

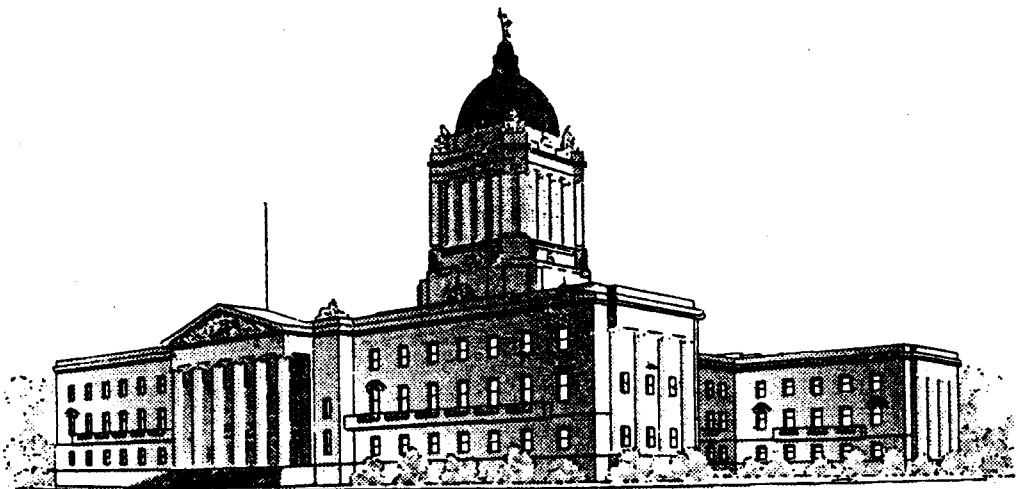


Sixth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

**(Hansard)**

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Fifth Legislature**

**Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation**

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

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, March 20, 1995

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

## PRAYERS

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

## PRESENTING PETITIONS

## Physical Education in Schools

**Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Sandra Hildebrandt, Natalie Reimer Anderson, Dennis Fournier and others requesting the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) to consider maintaining physical education as part of the core curriculum from kindergarten to senior high.

## Canada Post—Unsolicited Mail

**Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Lorraine Douglas, Magda Hulsbosch, Nina Alsop and others requesting the federal minister responsible for Canada Post to consider bringing in legislation requiring all unsolicited mail and flyers to use recycled materials.

## Physical Education in Schools

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Les Ellchuk, Terry Sprott, L. Chemerika and others urging the Minister responsible for Education (Mr. Manness) to consider reinstating physical education as a compulsory core subject area.

## READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

## Physical Education in Schools

**Mr. Speaker:** I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Lamoureux). It complies with the privileges and the practices of this House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? No. Dispense.

*The petition of the undersigned residents of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:*

*THAT in July 1994, the Minister of Education introduced an action plan entitled Renewing Education: New Directions;*

*THAT this report will make physical education an optional course in Grades 9 to 12;*

*THAT the physical education curriculum should be regularly reviewed to ensure that it meets the needs of students;*

*THAT the government is failing to recognize the benefits of physical education such as improved physical fitness, more active lifestyles, health promotion, self-discipline, skill development, stress reduction, strengthened peer relationships, weight regulation, stronger bones, reduced risk of health diseases and improved self-confidence.*

*WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly urge the Minister responsible for Education to consider reinstating physical education as a compulsory core subject area.*

## Canada Post—Unsolicited Mail

**Mr. Speaker:** I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Ms. Friesen). It complies with the privileges and the practices of this House and complies with the rules (by leave). Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

**Am Honourable Member:** Yes.

**Mr. Speaker:** Yes? Okay, the Clerk will read.

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

WHEREAS each year over four billion advertisements and flyers are mailed to Canadian households by Canada Post alone; and

WHEREAS each Canadian household receives an average of 1,300 pieces of unsolicited mail each year; and

WHEREAS the number of trees used to produce this vast quantity of unwanted advertising is

substantial and the amount of junk mail has doubled in the past five years; and

WHEREAS much of this advertising material is non-recyclable and ends up in landfills costing municipalities millions of dollars each year; and

WHEREAS repeated requests from consumers to have Canada Post not deliver junk mail at their homes have been denied; and

WHEREAS if it was mandatory that advertisers and distributors of unsolicited mail and flyers use only recyclable material in all unsolicited mail and flyers delivered by Canada Post, this material could be recycled.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly request the federal minister responsible for Canada Post to consider bringing in legislation requiring all unsolicited mail and flyers to use recyclable materials and amending the Canada Postal Act so that Canada Post would have to comply with no-flyer signs at personal residences.

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Urban Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the Annual Report 1993-94 for the Department of Urban Affairs.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### Bill 221—The Public Health Amendment Act (2)

**Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that leave be given to introduce Bill 221, The Public Health Amendment Act (2); (Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur la santé publique), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

**Motion presented.**

**Mr. Kowalski:** Mr. Speaker, this bill deals with emergency workers who treat people at emergency scenes. It allows for them to request

information about any infectious diseases that those people they treat may have so that they can protect themselves and their families. I ask all members to support this bill.

**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 Joseph Wolinsky school thirty-five Grade 11 students under the direction of Mrs. Linda Connor. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh).

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

\* (1335)

### ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

#### Education System Core Curriculum

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

In dealing with the public education system in the province of Manitoba, notwithstanding the fact that this government in the last three years has reduced dramatically the contribution from the provincial government and downloaded the costs to the property taxpayer by some \$35 million in their education funding, we find an education system that is dominated more by the personality of the minister rather than long-term planning and long-term research about the impact of changes in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, two previous ministers ago in the Conservative government, we were told and instructed, Manitobans were instructed that skills for independent living would now be a core mandatory subject across Manitoba, so, of

course, 700 schools and all the teachers and all the communities had to head off in the Derkach direction or the member for Roblin-Russell's (Mr. Derkach) direction under the Conservatives. A couple of years later the deputy minister sends out a letter saying, oh, we have a new minister now and this is no longer a necessary mandatory course.

I would like to ask the Premier: Is there any research or study into the changes that this government makes in terms of its impact, and is there any study going on into the changes in education so we are not going, on the one hand, to make a course mandatory one day, and on the other hand when the minister changes, to make it optional and have all that wasted energy the next day?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, while I am on my feet, I would like to take the opportunity to extend on behalf of all my colleagues our congratulations and best wishes to the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Edwards) and his wife, Anne, on the birth yesterday of their fourth child, a boy. We certainly wish them good health and all good wishes to them on this very happy occasion.

In response to the questions of the Leader of the Opposition, I might say that certainly I have attended, for instance, even in the last couple of weeks, two all-day sessions in which we met with the teachers of Manitoba and the parents of Manitoba in which we brought in speakers such as Andrew Nikiforuk and former Dean John Stapleton of education, and numerous people with backgrounds in education and interests in education to talk about education change and reform.

Interestingly enough, former Dean Stapleton put into perspective the fact that change is taking place in the field of education worldwide, that we are in the throes of making changes for the first time in 25 years to improve our education system. In fact, things such as enhancing core curricula, standards and testing, many of these

elements, more parental involvement, all of the things that we are putting forward as a government, are in the mainstream and characterized of change that is taking place in places like New Zealand, Australia, England and throughout the civilized world. So the changes that we are talking about—and I know that there is a natural reflex of reaction against change; in fact, a speaker at—[interjection]

**An Honourable Member:** Do not mumble, John.

\* (1340)

**Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin):** It is my last chance. [applause]

**Mr. Filmon:** Mr. Speaker, that is the most enthusiastic support I have seen for anything the member for Dauphin has said in 15 years in this House. I just want to say, we look forward to having him respond more fully to our enthusiastic response later today as he gives us his swan song.

We basically—as was said by Nuala Beck at the women's forum just two weeks ago here in Manitoba, the only people in society who look forward to change are babies with wet bottoms. What we are seeing is a natural reflex reaction to any type of change.

I might say that the changes that are being brought in are the product of extensive discussion and consultation, and the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) was characterized by the president of the Manitoba Teachers' Society as being the most approachable Minister of Education that the Teachers' Society has ever had to deal with, in his recollection.

Having said that, I will apologize for my voice and the laryngitis, and since I want to save it, Mr. Speaker, I will just tell the Leader of the Opposition that perhaps he could direct his questions to other people in the course of—I know he will be disappointed not to be able to

hear from me, but I will ask him to direct his questions to others.

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, the only change for those babies with wet bottoms is the new taxes that were put on in 1993 in the budget by the Conservative Party, but I guess babies do not count for their so-called tax freeze, the alleged tax freeze.

