left? Two minutes? I will just wrap up then. I thought I was nearing the end.

I think it is clear that there are a number of concerns, legitimate concerns, that have been raised with respect to this project. The largest one is that they are not complying with federal legislation, and I think that there has been some agreement between the federal level and provincial level through the federal minister for Agriculture who, as I said, is both the funder of this project as well as the ministry that is deciding not to have a review. I think that there is an agreement that has been made with some of the members in the House at this very minute to simply try and fast track the project. I think that this government is going to pay for that decision with the support that they are losing because of their shortsighted attitude to economic development and rural development.

I think that they are making a big mistake on this one. I think that, unlike some of the other decisions they are making where they say they are making tough decisions and that we can see that they are only cutting programs that affect people who are not in the privileged class, as the Premier was alluding to today, that this project is affecting people who

have in the past supported them and raises environmental concerns that are being raised by people in the areas that they traditionally have represented.

I think for those reasons that they are making a big mistake. I hope that they would come to their senses and have the proper federal environment review or joint review so that the proper research can be done. I do not have much hope that they are going to do that. Unfortunately, there probably will be a court case on this.

I thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time has expired.

Point of Order

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): I rise, Madam Deputy Speaker, on a point of order simply because I need to ask you whether you think it is in the best interest of this House to have somebody—or in order—stand up in this House for a matter of 40 minutes to speak in utter ignorance about something she knows nothing about.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Madam Deputy Speaker, clearly that is not a point of order. If you review the record of the remarks of the member for Rhineland, you would determine that the same has happened on many occasions when that member spoke.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) did not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

Mr. Penner: I would like to remind the honourable member for Flin Flon, Madam Deputy Speaker, that there is no member for Rhineland, it is from Emerson.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Emerson did not have a point of order, but he did indeed want the record set straight.

Mr. Cliff Evans (Interlake): Madam Deputy Speaker, I too would like to make some comments—

An Honourable Member: Is this a grievance?

Mr. Cliff Evans: Yes, it is a grievance. [interjection] Well, it may very well be.

This is the part where I am going to start. I, along with many people in this House, am new, and when we were elected and when we ran, we were running for the people in our constituency, for the people of Manitoba.

We were not running to become personal. We were not running to come in here, into this House, and deal with personalities and deal with years previous, and what has been done and that has been done.

We are dealing, Madam Deputy Speaker, now. From 1990, that is the time that I am dealing, from 1990 as the elected representative of the Interlake. And, also included, the year that I had the privilege of being the mayor of Riverton. That is what I am dealing with. That is what I have been trying to deal with since I have been in this House, since September of 1990. And since September of 1990, I have heard, not only directed at myself but at other members in this House, comments that would in fact, if these comments were made outside of this Chamber, be a time for a lawsuit.

Now, I am talking about everyone. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is querying my comment. The Minister of Finance should perhaps just listen to what I have to say. Again, I am not here, and I do not think many members are here—I do not think the newly elected member for Portage la Prairie, whom I have known for many years, is here to ridicule or to contradict or to make any comments about personalities of any kind. That is what I have heard here, and it bothers me.

It bothers me to the limit, because I would like to know that we here are elected to work for the people of Manitoba, for the people of Manitoba. We hear comments from the government side that, yes, we are listening to people of Manitoba. We will not choose who we will listen to as government. I find those comments very, very hard to believe. Listening to the people of Manitoba means listening to the million people in the province, not just listening to the people in your constituency, not just listening to the people in Tory land, NDP land, Liberal land. It is to listen to everyone.

Everyone has a problem of one sort or another, and we have to deal with it here. I would like to think that, as 56 or 57 members of this House, we would deal with these problems collectively. Maybe, and I will say so myself, perhaps I came here being a little naive about the whole process, and I find it very

difficult and very hard at times to deal with issues in my constituency and in my critic areas throughout the province when people say to me: Why are you people not working together? Why are you working against each other? Why are you as opposition contradicting everything the government is doing and why is the government doing what they are supposed to or not supposed to be doing? [interjection]

Well, the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) makes jest of the fact of going golfing on June 7— [interjection] Okay, I will be looking forward to that.

* (1550)

What my point is, I think most of the members of the House get along outside of this Chamber and inside, most, but I find it very, very difficult at times to hear some of the comments in this Chamber at one member or another, whether it be our side, whether it be government side, whether it be Liberal side. I find that very hard to believe. Again, perhaps call me naive; call me whatever you want. Just do not call me late for dinner, that is all.

I say that we have a job to do. We all have a job to do here, and it seems that at times personalities conflict with the job that we have to do. Also, what I find very difficult is the process, to understand. Being new at this and in trying to understand and talk to some of our senior members, I find it difficult. I feel I have a job to do, a responsibility to do for my constituents, and if I am given a critic area, I have that job to do, too, that representing all the people in the province.

I find at times that the system that we have here takes away from us as elected officials to represent the people like we should. I find it difficult. At first, I found it very, very difficult to be able to go across to the government side to a specific minister and request assistance with some issue that I have in my constituency. I found that very difficult to do because I was under the impression that that was not the right thing to do, but not so—not so.

I found it very easy, with some of the ministers, to go and discuss an issue in my constituency that arose, but what I find also very difficult is the way the present government has treated the people in this province with certain issues, certain funding, certain classes.

For an example, it is hard to go to my constituency and sit down with people and discuss the recent dental program cut. "Can you not go to the minister?"

is the question. Can you not go to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), and can you not go and tell him to bring the program back? [interjection] I am sure the minister reiterates what I say, yes.