Perhaps my questions to the First Minister could be answered with yes or no, and that would make it a lot easier on his voice, because he did not answer the first question when I asked about the issue of confusion about curriculum changes back and forth. What we need is orderly planning in our education system, not one minister change the curriculum one day and another minister, with their own personality, change it back the other day. That is the question—orderly change in a changing society, not the flip-flop changes that we see from the government on the basis of confusion and lack of research and personality of ministers.

### Recess

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition):** I would like to ask the Premier another question which he can answer very simply.

Mr. Speaker, all the advice we have had and all the advice we have received over the last period of time indicates for young people that the old motto of a sound mind and a sound body is verified by research and new research after research, in terms of the validity of having children get exercise and the need for recess for children that is proposed to be changed by this government in terms of the provisions.

I would like to ask the Premier: In light of the fact that we have had three different Ministers of Education, will he overrule his existing Minister of Education and change the direction in education and maintain recess as a mandatory part for Grade 5 and Grade 6 kids in our schools?

**Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training):** Mr. Speaker, let me state for the record, in case members would like to make sport of this issue, that I support recess in the school. I enjoyed it when I was a student and I know my children enjoyed it, and I imagine most students in the public school system find recess a redeeming feature of school.

Mr. Speaker, all we have tried to do is to allow school divisions an opportunity to decide how it is that they wish to build their own school program. It is just in totally keeping with the whole reform package. A number of school divisions have asked us for that leeway, no different than what happens in the province of Saskatchewan, where their school divisions have a leeway to direct as little as five minutes a day into recess or as much as 20 minutes a day.

Mr. Speaker, what we are saying to our school divisions is if you want this tool amongst the many others that were provided in the letter—the letter that was known by the opposition; they had a copy of it in their hand the other day when they brought forward the question—many options to try and again take into account the core subject areas which were being taken away from, 110 hours per subject area in many cases being squeezed to 80 in mathematics, as we were able to find out, and our greater emphasis that we have put into the core subject areas, and the impact it was having on some of the optional areas, we took that into account. We said to the school divisions, here are seven areas that you can use. If no school division wants that, we will not change the regulation. Ten minutes will then be the requirement in the morning, in the afternoon, if nobody wants the change.

\* (1345)

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, the reason why the province has certain standards and certain mandatory provisions—and, of course, the government flip-flops on them considerably. I mentioned the independent living course that the

government made mandatory on the one day by fiat from the former minister for the whole school system, and then the next day with a personality change from a different Minister of Education, they stroked that program right off. After sending 700 schools off in one direction, they send them back in another direction.

What we are calling on, Mr. Speaker, will this government—because it does not study, it goes more by impulse than study. It goes more by impulsive personalities than on long-term stable changes to meet the changing needs in a changing society and a changing education system.

Can the Premier (Mr. Filmon), today, table any studies he has that indicates that this will improve the quality of education for our kids in Grades 5 and 6, to change the standard for recess? If he cannot do that, will we keep this as a standard for our children in our schools so they will have sound minds and sound bodies in our education system?

**Mr. Manness:** Mr. Speaker, the member attempts to misrepresent the actual situation. The member talks about mandatory aspects. We do not have them. The very essence of the reform is to accept the common cry that came from teachers, from trustees and from superintendents to define basic education in this province, define what it is that our students are expected to learn in their formative years of training.

Mr. Speaker, they have been pleading for that for years in this jurisdiction and others. We have done that. We have mandated that there indeed should be a certain number of hours directed towards the core subject areas in keeping with what the community wanted, Mr. Speaker. We have done that, and the first question that the Leader of the NDP asked with respect to all of those changes is recess. He has no credibility in this issue. His party has no credibility in this issue. That is why he enters the debate on recess, nothing else.

### **Youth Crime Rate Prevention Programs**

**Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns):** Mr. Speaker, we are all saddened today by another tragedy involving youth violence, this on top of Statistics Canada records showing that violent youth offences in Manitoba increased last year at triple the national average, the worst rate in Canada.

My question to the Minister of Justice: Would the minister now admit that her PR efforts have done nothing to counter the government's policies which have bred the worst crime rate in all of Canada?

**Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, I think the member should clarify the date of the statistics that he was using. To my knowledge the statistics ended March '94. Since that time, we introduced in February of '94 a very comprehensive plan to deal with youth violence in this province.

Part of that comprehensive plan was action on the Young Offenders Act which we expected from the federal government. We have not yet seen that action, nor have we had any support from the NDP party or the Liberal Party in this province.

We also took action in the area of corrections and action in the area of prevention. This government has taken a comprehensive action in the area of youth crime and violence.

\* (1350)

**Mr. Mackintosh:** For the real story, would the minister explain to Manitobans whatever happened to her promises from last February for action on youth crime including the wilderness camps, the provincial council on youth crime, the youth advisory council, the hundreds of recommendations from the youth summit on crime and violence, the expanded mandate of

youth justice committees? What ever happened to those, Mr. Speaker?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** I hope that I will have the opportunity to explain every single one of the initiatives we put forward in our plan.

Let me remind the member, first of all, that the recommendations that came from the Summit on Youth Crime and Violence were recommendations which members of the community have adopted. Perhaps the member has not worked with his community in that area, but certainly others have. Schools, church groups, Y neighbours' groups in community areas have in fact begun to look at how they can become active in the area of youth crime and violence.

Then, we introduced about three or four weeks ago a program called No Need To Argue. No Need To Argue is a program which deals with young people in junior high school and high school in the city of Winnipeg. It is a co-operative program with business, with the community, with government, with schools and with young people themselves because young people at the summit said they wanted the opportunity to be involved in solutions, that most young people are in fact good and they have solutions to offer. All we heard from the other side was criticism. Young people in this province want to become involved and now they have an opportunity.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Mr. Speaker, instead of spending thousands of dollars on glossy, phoney pamphlets insulting the intelligence of Manitobans about the Conservative record on crime, I ask the minister, I ask the government, would it now cancel this cheap phoney propaganda and deal with the real crime record of this government and would it tell Manitobans what are we spending on this nonsense?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** This government has a record in the area of law and order that is unequalled

across Canada. Our record is one which deals with young people, which deals with adults, which deals with prevention and involves the community.

Mr. Speaker, we do not take the hug-a-thug approach of the opposite side. Thank you.

\* (1355)

\* \* \*

**Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood):** Mr. Speaker, before I begin my question, I would like to thank the Premier (Mr. Filmon) for his kind comments in regard to the Leader of the Liberal Party.

Let me indicate that in fact the baby was born early this morning. Anne Mackay and the father are doing well. The baby is doing well. His name is Adam Daniel. He was eight pounds, 10 ounces, and he is a brother for Beth, Evan and Wynn.

#### **Home Care Program Staffing**

**Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. Since before Christmas there have been a proliferation of ads in the newspaper advertising for home care attendants in the Home Care program. We understand these ads are there because there has been an increased number of people who are being discharged from hospital who require trained service from home care attendants, but in fact we do not have much of a trained labour force. People are waiting right now to be discharged because we do not have the home care attendants.

Can the Minister of Health indicate what his plan is to ensure that we do have a trained labour pool in place? We have had a health reform plan for three years, yet now we are in a crisis situation not having trained personnel. What is the minister going to do about this situation?



**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, I join with the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and with my colleague in congratulating the family of Adam Daniel, and Adam Daniel himself, and I hope that he has a long, productive, happy and healthy life.

Mr. Speaker, the one thing I am not going to do is engage in the kind of discussion that our federal Minister of Health has been engaging in lately. When challenged in the face of the extensive cuts to health, social service spending, the response is, we are going to stand up for the principles embodied in the Health Act but we are going to be very flexible about it. Mr. Speaker, I think my colleagues in the Liberal Party here in Manitoba are going to have to help explain to Manitobans just what federal Minister of Health Marleau meant when she made those comments.

Mr. Speaker, the ads the honourable member refers to in the newspapers for additional staff in the Home Care program indicates rather clearly I suggest of the increased activity going on in the Home Care program which since this government took office has increased in terms of its resourcing by some 93 percent. That says that something good is happening in the health care system.

**Ms. Gray:** Mr. Speaker, with a supplementary question to the Minister of Health: There is still a crisis in the Home Care program because one of the areas in which we are very much understaffed is home care attendants to deal with overnight situations, and that is because of the nature of the work and the fact of poor pay. This has been an issue for the last number of months, and we have people and families who are under stress out in the community because there is not continuous service in an overnight situation.

Can the Minister of Health tell us what he plans to do for Manitobans and for seniors to ensure that we rectify this situation?

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

**Mr. McCrae:** Well, I am not sure what the honourable member means by "poor pay" but there are probably 45,000 federal civil servants who are going to talk about no pay, and that might give the honourable member some reason to make some explanations of her own.

We are very interested, Madam Deputy Speaker, in ensuring that the people who do work for the Home Care program are properly trained. I will take the honourable member's recommendations very seriously indeed. In fact, earlier today I met with Peter Olfert of the Manitoba Government Employees' Union and we discussed a number of matters. The one thing he asked me to do was be more vociferous in defending the Home Care program, and I wonder what he means by that when his friends in the New Democratic Party want to do the opposite every time they turn around.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, we want to ensure though, getting back to the honourable member's question, that we look very seriously at improving services in our Home Care program even though we are resourcing it at levels never before seen in Manitoba and the activity is indeed increasing.

We want to always do everything we do in the Home Care program with an eye to improving our services. We have many, many thousands of dedicated employees of the Home Care program, Madam Deputy Speaker. We want to continue to work with them to provide Manitobans with the very best that can be offered.

#### **Recruitment/Training Position**

**Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood):** Madam Deputy Speaker, with a final supplementary to the Minister of Health. If he understood the Home Care program, he would realize that overnight attendants in fact are paid a lesser amount of money for the amount of hours they put in, so it has been a difficulty in terms of recruiting the appropriate people for that.

My final question for the minister is: Can he indicate to us, because of the increased number of home care attendants and trained labour pool that we do need, why he chose to have a recruitment and training position from the Home Care program eliminated a year ago, given that we are seeing a great increase in the need for this type of work?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** Madam Deputy Speaker, I would be happy to hear further from the honourable member some detail about that particular position, and I would be happy to look into that matter. With respect to the issue of pay, however, for home care attendants, the home care attendants are represented by the Manitoba Government Employees' Union and their pay arrangements are the subject of negotiations which lead to collective agreements.

### Education Information System Progress Report

**Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley):** My questions are for the Minister of Education.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in 1994 and 1995, the Department of Education spent close to a million dollars each year to create an educational information system, and in 1995 they propose to spend yet another million dollars.

Will the minister explain why the report on the pilot project for the EIS, the educational information system, condemned his department's lack of leadership, communication and commitment, and will he tell us why school boards and superintendents are unaware of any progress which has been made on student records or educational records for the last five years and at the cost of over \$2 million?

**Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training):** Madam Deputy Speaker, we are having some difficulty building the system, the conceptual framework around it, at this time, and yet I remind the member, when we built the

MACS assessment system within Health and Rural Development—and that is basically only going to be a fraction of this once the education information system is built—but the cost of that I think was \$3 million or \$4 million, from memory.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I do not know whether the member is talking about the commitment of funds, whether or not she is trying to indicate that this is a large amount of money. I doubt that we will be able to build, once we have completed the information system, below \$5 million or \$6 million, because, of course, of the incredible amount of information that will be stored therein. I can indicate though that it continues to be one of the department's very high priorities and that we will hopefully have more success over the course of the next number of months.

\* (1400)

**Ms. Friesen:** Madam Deputy Speaker, my questions in fact relate to the amount of money and the absence of any action; \$3 million for no action seems to me a great deal.

### SmartHealth Merger

**Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley):** I want the minister to explain why the advisory board for the educational information system meetings have been recently postponed, and I would like him to confirm that his government is considering merging the educational information system and the student records number with the Royal Bank health smart card.

**Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training):** Madam Deputy Speaker, that is not under active consideration. But why we are looking at all alternatives is simply that to create a student number—so I am told—identifiable for each student in the province in itself would be a horrendous cost far beyond one that can be contained within that \$3-million, \$4-million or \$5-million budget.

Obviously a new government, the next Legislature, is going to have to reflect upon how it is or whether it is they want to take a common identifier number that exists now and use it in an educational sense.

**Ms. Friesen:** That seemed a pretty ambiguous answer. On the one hand it is not being considered, and on the other hand it is.

### Confidentiality

**Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley):** I would like the minister to tell the House how he is going to ensure, in this prospective layering of two significant and very personal databases, how does he propose to abide by the federal Privacy Act and the EOCD regulations which ensure that personal information should be used only for the purpose for which it is collected.

When you start layering this kind of information you are beyond those guidelines. I think the public needs an assurance of this kind of privacy in this matter.

**Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training):** I could not agree more with the thrust or the import of the member's question. That is why, of course, when we divested Manitoba Data Services we were very cognizant of the fact that one had to be extra sensitive and careful of information which can be accessed simply by plugging in a specific number. So we are very well mindful of the fact that one has to be very careful.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what the member has been pushing us for over the course of the last year is to move on with building an information system that will very quickly allow interaction of information on an educational sense.

I mean, many of us are products of student numbers at university. I mean, we are well aware how the system works. We know that it can be brought forward into this generation, and

it has tremendous application within the public school system. That is what we are endeavouring to try and build with the amount of money that has been allocated to us through the budgetary process.

### Introduction of Guests

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** I would like to draw all members' attention to the loge to my left, where we have with us this afternoon Mr. John Angus, the former member for St. Norbert.

### Health Care Facilities Funding

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** Madam Deputy Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

The usual rallying cry from this government is that patient care is not being compromised. They said that when they did the hospital cuts. They said that when they did the devastating home care cuts. They said that when they brought in Connie Curran and gave her \$4 million and \$800,000 in expenses.

Now in the North where devastating cuts are taking place in the hospitals, how does the minister explain the fact that at Flin Flon Hospital there will only be one nurse covering intensive care and emergency, how at Flin Flon Hospital they will have to combine the medical and pediatric wards and how the combination of the maternity and surgical floors will have to take place as a result of this government's cutbacks? How can they say patient care will not be compromised?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** Every step of the way, Madam Deputy Speaker, the focus of our health care system ought to be on the patient, unlike the honourable member for Kildonan who first hears what his union boss friends have to say and then maybe if the patient's agenda fits in with that one we might accept it. That is not the way we do it on this side of the House.

The honourable member referred to home care. May I remind the honourable member that the number of people working in home care in 1995 is 3,543. In 1990, that number was 2,787. There are 756 more people working for home care this year than in 1990. Let not the honourable member mislead anybody else in the light of those numbers.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I answered the honourable member's questions the other day with respect to hospital staffing guidelines. I also made it very clear that if hospital administrations have trouble with the staffing guidelines as they have been laid out and as they have been developed by people who work in the hospitals including northern hospitals, that our department's consultants are there to assist. Should something become a problem for patient care, we would be the first to advise that they pause and they work out the difficulties with us.

The honourable member is very prone to raising concerns when there are not any.

### **Health Care System Consultations**

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** Madam Deputy Speaker, perhaps after the minister reads his own annual report and sees that home support services were down by 2,000 per month—2,000 per month his own annual report—perhaps he will revise his own annual report, page 122.

My supplementary to the minister is: How can he explain these cutbacks to places like Flin Flon, Thompson and other hospitals and crowding in emergency rooms in hospitals and people in the hallways, when hospitals have money to bring in the Centre for Case Management from Boston, Massachusetts to hold seminars on April 3 where health care people have to attend? How can they actually with a straight face allow cutbacks to take place when American companies are brought in to do consulting on behalf of this government?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** Madam Deputy Speaker, I am not sure if the honourable member is not listening or if he just cannot hear. I just finished telling him that there are 756 more people working in the Home Care program in Manitoba today than there were five years ago. The honourable member can be as selective as he wants in his recitation of the statistics but the idea is to make sure the people are appropriately cared for in their homes. That is why we have hired that many more people to work in our Home Care program.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I also have set out for the honourable member, it was late last year that all of the hospitals in rural and northern Manitoba were advised of the outcome of the review of the staffing guidelines, something that was put on hold a year and a half ago pending that review. We asked the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses, the Manitoba Association of Licensed Practical Nurses, the College of Physicians and Surgeons and others to engage in the review of those staffing guidelines.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there were personnel from the northern hospitals involved in the review. As I said earlier, the implementation of the review will be done in a very, very careful manner.

### **Funding**

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** Madam Deputy Speaker, as usual the minister did not answer the question. I will give the minister another opportunity to answer another final supplementary.

While he is looking up the information perhaps he can explain to this House how it is that they can cut back hospitals, have crowding in emergency rooms and at the same time an American is brought in, Dino Brisi, and 200 staff from the Health Sciences Centre are mandatorily told they must attend two 12-hour seminars and one eight-hour seminar on management and conflict resolution, et cetera, while they cut back

funding to hospitals. How do they fund that—another consultant from the United States—but they cannot fund hospital patient care?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** Madam Deputy Speaker, anything the honourable member said is not correct, because if you look at the spending on health in Manitoba as a percentage of budget, our commitment to health care is significantly more than any commitment ever demonstrated by the New Democrats when they were in office.