That is why I say, the perception of people out there is that we are the cure-all for all. All you have to do is just knock on the minister's door, the government's door, and it will be done—not so. Each government has its agenda. Each government follows its agenda, and each government puts on certain people an extra burden that they have to continue with on and on and on.

When you are starting to put a burden on the people who cannot afford, on the people who need the most, the children, the seniors, the disabled, the handicapped, what do we get? No response. The dental health program again, Madam Deputy Speaker, I come back to that. I have got letters, petitions, people calling, meetings about a vital part of the services that have been provided to this province for the many, many years—17 years. You know, we here on this side can say, well, the NDP brought that in. Well, that is fine. Perhaps at the time the government in place decided that this program was the program that would benefit the young kids in our province for the future. That is fine.

The problem is today, 1993, this program has been cut, cut to a skeleton staff of four. We are down to a skeleton for these 60,000-70,000 children that we are dealing with. What I hear from the parents and from the children and from the school trustees and from the principals and the dental health nurses is that not today, maybe not today, is it going to affect, but down the road it is not only going to affect the children, but it is going to affect the government that is in place. So we have to look at a longer range forecast. We have to look at things 15-20 years down the road. Let us not talk about or think about what is behind us. Let us talk about the future. Let us not so much talk about what is happening today. Let us talk about the future, and I think perhaps we have here in this Assembly, under this government, we have the blinders on for the future. That, Madam Deputy Speaker, not only disappoints me as to what this process is all about, but I know it disappoints many, many thousands of people outside of this building.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when it comes to rural Manitobans, I have had the pleasure of living in rural Manitoba for now on 11 years. I moved from Winnipeg in 1982, and I found that rural Manitoba

and rural Manitobans were in a certain class of their own, a certain warmth of their own. I have had the opportunity of travelling even more in rural Manitoba in this past two and a half years than I ever had the opportunity to before, and it makes me proud that I had the opportunity and did go to rural Manitoba. My roots are still in Winnipeg, but my home is in rural Manitoba, and I think that above all that we have seen and all that we have heard in the many years of governments, we must depend on the people of rural Manitoba and keep the people of rural Manitoba in rural Manitoba and provide the services to the best availability to rural Manitobans that the people in the urban centres are able to receive.

We are not a separate class that, as mentioned again today in the House—talking about classes, talking about how we voted. Madam Deputy Speaker, that was the first time, the first comment that I thought in this House was absolutely ludicrous, because it does not matter after election day, it does not matter who you are, what you are. You are a person, you are a Manitoban, whether it be rural, whether it be urban, but you are a person, a citizen of this province and now we find out, I find out, naive member for Interlake, that people do not receive things in this province because they do not know how to vote. Well, I find that very difficult to believe.

An Honourable Member: Watch it, Clif.

Mr. Clif Evans: The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) says, watch it, Clif. You know this is the—

An Honourable Member: I only think highly of you, Clif.

Mr. Clif Evans: I am certainly glad someone thinks highly of me, as I think highly of most members in this House. [interjection] I just want to say, Madam Deputy Speaker, that I appreciate the comments from the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), but I just want to get back to the rural people.

In the last two and a half years, I have gone out and I have seen the people, not only in my constituency but in others, suffering, needing services, needing roads, needing infrastructure, needing jobs. Well, I will tell you, there are no jobs out there.

An Honourable Member: What about that elevator at Fisher Branch? It looks as if there are a few jobs there. Where are you on that one?

Mr. Clif Evans: The Minister of Environment makes comment about the Fisher Branch pool elevator project. Well, there, Madam Deputy Speaker, right

now, what I hear is what I just made comment about earlier because as far as I am concerned, and I talked to the government and I talked to the Minister of Environment—now, I went to the Minister of Environment with this and we are working on this. So if we are working on this, I think that the Minister of Environment should not be making these comments. I really do not. Because where does he stand on it? Where does he stand on other environmental issues? [interjection]

* (1600)

No, the Minister of Environment wants to make comments. Just what I said earlier about the fact of working together and you want to make comments like that, that is fine, but where do you stand on it? [interjection] That is right, and that is where it should be left, between the minister and myself. We should be dealing with this together.

An Honourable Member: Where do you stand, Clif?

Mr. Clif Evans: I do not think the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) should question me. I should question you on where do you stand on it. Where do you stand on it, Mr. Minister? Let us talk about rural issues.

An Honourable Member: That was an unfair shot.

Mr. Clif Evans: Well, it was also an unfair shot to me. Now, I say, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and the other ministers, you know when we talk, they talk about jobs. They are talking about the pool jobs. They are talking about this job. Now, let us get to jobs. Let us get to natural gas.

An Honourable Member: Why are we going from jobs to natural gas?

Mr. Clif Evans: Well, natural gas in the Interlake will create jobs, will it not? You know, sitting back—and the member for Gimli brought it up in a resolution, and we spoke on it. I would like to see co-operation from this government, co-operation from the ministers responsible to provide the proper study to be able to hear the people in the Interlake and in Manitoba where natural gas is required.