May I suggest that the honourable member who raises the issue of conflict resolution engage in a little of that himself, learn just a little bit about how to put the truth on the table and let us deal with what is true instead of with what we can make up as we try to make our arguments for or against whatever case it is. If conflict resolution school is not good enough, maybe he could go to acting school and be in on some of those commercials that he and his friends are putting out.

\* (1410)

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader):** On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is not parliamentary to suggest that a member would bring anything to this House other than the truth. The member has brought forward the situation in Flin Flon and northern hospitals, and I think we would appreciate on what may be the last Question Period if we could once actually get a response from the Minister of Health to the questions we have been asking on health care.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** The honourable member for Thompson does not have a point of order.

#### Provincial Parks Endangered Spaces Program

**Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupertsland):** Madam Deputy Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Natural Resources concerning the

four new parks in northern Manitoba.

On Friday, the minister admitted that the logging, mining and Hydro officials he consulted with had no economic plans for these areas. Will the minister tell the House how these areas qualify as endangered spaces?

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pretty broad complex process that we go through because there is a whole bunch of areas that get identified by the department by all kinds of people that play a role in this thing.

Ultimately, it is matter of a process of elimination, depending on people that have concerns about an area that is identified. This is not an unusual process. We have done that with the Churchill park, the national park that is now moving ahead, I might say, very positively, and I am very pleased about that.

I can get the criteria for the member specifically as to how the process, and it quite an extensive process. I make no apologies. I think it is a very positive process that we go through in establishing these parks.

**Mr. Robinson:** Mr. Speaker, since the areas were chosen to partially fulfill broken election promises, not because of their diversity, will the minister rescind or amend the December 21, 1994, Order-in-Council that now has been requested of him by the Grand Chief of MKO George Muswagon, along with the Chief of the Sayisi Dene First Nation at Tadoule Lake, Ernie Bussidor, along with many other First Nations in Manitoba?

**Mr. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, I thought I had clarified the process the other day when the member raised a question about it, where I said that we have basically established these parks under the parks act that has been passed and has not been proclaimed.

We will be going through a process where every one of these parks, the provincial parks that we have, are going to be subjected to public input, public review. The people that basically want to and have interest in it can take and make a presentation to us on what they want to have done with these parks. I would expect and hope that the people that have concerns—you know, they might not have shown that concern the first time around; they certainly will have the option to do that the next time around, and I hope they avail themselves of that opportunity to make their views known at that time.

### **First Nations Working Group**

**Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupert's Land):** Mr. Speaker, my final question to the minister is this: Will the minister establish a First Nations government working group on these and future land designations related to the World Wildlife Fund's Endangered Spaces campaign?

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources):** Mr. Speaker, I am not quite clear as to what the member is implying by his question, but if it has to do with consultation, I am prepared to get involved with any group that has interests or concerns, whether it is parks or any issues within my Department of Natural Resources. If I might suggest, because I did not quite get the full context of the question that he raised, I would suggest that maybe if he wants to put it in writing and send it to me, I am certainly willing to respond.

### **Agriculture Industry Poultry Hatchery Regulations**

**Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. [interjection] I support all of them.

Over the past number of years, there has been tension between Manitoba's hatching egg producers and one particular hatchery, Carleton's. The reason for this tension is Carleton's arbitrary decision to impose a 50-mile

distance restriction between producers, operations and the hatchery. Despite this requirement Carleton continues to fill a large percentage of its quota with hatching eggs imported from the United States.

Could the minister explain why one hatchery in Manitoba has been allowed to discriminate against Manitoba producers through distance requirements while other successful hatcheries such as Granny's have no regulations and buy almost exclusively Manitoba products?

**Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture):** I thank the honourable member for the question. He does raise a legitimate issue that has troubled the hatchery egg-laying business in Manitoba for some time. I had appointed an interim board of three members who I want to stress are doing that as a result of their long experience in the industry to try to bring some resolution to some of the problems that are troubling this part of the poultry industry.

Part of the problem is quality, Mr. Speaker. I am afraid distance to hatchery has something to do with that. The particular producer in question, particular hatchery in question, maintains there has been repeated problems of maintaining quality of the eggs being produced, and the hatchery in question has imposed that distance limit with respect to deliveries to that hatchery. I have asked the players in the field to try to resolve their issues, and my understanding as of about a week ago or eight or nine days ago was that a resolution was close at hand.

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

### **Speaker's Ruling**

#### **Allegation of Promoting Racism**

**Mr. Speaker:** I have a ruling for the House.

On Wednesday, March 15, 1995, during the Budget Debate and while the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) had the

floor, a matter of privilege was raised by the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) alleging that the honourable member for Inkster had accused her of promoting racism in comments on her party's position on the federal immigration guidelines. She then moved a motion that the member for Inkster be asked to withdraw and publicly apologize for the comments.

I would draw the attention of honourable members to Citation 69 of Beuchesne which reads in part: ". . . something can be inflammatory, can be disagreeable, can even be offensive, but it may not be a question of privilege unless the comment actually impinges upon the ability of Members . . . to do their job properly."

Further, I have carefully reviewed the Hansard extract in question and find there is no prima facie evidence of a matter of privilege. The honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) maybe should have raised a point of order about the language used. In any event, the matter comes to a dispute over the facts about the interpretation by two members of what was meant by what was said. As Citation 494 of Beuchesne advises: ". . . statements by Members respecting themselves and particularly within their own knowledge must be accepted." "On rare occasions this may result in the House having to accept two contradictory accounts of the same incident."

Just a final word, this is not the first time I have had to rule on the use of the word "racism" or the words "racist comments." I would caution all members to be very careful any time they use these words. They are very powerful.

## NONPOLITICAL STATEMENTS

### Congratulatory Message

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the honourable Leader of the official opposition have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to join the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) in congratulating the family on the birth of Adam Daniel. I would like to wish the father and mother well. I understand the baby and the mother are doing well. I understand also the father is doing well. We congratulate the Edwards family on the birth of their new son.

\* (1420)

### Provincial D Pee wee Championship

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

**Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to add my congratulations to members on this side of the House to the communities involved in last weekend's provincial D Pee wee championship.

Interlake had the most tournaments being held for the minor hockey system within the Interlake. I want to congratulate the community for their involvement.

I would also like to congratulate the winners. The winners were La Broquerie Habs who won the gold, Wawanesa Black Hawks who won the silver and our own Riverton Eagles 12-to-13-year-old team who won the bronze. Also to add to that they won the north provincial Interlake championship to go along with the bronze medal for all the provincial champions.

I would like to just acknowledge them, Mr. Speaker: Kris Kyle, Kelsey Plett, Michael Johnson, Tyler Evans, Jordan Johnson, Evan Kornelsen, Mark Sigurdson, Alana Grimolfson, Eric Gimolfson, Warren Spring, Darren Kornelsen, Shane Sigurdson, Sean Monkman, Trevor Charrier and Jamie Mowatt; and the coaches: Bob Johnson, Danny Sigurdson and Ken Kornelsen. We wish them well.

### High School Basketball Championship

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

**Mr. Harry Schellenberg (Rossmere):** The provincial varsity high school boys basketball AAAA championship tournament was held at the University of Manitoba last weekend with River East Collegiate Kodiak boys winning the championship crown. The River East Collegiate Kodiak boys defeated John Taylor Pipers 56 to 34. The Kodiak basketball team went undefeated in regular KCAC league play, as well as going undefeated in the provincial tournament.

Congratulations are extended to both basketball teams for the excellent play and sportsmanship.

The River East Collegiate boys Kodiak team members are Luc Buller, Chris Fey, Trenton Jones, Matej Maroti, Jeremy Jones, Dave Stelter, Carlos Lopez, Jeremy Hokanson, Daryl Falzarano, Jaret Hamm, Mike Samborski, Scott Sharples and coach Brent Graham.

The most valuable player of the basketball championship tournament was Matej Maroti of River East Collegiate who was ranked the No. 1 varsity player all year. Luc Buller won the Hustle Award and Trenton Jones was placed on the all-star team.

In the quadruple A girls championship St. John's Tigers defeated Vincent Massey from Brandon 49 to 46.

Congratulations go to both teams for a very successful season.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### BUDGET DEBATE (Eighth Day of Debate)

**Mr. Speaker:** On the adjourned debate, the eighth day of debate, on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr.

Stefanson), that this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government and the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the official opposition in amendment thereto, and the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the Second Opposition party in further amendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable member for Kildonan who has 35 minutes remaining.