The member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), her area is looking for natural gas. Are we getting co-operation? Thompson would like it. Are we getting co-operation? You are sitting back doing studies, doing nothing, just talking about it. That is what it is. Instead of getting together or instead of even enlightening the people that are responsible

for the area, enlightening the people that are trying to create economic growth in the area, what do we do? Do we meet with them? Do we discuss it openly with them? No. A nice little meeting with this group here, that group there. Oh, yes, we are looking into it. Yes, that department is looking into it. Right, that department is looking into it. Well, four years of looking into it and four years of lost economic development and lost economic values in the northern rural area.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): I will stop building that bridge for you there. You know that bridge that you have been wanting to have built for the last couple years? Your government did not build it; I am building it for you.

Mr. Clif Evans: Madam Deputy Speaker, if I may, again the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), the senior official, waiting for the phone to ring, is chirping over here. I want to just put on record that the minister not only in this House but by personal conversation, I thanked the minister for going ahead with that. It is on record in Hansard. I am not afraid to do that. I am not afraid to say that, but I would appreciate a little bit more co-operation from the other side when it comes to a lot of other issues that are for rural Manitoba, not just for the Interlake. You have the natural gas issue. You have the highways issues. [interjection] Well, yes, perhaps, and where are they all?

An Honourable Member: They are all over the place.

Mr. Clif Evans: All over the place. The good main roads are all over the place? Which one? What about the roads that since have needed maintenance and have needed work? Why since 1988 and 1990 have projects gone off the Highway department's agenda? Why?

Mr. Manness: You are never thankful.

Mr. Clif Evans: Well, never thankful. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) says never thankful. Again, I am talking about today. [interjection] No, and you are sitting over there just taking this all in and smirking. That is terrific.

An Honourable Member: At least he is here.

Mr. Clif Evans: That is regardless of the point of who is here and who is not here. The fact of the matter is that we need to do something in this province when it comes to the people who cannot afford to be able to have the luxuries that some of us here and others in this province can. Now, the

Minister of Finance will say again, oh, yes, spending, spending. [interjection] He has said it many times to this Assembly. Why cut, cut, cut? Why cut, cut, cut, cut, cut, cut, cut?

An Honourable Member: No money.

Mr. Clif Evans: No money, broke.

An Honourable Member: Six billion reasons.

Mr. Clif Evans: Right, six billion reasons where somebody owes the government \$6 million, and that is \$6 billion and whatever—[interjection] Well, okay. We all owe. We should in fact if we can, if able, pay. I have no problem with that, none whatsoever, as long as something is done. Let us not just concentrate on the previous deficit and this and that. Let us concentrate on trying to get the 50 or 50,000-plus people to work again. Let us concentrate on that. Let us work on a basis of trying to get 10,000 people back to work—5,000 to 10,000 people a year, let us try that. Will that not generate revenue?

I am saying, the spin-off from the incomes totally will create revenues. You should know that. It moves around within the communities, does it not, and some of it comes back.

Mr. Manness: But not \$30,000.

Mr. Clif Evans: Not \$30,000. Well, then the Minister of Finance, everything he makes on his farm, does he throw it all back? Do I—you are saying, if you are going to make money you want it all back?

Mr. Manness: I am saying, I am borrowing that \$30,000.

Mr. Clif Evans: Borrowing?

Mr. Manness: If I am going to get five back.

Mr. Clif Evans: I do not think that the Minister of Finance has to go out borrowing money to create some employment in this province. I do not think he has to. With the minister present—

Mr. Manness: Where am I going to get it?

Mr. Clif Evans: I would say he should probably look very seriously at finding it somewhere. You are not finding it by cutting all these programs and that are you?

Mr. Manness: Where do I get the money?

Mr. Clif Evans: That is up to you and your government.

Mr. Manness: Oh, that is up to the government.

Mr. Clif Evans: That is right. Now, I am saying that what I am looking for is co-operation, okay, co-operation amongst the government and the people. I say that there are honourable members opposite and ministers who are co-operative, but I think on a whole that the problem is for all Manitobans, not just for those few.

Mr. Brian Pallster (Portage la Prairie): Like the hotel industry.

Mr. Clif Evans: Well, again, the member for Portage la Prairie is—

Mr. Pallster: Too close to the core of the issue.

Mr. Clif Evans: No, it is not too close.

Mr. Pallster: There is co-operation there.

Mr. Clif Evans: There is, amongst the hoteliers, that is right. There is. That is right, with the hotel association and with the government there is co-operation. I will admit that, and I think that co-operation comes from any government and has been with any government. So there is not a problem. But, do you know what we have here now? We have a situation where because of the government of the day not listening to people, not listening to people, what do we have now in the education system? I find it very difficult to look at the fact that my kids, who are both still young, will in fact, or may in fact, if that may be a broader question, not have the education availability that I had or the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) had with certain aspects of the education system. [interjection] The Minister of Environment says he went to a one-room country school, and so did my parents.

* (1610)

An Honourable Member: I am not talking about your parents. I am talking about my generation.

Mr. Clif Evans: Your generation, well, that is what was available in your area. Are we going to go back to that? What are we going to do with our young kids after school? What are we going to do with our young kids in the sporting end of it within the high schools and the junior highs and the elementary? Because of the system and because of what has been implemented by this government, we have teachers who are fighting the system. They are fighting the system because they have their feelings and government has their feelings. Who is suffering? The kids are suffering.

My kids are suffering, could be suffering even more. As far as schooling goes, I am always, and have been, concerned in the last many years about the schooling in rural Manitoba. I do not want to see schools moved away because, if you move schools away or close schools down, you lose—

An Honourable Member: You know what my school division told me? It now pays them to keep their smaller schools open because of the changes that the minister made to improve the ability to serve rural Manitoba in the smaller school system. You got her backwards, Clif.