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** Mr. Speaker, I left off my comments on Friday prior to what constituted probably in Canadian political history the most massive number of press conferences and blizzard of paper that went forth across desks in the history of Canadian politics.

Obviously, the government was clearing the decks for an election campaign and trying to create the impression that they might possibly perhaps do something creative or possibly positive in health care. After striking 103 committees, keeping most of them secret, not revealing the reports, we see the minister and several other ministers announcing a number of policies on Friday.

First and foremost, finally after having the report for many months, Mr. Speaker, and trying to decide when they were going to release it because it is quite a damaging report to the government, they released it on the final days of their tenure as government. Perhaps it will serve as an epitaph to the members opposite because it illustrates something members on this side of the House have said, that Manitobans have the highest child poverty rate in this country, Manitobans have the highest rate of children in care in this province, the aboriginal children's health is the worst in this country.

The daycare system has deteriorated under this government and all across the board be it in schools in special needs children, be it in the hospitals, be it anywhere in the health care, the education, the justice system, this government has failed children miserably. In the final days, they announce the release of the Health of



Manitoba's Children, a comprehensive report which in fact is a very good report and which only serves to justify and completely vindicate almost everything the members on this side of this House have been saying for years.

In fact, we in the New Democratic Party announced a program and put forward a 10-point children's plan several months ago that goes beyond anything the government even announced in its blizzard and flurry of announcements that it made on Friday, and we did that just as a result of assistance from volunteers and from the public who have told us what had to be done. We announced a more comprehensive plan than this government did and has done in its entire seven years of office in this province.

We welcomed a lot of the initiatives of the government, but frankly it was very hard not to take those initiatives and announcements with a huge grain of salt. In fact, when I door-knocked on the weekend, it was abundantly clear to me that the public simply will not attach any credibility to this government and their initiatives, particularly the last-minute health announcements, but also, Mr. Speaker, the announcement of a balanced budget and balanced-budget legislation.

Now, it strikes me as curious that for seven years we heard nary a word from members opposite about balanced-budget legislation, from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) and from members. Perhaps, when the member for Portage (Mr. Pallister) was thrust into this Chamber, he made those comments, and perhaps he is the one who convinced his colleagues, but I do not think so. He is saying to the negative, and I agree.

I think there is only one reason we have legislation regarding a balanced budget on the Order Paper, and that is that the government is conniving and trying and maneuvering—maneuvering is the correct word—to try to be re-elected. They will grasp at anything symbolic in

order to assure their re-election to this Chamber. Despite the fact and the hypocrisy of members opposite running seven deficit budget in a row, they all of a sudden have become the champions of the balanced budget.

It is particularly surprising when this is the group that inherited a balanced budget from the New Democratic Party when they came to office. One only needs to review and read the Auditor's Report to confirm that. The now-Minister of Education (Mr. Manness), the former Minister of Finance, ratcheted that deficit up to close to over \$700 million. Now they have come in on the backs of lottery revenues and said, oh, now we are going to reduce the budget.

But I do not think, given from what I have heard from members of my community, that the public will attach much credibility to the claims of this government; and, if they are hoping to run the campaign based on their credibility on this issue, I am afraid they are going to be mistaken.

They are going to be mistaken because, frankly, given the broken promises and given the damage that they have done to the health care field and the education field for the past seven years, I do not think that the public is somehow going to be convinced that this same group of people can come back and manage the economy like they have managed the economy the last seven years or like they have managed health care the last seven years or like they have managed the education system for the last seven years.

I am always struck by comments of the present Minister of Education (Mr. Manness), who talks about consultation and who talks about understanding, and saying he is the most approachable Minister of Education.

**An Honourable Member:** I have never said that. What a liar. I never said that.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Consultation. What did you say?

**An Honourable Member:** I never said I was the most approachable. What a crock.

**Mr. Chomiak:** What did he say? The Premier (Mr. Filmon) said that the minister was the most approachable, Mr. Speaker. I apologize. It was the Premier who said that the minister was the most approachable.

So is the minister then saying that he is not the most approachable—

**An Honourable Member:** Right.

**Mr. Chomiak:** —or, is the Premier wrong, and this minister is not the most approachable?

The fact is this minister is the most closed-minded Minister of Education that we have ever had in this province of Manitoba. It does not matter how often you approach him, because he does not listen. He listens only to himself and keeps only his counsel and does not give a hoot for what the public says.

\* (1430)

That is one of the problems in education. Education has to be dealt with with consensus and dealt with with consultation. It may be that a lot of people approach this minister, but it certainly is not the case that they come away with any impression whatsoever that this minister has heard anything that they said.

I am astounded how this government can say that they are reforming education when this government is responsible for the highest property taxes in the history of this province, largely as a result of their offloading of education taxes on their own school divisions. Then they step back and say, oh, no, that is not our responsibility.

When they do that—the minister's own Morris-MacDonald School Division is going to see some massive tax increases. Then they step back and they say, oh, now, you have to be more

flexible. We will take recess out, and we will take other things out. In fact, school divisions are striving to try to make ends meet within their budget, striving, trying to improve the quality of education, but you cannot when class sizes get larger. You cannot when you stop providing resources to special needs kids, and you cannot when you cut off services to families. That is one of the sad legacies of this government.

In fact, I do not think they understand it, Mr. Speaker, or they choose not to understand it, but I believe that the public of Manitoba is aware of the flip-flops and the inconsistent policies that have been perpetrated by members. The member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), our Leader, this afternoon in Question Period, outlined the classic flip-flop of the Skills for Independent Living program that was mandated by one minister and then shorn away by another, on whim, with no research support whatsoever. That is indicative of this government's approach to education.

With respect to the health area, I would like to indicate that this afternoon in Question Period I indicated that again the onslaught of consultants continues in this province.

We have the centre for case management coming up from Boston, Massachusetts, to hold a seminar. We have Dino Brisi from Wisconsin, who held seminars at the Health Sciences Centre where 200 employees were mandated to attend. The employees and others in the health care system approached me and said: At what cost is this? They are saying: Is this another example of Connie Curran? Is this another example?

I have to admit, Mr. Speaker, that I am astounded by the number of consultants and others that have been brought into this jurisdiction to somehow reform health care when the answers and the solutions are here to be found in Manitoba by talking with Manitobans, by talking with people that are actually involved in our health care system. Unfortunately, the government has kept its plans to itself, its closed

committees, to the 103 very select committees, and that much will come out.

A prime example is the \$150-million or \$118-million contract with the Royal Bank to develop a computer system. When I ask questions in this House, the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) refuses to answer over and over again, but the fact is, this government had either entered into a contract, which I believe they have, or they are in the process of negotiating a contract, which almost amounts to the same thing, to spend over \$100 million on computers at a time when we hear that our emergency rooms are crowded, at a time when we hear of hospital emergency rooms—I will not name them in order to protect individuals, but I have been told of nine-nines occurring in emergency rooms where there is not enough staff. We hear from the Flin Flon nurses that only one nurse will man the emergency intensive care room as a result of government cutbacks.

It is very hard to justify how they could spend this kind of money on computers. More importantly, Mr. Speaker, it is very hard to understand why they will not reveal any information, why they will not give us the contract, why they will not give us the documentation, why they will not tell Manitobans what Manitobans are going to be paying \$118 million—or is it \$150 million?—for. That is the most significant expenditure of funds in health care, bar none. Even the William Avenue project that was recently announced in the five-year capital plan is not as great as that contract deal that is being entered into by this government, but we hear nary a word.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, we hear that the Department of Education is somehow looking at intermingling the education computer system together with the on-line health care system. We know they have spent \$3 million on the education system. We do not know, is that \$3 million part of the \$150 million? Is it in addition to the \$150 million? We do not have answers. We are going to be facing an election probably

within the next 24 hours, certainly very shortly, and we are getting no answers from members opposite.

I would have thought that members opposite would have learned from the Connie Curran lesson. If you are not straight and you do not come upright with the information, if you do not do that, if you do not talk about the \$4 million plus \$800,000 in expenses, tax free, that was given to this U.S.-based consultant, if you are not up front, the public of Manitoba have spoken about that. You would have thought they would have learned, but apparently they have not. Perhaps they are trying to keep it under the table until after the election. I suspect that may be the case.

Mr. Speaker, there are many topics to cover. I know a lot of members want to speak, so I am going to highlight a few others.