Mr. Clif Evans: That may very well be. There are still many small schools in rural Manitoba. Small schools, Riverton's both schools are relatively small compared to the population and the need, but they are getting smaller in population. People are moving out. They are going to larger centres, or they are going to urban centres. Why? The teachers are being either laid off or teachers are being cut off. [interjection]

Well, the economy, I still say, Madam Deputy Speaker, that all I am saying here is that there has to be something collectively that we can accomplish. I say that we should, to a point, a very large point, quit politicizing the system. That is my argument. There is no way that if I had the opportunity, I would not prioritize a problem in this province regardless of political colour. That will be on record. I will say that I would prioritize, look at the need for an area, the need for different groups, the need for different areas for roads, the need for different areas for education. That is my point. That is mine. That is what I believe in. That is the way I do my business, and it is the way in my life, is priorities. What is needed more? What is more important?

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would just like to close and say again that we on this side of the House and myself in particular are not happy with the way this government has treated most of the people in Manitoba. I would like to see us all get together more as a government to work for the people in this province, get the deficit down, get the people back to work, provide the programs for those who need it the most and be collective as government and as people representatives in this province. Thank you very much.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): I had not originally planned to participate in this grievance, issuing a grievance, but having heard some of the

comments from the other side, I have been inspired to add a few words, to take this once-in-a-session opportunity to express my grievance about some of the actions of this particular government.

I think, Madam Deputy Speaker, we are now seeing the true colours of this government, the true-blue colours of this government because I can tell you, after 23-plus years in this Legislature, I have come to the conclusion now, after how many years, about five years of this government, that it has become more right wing and more small "c" conservative than the Sterling Lyon government during which I sat in the opposition and which I witnessed as well.

The Sterling Lyon government and Sterling Lyon perhaps scared a few people with some of his dramatic comments, but the fact is that it is this government that is putting the knife to many major programs that Sterling Lyon would not have dared touch. They are shafting a lot of good programs; they are cutting back in social services; they are cutting back in health care; they are ruining the economy in such a way that it makes Sterling Lyon look like a bit of a radical, making Sterling Lyon look like a bit of a progressive. Sterling Lyon would not kill the children's dental care program as this government is doing, and Sterling Lyon would not cut back on the Human Resource Opportunity Centres as this government is doing.

Sterling Lyon would not engage in changing the laws to permit Sunday shopping which will, in turn, shaft a lot of small businesses in this province. So I am reminded, Madam Deputy Speaker, that we have got a government that really believes in cutting, in reducing expenditures and eliminating programs, and they take great delight in it.

They are true to their philosophy, and they are entitled to their philosophical position. They are entitled to their policy position, but let us not kid anyone anymore. The fact is, this government, this Premier, these cabinet ministers, that caucus believes the less government the better. They want to essentially downsize government. They want to essentially eliminate programs. They want to eliminate many good social programs that we have had and have taken for granted in this province for many years.

In doing so, they seem to get great delight and great pleasure in this. Some kind of an odd pleasure, it seems to me, Madam Deputy Speaker. On the

other hand, they really and truly believe in eliminating government programs where they can. I have come to the conclusion that this government has become more right wing than the Sterling Lyon government ever was. We can go right across this. Lyon would not nearly attack the health care system as this government is doing. He would not have shafted rural retail centres. He tinkered with the Children's Dental Program, but he did not kill it, as this Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) has done.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Let me go back. I am getting ahead of myself. I think, Mr. Speaker, that there are a number of areas where this government, in its cutbacks, in its reduction of programs, is particularly hurting rural Manitoba. This government prides itself in being a friend to rural Manitoba, but rural Manitoba is in the process of being very badly hurt. I can think of a lot of examples.

I think the whole Sunday shopping issue is really antirural Manitoba, because in rural Manitoba you do not get, with the exception of Brandon, the major shopping malls, you do not get the large corporation stores and so on. You get essentially small business, small retailers, and there is no question it is these small operations that are being hurt by the Sunday shopping legislation of this government.

I can tell you that in the city of Brandon, although there are a couple of major stores, by and large the business community in the city of Brandon is against the Sunday shopping legislation of this government.

* (1620)

I also note, Mr. Speaker, that I for one, and many church groups as well, feel very offended that this government has virtually gone ahead and instructed the police force not to prosecute retailers for opening with more than four employees on a Sunday even though the legislation has not been passed.

That is an affront to legislative democracy. It absolutely is an affront to legislative democracy. The law has not been put in place, yet the police force has been instructed to carry on as though the law is in place. But I am sorry, the law is not in place, and I think this is a major challenge, a major undermining of legislative democracy.

I think for that reason alone, we should be opposing the Sunday shopping efforts of this government, but I go back to the impact of it. The impact of it is essentially on the small business person and essentially in rural Manitoba. I know of

at least one store in my own riding that has closed down—Hurl's retail store had been in operation for years—because of the Sunday shopping legislation. I know of many other small stores that are hurting very, very badly.

So I say, Mr. Speaker, we can make a list of where this government is hurting rural Manitoba, and I can start the list with Sunday shopping because Sunday shopping legislation is a hit at the rural small retailers we have in this province.

Another example of where this government is hitting rural Manitoba is in the elimination of the Children's Dental Program. That Children's Dental Program, even the Minister of Health admits was a fine program. It was a preventative program and, by and large, because it is a preventative program, it is far cheaper to attend to children's teeth when they are small, when they are young, than to have to cope with it when they are older, say when they are in their teens.