I would challenge the government, if they spent even some of the time, for instance, debating our health reform accountability act that they did preparing themselves for their press conferences on Friday, we might have had in place a health reform accountability act. Had they spent as much time debating our 10-point child plan as they did preparing for their press conference, for the minister to bring in all of the troops to deal with the health of Manitoba children, we might have had in place already a children's health plan that would work for the children of Manitoba. If they had spent some of that time dealing with some of the issues we raised in this House instead of trying to deflect the legitimate issues, perhaps we would have had better legislation from members on this side of the House. [interjection]

The member for Morris (Mr. Manness) from his seat, I think, is taking exception to some of my comments, Mr. Speaker. I can tell the member for Morris that I was out on the door this weekend, as I have been on the door for every week since I was elected. My constituents are not pleased with the way this government has

managed the economy. They are not pleased with this payout to the Jets. They are not pleased with the way health care reform has unfolded in this province. They want answers. They are not pleased with the way this government is directing education.

It is something I think they are going to have to be called accountable for as we go into the competitive period and the period within the next several weeks when we will have a chance to talk about the issues and to debate some of the issues.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), as usual, takes exception to comments and talks about the expansion of home care and talks about the extra money that they have put into home care. It is really curious, because if one looks at the annual report for the Department of Health, and if one recalls it, in this Chamber members opposite denied cuts to home care.

If one looks at the statistics on page 122, you could see where the cuts took place between 1989 and '90 and then '93-94 when the cuts took place. There is a cutback monthly of 2,000 people on the home support services. There is a cutback of 400 people receiving registered nursing service. There is a cutback of 300 people per month receiving less LPN services as a result of the cutbacks in the '92-93 budget. These are the statistics that are provided by the minister's own department. This is from his own annual report.

Now he argues that they have put more money into home care, Mr. Speaker, but natural growth has resulted in that. More importantly, if patients are being let out of hospital at a much more serious level, if the acuity level of patients is so much greater, home care should be expanding far greater and the range of services offered should be expanding far greater and palliative care should be expanding and respite care should be expanding and none of that is happening. There should be more nurses into the homes, not less. There should be more visiting

services, not less and that is not happening from members from that side of the House, and I regret that.

The minister can play with statistics all that he wants, the only statistics that we on this side of the House use are statistics, just so they cannot make the kind of accusations that have been brought forward by the minister, Mr. Speaker.

There is a good deal, Mr. Speaker, that I wish to deal with in my speech, but I do know that this is the last night for the budget speech debate. I know that a lot of members want to have the opportunity and I will have an opportunity and I will continue to have an opportunity to speak both in my constituency and out.

\* (1440)

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

With those comments, as I said at the beginning aspect of my speech when I started on Friday, I wish well to all those members who have taken the opportunity afforded them to voluntarily leave this Chamber and wish them all well in their future endeavours and thank them for their contribution to the discussion and to public life in Manitoba. I think all of them deserve credit and deserve to be referred to as honourable members. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Ben Sveinson (La Verendrye):** Madam Deputy Speaker, it is nice to rise today to speak to the budget of the century. Before I get into a few words on the budget, I would just like to pass on some good wishes to a number of my colleagues.

The honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose) has truly been a super colleague, a friend, a person who stands up in this Assembly and when you listen to the pearls of wisdom that roll out of his mouth, I feel quite at a loss for

words when I stand. But I would just like to wish him and his wife and his family the best in their future.

I would also like to wish my other colleague, the Honourable Gerry Ducharme, the member for Riel, the best in his future. He indeed has been around for a long time and was always there for myself and for other colleagues who just came into the Legislature, and I would like to thank him for that and wish him and his wife and family the best in their future.

The member for Morris (Mr. Manness), I would like to extend to him and his family the very best. I know that it has taken a considerable lot of time from his family just being in public life. I do know that I have gotten quite close to Clayton in many of the things that we have looked at over the last four and a half years.

Clayton has a special—how would you call it? There is something special about him in the way that he can stand in this Assembly or in any area and speak—I guess he uses something that I think that I can use or have used much, and that is just simple common sense. If you use that, I will tell you right now that most of our problems would not be problems.

Clayton, to you and your family, I thank you for everything that you have contributed to this province.

I would like to also thank the Honourable Don Orchard for his part in this government and in this caucus. Something about our colleague, Mr. Orchard, and that is that with Don you do not have to be in a real war, you can just get the effects of a real war.

If you ask him a question that is somewhat, what I would term, off colour, you will end up feeling the effects of a war and really you have not been in one except in the fact that he can use words in that way that you know where you have been. Perhaps after this Assembly closes, in the

next month or so, you actually know where you are going.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I also wish to give my best wishes to a colleague from the other side of the House, that is, the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman). John and I grew up in the same area and actually attended the same school. The honourable member for Dauphin and I attended school in Moosehorn, Manitoba. We in fact attended a school reunion just about a year ago in Steep Rock. We had many good times together in school. Whether it was football or whether it was just times out on weekends, we had many good times. So to our honourable colleague from Dauphin I wish him and his family the very best in the future, and perhaps we will see him out in the northern area where we grew up.

I would also like to pass on congratulations to the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) on the birth of their son and also wish them the very best. There really is not too much that can top having a child. This is his son.

There is one thing that perhaps he will see down the road as I have seen over my years. There is a saying—I do not think it is meant in any harsh way, but there is a saying that in fact after you have a grandchild though you would wish that you by-pass the children and go straight to the grandchildren.

There is nothing quite like having a grandchild. I do have two. I have two grandsons. I do have an absolutely tremendous time with them. [interjection] I would like to think that, but the fact is I do have two grandchildren and they are super. There is nothing like it. I do wish the best to the Edwards family and hope they have many, many years of happiness and health and the best to them.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in this House today to discuss our government's budget. It is a budget that I

know is being widely accepted by Manitobans and indeed by the people of La Verendrye.

An interesting thing here, just listening to the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) a few minutes ago, and I guess I should try to keep it in line, but I could not help but comment on it. He was throwing remarks across the way on health care and education and so on.

I have to just reminisce a little bit here, just go back about three years or about that when health care reform was brought in by that fiery little member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard). The thing across the way, from the member of the opposition, was for goodness' sake, this is the worst thing we could do. After a year or so of pulling the NDP party kicking and squealing into the next century, they finally changed what they were saying. They finally changed it. That was, well, okay, all right, we have to do it. Then they tried to find little sticks to throw on the spokes along the way. That is quite easy. When you have union bosses throughout your support, it is not too hard to throw spokes in the wheels of progress.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this budget is a budget, as I said, that has been widely accepted by Manitobans and indeed by the people of La Verendrye. The reasons are clear. We have balanced the budget. We did not raise taxes. We have maintained our essential services.

I have heard it said that it is the dawning of a new age, an age where I guess governments are now going to have to be absolutely accountable, bringing in balanced-budget legislation that will force governments—[interjection]

We just heard from the honourable member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg). He hollered out from his seat, you will never pass it. I guess that means that the NDP will not pass balanced-budget legislation. I guess that is what he is after. I am glad that one of the members over there stood up and let it go. They will not go for balanced-budget legislation. That is nice to hear.

That is what the member for Rossmere said. Madam Deputy Speaker, we did not raise taxes, and we have maintained our essential services.

\* (1450)

I would just like to touch on a little thing here. It is a write-up that was in the Leader Post in Regina. I bring this to your attention because it is something that should be read and I think heard by a lot of people. If you will just bear with me I will try and get it through just as quickly as I can but with as much clarity as I can.

It says, the headlines are, Provincial taxes and levies have hurt the most. What is compelling about Kathy and Larry Dolters story is the reality that every family like this has to sometimes struggle to make ends meet. It should not be this way. This is in Saskatchewan. For the past four years, a Regina firefighter and his wife, who works as a teacher and administrator, have seen their combined gross household income increase about 6.7 percent to the mid-\$60,000 range.

We used to dream of earning \$64,000, too, said Kathy Dolter. Now that we do, it is not so great. Even with four kids, three of them teenagers, one might still assume the gross income would be more than enough to live on, particularly when you consider the Dolters do not live in a relatively fancy home. They do not drive big new cars. They do not smoke. They do not drink, and they do not gamble. In fact, the Dolters, whose only out-of-the-ordinary expense would seem to be the \$5,400 they spend annually to send their four children to a Christian school, are about as careful with their money as anyone.

Kathy Dolter—this is a write-up in the paper—budgets the family grocery bill right down to \$3.46 per person per day. The Dolters admit they have made a few past financial decisions they now regret—who of us have not?—but the biggest problem faced by such middle-class families seems to be the result of taxes that have

been dumped on them by the government, specifically the provincial government. Sure, the 10 percent more they now pay in federal taxes, UIC and CPP than they paid in 1991 does not help, but at 19.3 percent of their total gross income such federal levies today are only slightly higher than the 18.7 percent of their gross income they were paying to Ottawa in 1991.

Similarly, the 9 percent more they now pay to the city for water and sewer and property tax due to provincial government offloading does not help. It is provincial taxes and levies, however, that have hurt the most.

In 1991, 9.7 percent of their gross income went to various forms of provincial income tax. Today it is 10.7 percent of their gross income. It is just a beginning. Nearly 20 percent more for telephone in four years; 17 percent more for gasoline, partially due to a five-cent-a-litre tax increase; a whopping 27 percent more for natural gas; 29 percent more in provincial sales taxes.

Friends, I could go on and on and on. It is clear what the Saskatchewan government did. They brought in a so-called balanced budget, and for goodness sake, we can see where it came from. Increased taxes right across Saskatchewan. Right now a family of five at a gross income of \$64,000 a year—and as you can see and as you noted these people are very, very stringent—they have a budget laid out so that there is not a lot of money flying everywhere that you do not know about, and they can hardly make it.

The point that they make in this write-up here is, if these two people who are making a good wage, a good income as they see it, and they are just making it, what about the ones who are making less?

I do not know if I would want to be in Saskatchewan right now, and I do not think there are too many over there that would like to be, but sometimes you just have to be when you have been there for a number of years, I guess, and

stuck with it in that way. But I dare say that they will have a provincial election not too far down the road too, and they will probably straighten out their situation there.

I could stand here today and talk about every detail of the budget, but I think it is more important to talk about the way it will help improve the lives of Manitobans. Families have told us that they have had it with new taxes. We have listened and we have acted. We have delivered eight consecutive budgets without an increase in major taxes, the sales taxes, personal or business taxes. The result is that our government is staying out of the wallets of Manitobans. It means that decisions on how to spend that pay cheque are left to you, Manitobans, and not taken away by politicians before you receive the cheque.

By raising taxes to fund big government and big programs, you take valuable dollars from the taxpayer. That has an immediate and dramatic effect on their lives. It means that consumer spending slows down because people have to work even harder to watch their money. By putting off those decisions to spend, even for household or other items, it has a negative effect on the economy.

Let us look at it the other way. If the government stays out of your pockets, you are much more likely to have money to spend. Spending that money creates economic growth because, by stimulating the economy, the climate is right for business to grow.

We all know that familiar saying that small business is the backbone of the economy. Well, in the climate that this government has created, small business is the lifeblood of economic growth that we are seeing under this government. It means jobs. There is no better way to help Manitoba families than to ensure that those who want to work and who value a good day's work can get a job. To just try to manufacture those jobs out of thin air, as was done a short time back by the past government,

as we saw, it was a complete failure. It is a temporary quick fix that actually leads to a slowdown in the creation of real jobs and a strong economy for the future.

This government is not interested in artificial jobs, ones that disappear when the money from the program runs out. We have worked hard to create a climate for strong growth in the economy.

My friends, we have succeeded. Thousands of jobs have been created in the last year alone, and that trend will continue because of the growing confidence in the way the Filmon government is guiding this province. We do not have to look far. There are so many different write-ups that I have here, and there are so many different comments by many different newspapers, in the Times, the Financial Post, you could go on and on. Manitoba shows the fiscal way. It goes on and on, just super headlines and super reviews.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to thank our Premier (Mr. Filmon) for his courage in maintaining the course. With our Premier at the helm, our province has been guided through the rough waters of the recession and into the calm and prosperity of a bright future. I shudder to think how this province would have floundered if the members from opposite had been at the helm.

It is an interesting thing—what was it?—about a month, a month and a half ago, when it was announced that the federal government was going to be very nice to us and shoot us another \$180-or-so million, it was interesting how the media ran to the Opposition Leader (Mr. Doer) and said, what would you do with this money?

I could see the honourable member, the Leader of the Opposition, smacking his lips and saying, I would spend it. Yes, I would spend it. He would have spent the whole thing—approximately \$180 million. I think there is about \$30 million of it left or approximately. So

we would have just been in the hole about \$150 million—\$150 million that we never did have.

\* (1500)

Then he ran to the Leader of the Liberal Party. He was a little more cautious. He was only going to spend half of it. I think that would have left us about \$60 million in the hole with money that we never did have, that we never did see.

Our Finance minister said: Take it easy, calm down; we do not have the money yet; let us take a look; when we get the money we will take a look at where it is best to put it and then we will deal with it—a very calm, commonsense approach and indeed one that I respect.

Guiding this province is a task for a government with a clear vision and a clear plan of action. This government, Madam Deputy Speaker, has both.

I would like to talk about how one of this government's plans will benefit Manitoba today and into the future. Under the leadership of our Finance minister, this government—and indeed I think there has to be a thank-you to the honourable member for Morris (Mr. Manness) as the Finance minister for five years previous for laying the groundwork and the foundation for a balanced budget, and indeed a thanks to our minister now, the Honourable Eric Stefanson, for introducing tough balanced-budget legislation in Manitoba.

What have the opposition parties said about it? Well, I just finished telling you what the official opposition said. There is no way that they are going along with balanced-budget legislation. [interjection] That came from the back benches there. By the time he gets to the front benches maybe that will change or maybe it will just get stronger.

If you look at some of what the Liberal Parties from other provinces have thrown out in



balanced-budget legislation, it is kind of one where they would like to see a balanced budget maybe one out of three or four years. The Liberal Party would like to see legislation that would allow them to bring in a budget but not use capital expenditures.

**An Honourable Member:** That would fudge the books.

**Mr. Sveinsson:** That would fudge the books.

They would also like to bring in maybe balanced-budget legislation that we would not have to use the interest on the debt. I think Manitobans are much, much smarter than that. To think that they would fall for either of those lines is really sad. Manitobans will not be led down those garden paths.

We do believe in balanced-budget legislation. We have delivered a year ahead of schedule. Not only is it a balanced budget but there is a \$48-million surplus. This government has done more than talk about balanced budgets, we have delivered it. The result will be a much stronger province for our children and their children. The reason is that we will start to pay off the huge mortgage that is held on our future and on our children's future. By refusing to pay that bill and to continue spending more and more as the tax-and-spend opposition parties would have us do, we would put our vital social programs in jeopardy. If we take a look at—[interjection] Would the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) like the floor, perhaps? He seems to have more of the floor than I do.

As I said, if we kept on spending like it has been in the past, we would put our vital services in jeopardy. If we look and just very simply—you do not have to be a financial wizard, you do not have to be somebody fantastic in mathematics to know that in the last five years we have increased in health care alone each year \$100 million a year. Madam Deputy Speaker and friends, the people of Manitoba, we only have approximately 1,000,200 people in this

province. How do you increase and intend to keep on increasing health care by \$100 million a year? It will blow up in your face. Changes had to come. As I said, those changes did come even if the NDP or the opposition members screamed and hollered the whole way.

This government has not gone to drastic measures. We have tried to do it with as little hurt as possible, and I believe we have accomplished that. In fact, our spending on social programs has increased substantially in Manitoba under our Filmon government. Spending on Health, Education and Family Services now represents 64 percent of our total budget, and if you include the interest costs, it is about 75 percent. There is not much left over when you think of all the different departments—the roads, the communication systems, Justice, et cetera—that has to be covered, under 25 percent. I think that the people of Manitoba know it. We have certainly told them, and running the risk of sounding absurd, I think the opposition parties had better be very careful when the writ is dropped for the next election.

I want to talk about some programs this government has maintained in this budget because we have been able to make government more efficient. Unlike governments that have been forced to slash programs, this government has been able to maintain and enhance key programs.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this government has shown clear priorities—indeed, I think I will probably run out of time—for improving community-based services in health. The people of Manitoba have told us that they wanted greater emphasis on community-based services rather than institutional care. As we know, keeping people in their only communities not only has a financial benefit for taxpayers, but it also contributes to a better quality of life at a lesser cost.

In education, I am proud of this government's plan to help our children prepare for the future.

Opposition parties see spending more as the answer. Throw money, they say. Throw more money. That idea of throwing more money does not work when it comes to teaching. The priority has to be focused on what the students learn.

Madam Deputy Speaker, by setting standards and priorities for our schools, the education system will be much more relevant for the future. The job market is changing and our students must be able to read, write and compute at high levels.

By ensuring that parents have a greater role in the education of their children, those with a direct stake in the education system will have a much greater impact.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this government will capitalize on all the opportunities that we now have in this great province and the potential to continue to help Manitoba grow and fulfill its potential in the years ahead is great.

There is much more I would like to say, but it seems that I am quickly running out of time, so thank you for the opportunity.

**Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley):** Madam Deputy Speaker, I am glad to have the opportunity to speak, albeit perhaps briefly on the budget, because it is in budgets that one can see the priorities of a government laid bare, and the clear priority of this budget is to get this government re-elected.