The fact is there are going to be thousands of families and thousands and thousands of children who will simply not get dental care once this program comes to an end this summer. They will not get it, either because the people are too poor or because they are too far from dental services. I am talking about northern and rural Manitoba where these services have carried on.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I was a member of a government that brought this in, the Schreyer government. We brought this in and we extended it. We covered the entire province. When the Sterling Lyon government came in in 1977, they looked at the program but they did not kill it. They did not wipe it out like this government is doing. What they did do is turn over some of the program to private dentists in some school divisions in some towns. So there was a bit of a saw-off, but nevertheless the program carried on. Some parts were directly in school using dental nurses, dental technicians, and other parts of the program were delivered by dentists in these various towns, such as Selkirk.

Unfortunately, it was never extended to the city of Winnipeg and the city of Brandon for various reasons. That is a long story. It is difficult—it would take a lot of time to go into, but my former colleague Mr. Desjardins, former Minister of Health, was trying to extend it to Winnipeg and to Brandon, but we ran into some opposition in the city of Brandon. Without going into detail, it was decided that we could not

proceed with bringing into Brandon the same program that was in place in rural Manitoba. Right outside the city, there it operates.

I think there is one exception and that is some private schools. I know there is one private school, at least in Brandon, where the program operates because that private school is co-operating with the program.

But it is an excellent program. It is saving money. It is saving the Manitoba people money collectively, because we are going to be paying far more in the years ahead when these children get older and have more difficult times with their teeth—[interjection] That is fine. That does not give me any problem as long as I have the ears of my friends across the way.

I am sure the members opposite who come from rural Manitoba really regret that they have had to kill this Children's Dental Program. I believe they are going to feel a lot of heat over this in the weeks and months ahead. There have been some meetings already, and I know there are other meetings planned. I believe the dental nurses and the families affected are going to be—[interjection] Well, I could mail it to you, but I am not so sure you would read it. This way maybe you will listen. I cannot be sure of that either.

The fact is this one program alone was relatively cheap in comparison to the total spending of health care in the province of Manitoba. We are spending, as the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) will tell you—thank you, I need the moral support here. What are we spending now in health care? Is it \$1.5 billion or \$1.6 billion?

An Honourable Member: \$1.5 billion.

Mr. Leonard Evans: That is a lot of cheese sandwiches—\$1.5 billion. This dental program for children was only \$3 million or \$4 million. So we are talking about a relatively small amount of money, and yet a lot of good was coming out of it. It was delivered, I believe, cost-effectively by the dental technicians and the dental nurses in this province.

At any rate, that program is gone. There is another program that this government seems to want to push ahead, and I know the Minister of Natural Resources' ears will perk up when I mention this, and that is the Assiniboine diversion.

Now, I do not know that much about this Assiniboine diversion where I can pretend to be an expert, that these are the problems that we should be addressing, whether it should go ahead or

whether it should not go ahead, but I do know that there are a lot of concerns in my own constituency.

The City of Brandon's council is opposed to it, at least at the present time until they get more information on the potential impact on the water supply to the city of Brandon. The impact on Brandon may not be nearly as great perhaps as it is on Portage or some other parts of the province.

Nevertheless, the City of Brandon just recently discussed the Assiniboine diversion and said that, until they got more information and were satisfied that there was some assurance of the water supply that the Assiniboine River provides—the drinking water to the city of Brandon and water for other purposes, of course—but until they get that assurance, the City of Brandon is officially opposed. They will be making representation. They would also wish that the hearings would be held in the city of Brandon.

An Honourable Member: Oh, we can arrange that, too.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Well, that would be great, because now we understand they are to be held in the city of Winnipeg. I understand, I am told, I have not seen it in writing, but I am told that there is a good possibility that the hearings will be held inside the Perimeter. For whatever reason, the minister decided not to originally; I think that was a mistake. But surely it is not unreasonable to ask the committee having the hearings to come to the second largest city of the province, city of Brandon, for a day or whatever it takes, to hear the views of the city and the citizens and groups in that area.

Then there is another area where I think that particularly one part of rural Manitoba is being shafted. It is a very, very serious matter, and that is the whole question relating to breast cancer and the lack of adequate mammography testing available to women in that area. There is one lady in particular, Ms. Marg Borotsik, no close relation to the mayor, but, at any rate, she has taken this cause on and she has had the support of many hundreds of women in the Westman area. I believe some of them are now writing to Westman MLAs in particular complaining about the fact that they have to wait eight months for a mammography test. Many women will tell you, there are all kinds of horror stories about women who find finally that they do have breast cancer and, unfortunately, they could

have found it much earlier if only the mammography testing was available to them.

The fact is that in the city of Winnipeg, if you are serviced—and I will just take the two hospitals—at the St. Boniface Hospital and Health Sciences Centre, the waiting period is from one to 10 days. If your doctor says, well, he thinks maybe it would be a good idea to have a mammography test, even though you are not suspected of having cancer—you just do not go and say I want a test. Your doctor has to say, okay, I will authorize you to have a test. But these are people who are called elective. They are going on an elective basis to have a mammography examination.

* (1630)

If you live in Winnipeg, if you are a woman in Winnipeg, you can get it done within one to 10 days. If you live in the Brandon area, you have to wait up to eight months. We have stories, case examples, of women having to wait that long. That is just not satisfactory whatsoever.

There is information—I know the Minister of Health hangs his hat on the fact that mammography screening does not necessarily reduce the rate of death from breast cancer. He refers to this Canadian study that was done about a year ago on this matter. So the results allow him to say, well, we are not going to have province-wide screening for breast cancer. Certainly, I am not going to proceed to give the Brandon Hospital a few more dollars so that they can get rid of this backlog, because, you see, it is for a relatively small amount of money. I use the term "relatively."

The Brandon General Hospital which has the equipment could operate it. If it had the staff, it could operate it many hours longer each day and maybe an extra day a week or so, and eventually get rid of this backlog. So it is not that a great deal of money is required, but it is a very serious matter, negatively affecting the health of women in that area. There is no question that this government, therefore, is discriminating against rural and northern Manitoba. The only facilities, I believe—now there may be one in Thompson—are in the city of Winnipeg and the city of Brandon. The one in Brandon, as I say, has been underfunded, so that if you go there you have to wait up to eight months to get the test.

Mr. Speaker, there is now information and the statement by the American Cancer Society that recognizes that there was this Canadian study of

women under 50 which concluded that mammography testing did not necessarily reduce the risk of breast cancer. Nevertheless, they say since some breast tumors are found and cured in younger women, the American Cancer Society stands by its guidelines for women aged 40 to 49, especially the risks of the test are negligible. In other words, the American Cancer Society stands by its recommendation in the United States of America that women receive these tests on a regular basis.

There is no question, for women over 50, it is a lifesaving process. It has been estimated that if every woman over the age of 50 got an annual mammogram, deaths from breast cancer would be cut by a third. This is according to estimates made by the National Cancer Institute in the United States.

So it goes without saying, Mr. Speaker, that if we could have adequate testing available in the Brandon area, we could help many, many women in that area perhaps to be saved from breast cancer or at least find it at an early enough time that we will eliminate the risk or certainly reduce the risk of death from that dreaded disease.

The fact is that for a 45-year-old, the odds are one in 93 of contracting breast cancer. For a 50-year-old woman, the odds go up to one in 50. If you are 55, it goes up to one in 33. Of course, it gets higher with older age. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, I am talking about women of all ages, and Westman does have an aging population. It has a high percentage of women who are in the higher age categories.

I think it is just vital that we have a proper mammography testing service available there, but we do not have it. The government just refuses and the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) just refuses this matter, and I say, again, it is another example of this government discriminating against rural Manitoba.

I would use another example of discrimination, Mr. Speaker, and that is when it comes to jobs. You talk about decentralization of the civil service, decentralization of government jobs. Well, this has become a meaningless exercise, because we can go down the list and see this government eliminating jobs around rural Manitoba. They have eliminated jobs in Selkirk. They have eliminated jobs in Dauphin. They closed the Dauphin sign shop. They closed down the human resources centre, or they are in the process of doing it.

In Brandon, the Minister of Health has announced the closure of the Brandon Mental Health Centre.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when you are talking about the Brandon Mental Health Centre, you are talking about 600 jobs with a payroll of millions of dollars. I think the payroll is well over \$10 million for the Brandon General Hospital. I am sorry, it is a \$16-million payroll.

Now, with community development of health care, the putting of people into the community, the fact is the patients, the clientele, will be spread throughout the province, but on balance, I can tell you there will be a net loss in the city of Brandon of over 200 jobs. So that, in one fell swoop, wipes out any jobs that have come to the city through decentralization.

I have expressed concerns in the past in this House, in the community and through the media about the future of patients and the future of staff, but there is no question about it, there is going to be a major job loss in the process.

Governments around North America and maybe around the world are infamous for never following through on community care of the mentally ill. The mentally ill are cared for, I think, in a very fine institution in the Brandon Mental Health Centre. So we are not opposing community placement. We are not opposing deinstitutionalization, but the fact is governments tend not to put sufficient resources into backing up and into providing support for the mentally ill in the community, so you find the mentally ill just being neglected, becoming street people, getting into all kinds of difficulties and creating social problems, as well, because of the lack of community support.

I am willing to predict that if any past experience with other jurisdictions is any example of what to expect, we are going to find the same problems arising here, that the resources will not be put in place.

Mr. Speaker, I talk about decentralization being made a farce of in the city of Brandon. Here is another example in today's paper. The Brandon General Hospital is laying off 16 more people. I do not know how many they laid off so far. They have probably laid off at least up to a hundred people so far, but here is another 16 people.

There are actually more than 16 people. There are 16 full-time positions from its housekeeping and dietary departments. It has already laid off licensed practical nurses. It has cut people from its nursing education program. It has cut other positions and so on, but now it is cutting 16 full-time positions from its

housekeeping and dietary departments as a cost-saving measure. It really means 20 permanent and 10 term employees being affected. The move is expected to save between \$300,000 and \$400,000 annually, and as the executive director of the hospital says, it is a fair chunk of change. The fact is the process has just been announced. The process will be completed by August 15.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the fact is the hospital is under tremendous pressure by this government and by the Minister of Health, as are the other hospitals in this province, to cut costs. I do not know where it is all going to end. I simply do not know where it is all going to end, but the fact is whatever the merits of the government's move in reducing expenditures in hospitals, the fact is we are losing jobs in the process. So I say, again, this simply adds to the amount of unemployment in the community. It takes away from any decentralization efforts of the government.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, although decentralization of government jobs is an admirable objective which I support, I only wish it was more effective and it was not counteracted by these other cutbacks. I want to mention, though, with all these cutbacks, they are having a very negative impact on the population of rural Manitoba. They are having a negative impact on the economy of rural Manitoba, and that has to be recognized.

The Minister of Finance can glow over cost savings as he refers to them, and members opposite may be satisfied with their government cuts in different programs and thinking, well, all is going to be well anyway. The fact is jobs have been reduced around rural Manitoba, not to speak of the city of Winnipeg, and there has been a loss in payroll.

Even with the proposed 10-day plan that this government is implementing through Bill 22, there is a going to be a major reduction in purchasing power which will be felt throughout the province. I will just mention in my own Westman area, for members opposite and on this side too who may be interested, there are over 7,300 public sector employees who are affected, excluding police and fire, people in the public sector, whether in the civil service, whether they are in the hospitals, the education system or wherever they are, and they are affected by provincial government spending.

So we estimate there are over 7,300 in the Westman area and this reduced payroll, this 10-day

planned reduction, will cut spending on payroll there by \$8.3 million. That is in the Westman area alone, a \$8.3 million cut and, of course, you can see figures—there are estimates that I have in front of me here for other areas, as well.

* (1640)

In the Parkland area, there is a \$3.7 million cut. In the Portage-Interlake-Morden area, the purchasing power will be cut by \$6.4 million; Selkirk and the Eastman area, a cut of \$7 million; Northern Manitoba, nearly \$2 million, and in the city of Winnipeg, it is \$64 million, for a total of \$93.7 million. That is an estimate of the spending reduction because of this 10-day plan that the government has before the Legislature.

But when you consider that there is a multiplier effect from this, as well, Mr. Speaker, you would say in the Westman area, it is not \$8.3 million. With the multiplier, you can multiply that at least by two—some people will say even three times—so you are looking at maybe a \$16 million-plus reduction in spending in that area in the few months ahead. That is going to translate ultimately into job losses. We estimate that it could result in job losses of well over 800 because of this reduction in purchasing power.

So what is happening, Mr. Speaker, with the policies of this government is that we are seeing rural depopulation carry on, and I hope in the not-too-distant future to bring in some figures here showing the extent of rural depopulation, because although the total Manitoba population is inching up in spite of the outward flow on interprovincial migration, that is only because of the city of Winnipeg.

If it was not for the city of Winnipeg, the population of Manitoba would be shown to be absolutely declining, including the city of Brandon, I am sorry to say. The census estimates between 1986 and 1991 showed an absolute decline in the city of Brandon which I found rather shocking, considering it is a city of about 40,000 people. But the fact is we are now witnessing and experiencing a rural population loss and it is serious. It is affecting the viability of our towns, and I do not see any end to it.

Although the government said it was going to try to offset this with the decentralization program, and I do not take anything away from that, the fact is you have more than counteracted that with all these cuts you are making. Look, 45 nursing jobs—those are

essentially in rural Manitoba. The jobs at the Brandon General Hospital, the mental hospital, the jobs in the sign shop in Dauphin, the jobs in—at any rate, Mr. Speaker, there is no question that there is a job loss going on.

The other point I wanted to make, and I wish I had more time because I wanted to talk about the direct impact of the budget. [interjection]

So, Mr. Speaker, there is no question that the policies of this government have hurt rural Manitoba apart from hurting the rest of this province. We look at the budget. The budget itself has hurt a number of groups directly in my constituency, and I know there are other groups throughout the province including the city of Winnipeg, but I know in my own riding, there are people who are hurting very badly and they do not understand.

I use as a case in point the friendship centres, where, yes, they get some federal funding, but the province's funding provided money to allow a particular youth program to be carried on, using two full-time employees, and they worked with difficult kids. By difficult, I mean children who came from broken homes, children who had maybe single-parent families, disadvantaged kids, who according to the friendship centre people, might get into trouble, and that it would be a good idea to have programs for them to keep them off the street, so to speak, recreational programs, cultural programs and educational programs.

They were doing an excellent job. Now this government has eliminated that program, just snuffed it out, and I can say, Mr. Speaker, unless somebody else comes along and does something, we are going to probably see an increase in juvenile delinquency, and we may be paying more than the dollars the government thought it was going to save by eliminating the friendship centres' budget. So that certainly is a case of false economy.

Another example in the riding is foster parents. They demonstrated in front of the Minister of Justice's (Mr. McCrae) office. They invited me to come to this demonstration, and they were very saddened by the fact that the government had eliminated the budget of the Family Services office in this organization in this province and that they were doing other things to really interfere and downgrade the quality of foster parenting here.

These people were very, very upset, and they do not understand why the government would take

such an attitude, but the fact is it happened, and you have a lot of unhappy foster parents in the Brandon area and, I know, around the province.

So, Mr. Speaker, I say the programs that this government has been embarking on, particularly in the last year or two, has confirmed my view that it has shifted to the right of Sterling Lyon's administration. There is no question about that. At least Sterling Lyon did not kill the Children's Dental Program.

You know, Sterling Lyon, when he was premier—I recall they did shave the budget of what used to be called work activity projects, and now they are called the human resources centres like the West Brandon in Brandon. They did indeed. I think they cut all of them at least by 10 percent. Okay, we did not like it, but they did not eliminate any.

This government is eliminating the one in Dauphin, and they eliminated the one in Selkirk last year. So I say you are far more extreme in your cutbacks than Sterling Lyon, far more extreme than Sterling Lyon in terms of the dental program, and I doubt if Sterling Lyon would have brought in the Sunday shopping legislation which, as I said, definitely hurts rural Manitoba and especially the small business people there.

Mr. Speaker, we have had a budget from the Minister of Finance. I guess it is his sixth budget, and in spite of all the huffing and puffing and all the trite statements made about concern for the economy and how this government is going to get the economy moving again, how they are going to create jobs and so on, the fact is it has been a total failure. We have fewer people working today than we had when this government was sworn into office in the spring, early summer of 1988. That is total employment I am talking about.

Yes, we were hurt by the recession. There is no question about it, but the fact is I have statistics to show, and these are from Stats Canada, that the employment decline in Manitoba superseded the employment decline in Canada as a whole. Yes, Canadian employment declined because of the recession, but Manitoba's declined even more so, so as a result, we have a smaller share of the total working force in this country. We have a smaller share of total employment in this country, and I ask why?

I say it has to reflect on this government's economic policies. Essentially, this is what the

government is facing, a failure of its economic policies because in spite of the reductions in expenditures by this government, in spite of holding the line on programs and so on to the point that we are the lowest spending per capita of any provincial government. I think we have been for the last two years. This government is not a big-time spender. We are the lowest of the 10 provinces for the past couple of years according to the latest information I read. I think it was out of a Royal Bank economic report. At any rate, we have got the lowest spending.

* (1650)

This all-time high deficit that this government has is not the result of big-time spending; it is the result of lack of revenue that is coming into the provincial coffers. The reason this government is not getting the revenue is that there is not—

Mr. Downey: You would tax more. That says you would tax more. You would put higher taxes on the revenue. That is exactly what you would do.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Well, you know what, talk about taxes. This minister or this Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) said, when we are in government, we are going to do something effective in the way of tax reduction. We are going to eliminate the payroll tax. You have not eliminated the payroll tax.

Mr. Downey: We have gone a long way.

Mr. Leonard Evans: You have not gone a long way in eliminating it. Mr. Speaker, I have before me the figures from the budget, and how much does the payroll tax bring in? Anybody want to give me an estimate?

Mr. Downey: \$190 million.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, \$190,800,000. Right on. They are supposed to be eliminating it. They said they have done a lot of it. That is a lot of money. [interjection] Yes, you cut it back from \$194 million to \$190 million.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, this government—this Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey), this Premier (Mr. Filmon) and this Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness)—has let the people down, has not fulfilled its promises. Do you know what? We can read Hansard back to them from a few years ago when they were in opposition, that it was going to be totally eliminated, absolutely eliminated, and here we have the thing still in existence.

The reason they are not getting the revenue is not the tax system; it is the lack of economic activity. The fact is that we do not have as many people working. The fact is that people do not have the money to spend, or they are afraid of spending it, so you do not get the retail sales tax revenues that you should be. You can look at the statements here. It is very clear. The revenue projections are flat; we can look at them line by line. There has been no—in fact, between the budget and the forecast for '92-93, there has actually been a drop.

I see my light going. Can I be told how many minutes I have, Mr. Speaker? One minute. Okay, I only have a minute, but I would like to have gone on.

The fact is, this is the bottom line: the failure of the economic policies of this government, which, in turn, has meant lack of economic opportunity and lack of economic activity, which means, in turn, that we do not have the revenues, that we have these extraordinarily large deficits. We have more debt today per capita than we have ever had in the history of this province, thanks to this particular government. So this government is failing in terms of treatment of rural Manitoba, which I mentioned. It is failing in terms of being fair in taxation. It is failing in terms of stimulating the economy to provide jobs and income for our people.

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, I conclude my remarks. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it five o'clock? Five o'clock.

An Honourable Member: Six o'clock.

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

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. Okay.

An Honourable Member: Five o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: They have called it five o'clock.

An Honourable Member: You have a motion before you.

Mr. Speaker: I asked the House whether it is the will of the House to call it five o'clock?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: At that time they indicated yes. Then a member asked me if we should call it six o'clock. So then I asked, is it the will of the House to call it six? That was denied.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): I realize it may be confusing to go back and forth, but we had indicated that we were not willing to call it five or six o'clock.

* (1700)

Mr. Speaker: Okay. We will try it again then. Is it the will of the House to call it five o'clock?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. Okay.

The question before the House, it was moved by the honourable government House leader (Mr. Manness), seconded by the honourable Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Motion agreed to, and the House resolved itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair for the Department of Agriculture.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY AGRICULTURE

Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This section of the Committee of Supply is dealing with the Estimates for the Department of Agriculture.

The first item of priority to be dealt with in the Committee of Supply is the motion of yesterday evening that was requested after 10 p.m. in this section of the Committee of Supply. Pursuant to

Rule 65.(9)(b), the vote was deferred until today. According to Rule 65.(10), the vote is to be the first item of business at this meeting of the Committee of Supply.

Call in the members.

* * *

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. Yesterday evening in the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in the Chamber, the Chairperson's ruling on a point of order was challenged. The ruling was sustained on a voice vote of which a formal vote was requested. As it was past 10 p.m., the vote was deferred until today.

The question before the committee is, shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained? All those in favour of the ruling, please rise.

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

Yeas 26, Nays 21.

Madam Chairperson: The ruling of the Chair has been sustained. The hour being after 5 p.m., time for private members' hour. Committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hour being 5 p.m., it is time for private members' hour.

Is it the will of the House to call at six o'clock? It is agreed? [agreed]

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 18, 1993

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