Many have already spoken of the sham of this document. By the minister's own admission it does not take account of the unconscionable withdrawal of federal dollars, and it throws in every last penny that is rattled through the gambling machines of Manitoba.

Over \$300 million of mostly Manitoban money dropped in the budget in yet another gamble to give the appearance of a balanced budget for the election.

An appendix to this is the so-called balanced-budget legislation with provisions for referendums on taxation and the docking of ministers' salaries. Madam Deputy Speaker, I have been much amused by the press reception of all this. The member for Pembina's nemesis, the Winnipeg Free Press, saw through most of it and unusually they did it both on their editorial pages and on their news pages. Was that why the honourable member devoted so much of his last speech in this House to a less than flattering trail of our oldest newspaper?

\* (1510)

The Free Press was not alone, Madam Deputy Speaker. Popular radio, other newspapers and many of the everyday folk of Winnipeg seem to see through this quite quickly. The Premier's rush to take us down the path of Newt Gingrich's Georgia was not a stampede that the majority seemed to want to join. No wonder that the speeches of government backbenchers on this are so full of false bravado. It must all be a great puzzlement to them. Where could they have gone wrong?

Well, partly it is the problem of the record of the last six years, the record thing. You cannot really deal with civil servants, nurses, teachers, students, aboriginal peoples, school trustees, trade unions, senior citizens, northerners and others in the way that this government has and expect that those Manitobans will have much confidence in what you do or say next. You have lost their confidence and they are not being brought back with \$348 million of lottery money.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I suppose it is also, Bush would have said, the vision thing. We are in the last years of the 20th Century, and in earlier times and other centuries this would have been a moment of utopian dreams, a heady mixture sometimes of both hope and fear, but in this budget document there is no sense of an optimistic future for Manitoba. Nor will the government be able to convey that during the

coming weeks. The budget shows no plans for investment in a believable future for the province. The reserves are gone, and there is no indication that the government has any plans to deal with the implications of a Liberal budget whose draconian provisions are more slowly beginning to be understood.

If you have no plan you have no vision, and Manitobans sense that already about the Filmon government. In a recent poll, Madam Deputy Speaker, over 60 percent of Manitobans could not identify any major achievement of the Filmon government. It is clear that trust has evaporated. There are no dreams and there are no jobs. At the end of the 20th Century in this province, there are only lotteries, lurid press releases with grandiose claims, extensive and much-mocked television advertising, and the repetition beyond belief of the big lie that the government has raised taxes.

Madam Deputy Speaker, at meetings I attend these days I always find at least one or two members of the audience who carry lists around in their pockets with a growing list of the tax increases of the Filmon government. The slogan of seven years without tax increases probably sounded good in the Tory back rooms. It has a certain simplistic appeal on a billboard, too. Unfortunately, its effect is to remind the passing Manitoban, particularly the one on fixed income, of all the many ways the Filmon government has found indeed to increase their tax. The list they carry in their pocket is a growing one.

**An Honourable Member:** . . . not increased any of the major taxes.

**Ms. Friesen:** Well, now the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) wants to say they have not increased major taxes. Are we going to see an amendment to every billboard that they have already put up around town? I certainly look forward to that one.

The record, the vision thing then are part of the hostile environment which faces this

government as they try to manipulate public opinion in the days before an election. The Premier was unable to bring himself to go to the people in the fall, yet my guess is that the situation has, in fact, deteriorated for him since then, and that this budget with its sleights of hand, its short-term outlook, its narrow perspective, its willingness to cut programs for the weakest in society has in fact illuminated for Manitobans the weaknesses and instabilities of the Tory approach to government.

The advertising itself, the hallmark of the last few years of this government, show the fault lines in the society they have created. We shall remember, I suspect, the advertisements for the government's snitch line, which asked us to spy on the most private affairs of our neighbours. Just a phone call away, the inspector who would go through the laundry of your neighbour to see if it contained forbidden clothing, and only a press release away, grandiose and unsubstantiated claims of how much money is being saved by this.

Madam Deputy Speaker, next to that in my memory of this government will be the other poster which talked of the growing child poverty in Manitoba—the deficit that lasts a lifetime. There is nothing in this budget that addresses that deficit, which will have an eternal impact on the history of this province.

Perhaps others will remember the government advertising on schools, which talked of order and discipline, or will it be the increasing time devoted to hungry children in some of the schools in my constituency or the many classrooms across the province, where there are more students per teacher and where the basic textbooks must be shared by two or three students. Perhaps that is what people will remember.

When we see the iron bars of the Filmon pamphlet, Tough on Crime, will it only lead us to marvel at the priorities of a government which for seven years has been part of a right-wing

crusade to create a world of low pay, low skilled, so-called flexible, short-term workers, and which has devoted itself zealously to undermining the public services of health and education.

The fault lines of our society are all too evident and will be all too clearly laid out in the forthcoming election. There is no doubt that the Filmon government will have left a permanent mark on the landscape of Manitoba. Some of the scars will be permanent too for those who lost their jobs, those who left the province, those who found the doors to post-secondary education closing. Some of those scars may be healed as we rebuild the confidence of Manitobans in themselves, their public institutions and their collective future, but some will require intensive care for many years.

Two elements in particular represent fundamental changes in Manitoba society. Tories in Canada, in the 1980s and 1990s, like their counterparts around the world, had a radical agenda. They are right to portray themselves as radicals. They did indeed strike at the route of many elements of our society. They taught us that the supreme good is the making of money, the gospel of the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness), who may indeed have used this as his message to high school students.

Like others of his stripe and his party, he tried to create a new moral universe in which good and evil are redefined and made manifest as rich and poor. Yet, you know, I do not think that the majority of Manitobans have accepted that vision. I believe the majority of Manitobans do have a different moral universe. They may indeed be gambling in larger numbers, but they do not necessarily see it as a positive vision for a society.

They are increasingly concerned about the radical vision of the Tories to withdraw public services. They recognize the divisions that have been created in Manitoba by the so-called Conservatives, and they are in a multitude of ways trying to cope on a daily basis with the new

insecurities of life that have been deliberately created for them.

It is these two elements, Madam Deputy Speaker, the growing insecurity of life and the increasingly permanent economic divisions in society, which I want to speak about.

As the multinationals began to flex their political muscles in the 1980s, they laid out around the world a clear plan for a new kind of society in the western world. Through annual reports, newsletters, conferences, lobbying, free trade agreements, think tanks and selective use of the media, they were able to create a climate of opinion which was prepared to accept the prescriptions of the Tory and now Liberal governments whom they financially supported. Smaller, weaker governments, restricted by choice and by agreement from regulation and intervention permitted the deregulation of transport, agriculture, drugs, culture, manufacturing and forestry and tied in our resource base to the political requirements of other governments.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the technological revolution, which enabled the rapid transfer of capital around the world, enabled these holders of economic power to create for most of us that unstable world that faces both us and particularly our children. Most of the new jobs that they sometimes boast about are part time, casual or temporary, and they offer an unstable and insecure future.

The costs of this strategy have been high, increased poverty and hardship, rising rates of crime and declining health care supports. All of this is becoming very visible, but what is less visible but equally significant is the climate of uncertainty which has been created.

Manitobans who do not know whether they will have a job tomorrow as a result of corporate downsizing, the elimination of middle management or the loss of federal or provincial services are not going to invest in equipment,

housing, appliances, those household goods which drive the consumer economy. When you know that you are only a few months away from welfare, your outlook on domestic spending of any kind is not particularly optimistic.

Young people, who must go from one part-time job to the next temporary job, have no security to plan their lives in the way that my generation did. There are significant concerns that that generational gap in experience is becoming more rigid and certainly more dangerous.

More than that, the climate of uncertainty which has been created discourages people from taking risks or accepting change. This is one of the major reasons in many western countries why the anticipated recovery of the regular business cycle has been so slow or uneven. People have neither the spending power, nor the consumer confidence that the economy needs to lift it out of recession.

\* (1520)

Nor is this lack of jobs, this lack of permanent jobs due to the lack of trained workers. Many of the people who lose their jobs are highly skilled technologists, tradespeople and professionals. It is not primarily the education system that has failed us, as business people and the Conservatives are so fond of pointing out.

In fact, one of the tests, if you speak to some of these people, particularly some of the senior business people is to ask them when they last hired a high school graduate or a university graduate. Quite often their response is not within the last 10 years, and yet they are very quick with their criticisms and undermining of the public education system.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we have to recognize that these Conservatives are part of the world of financial, technological and international trading forces, which are compelling Canadian, British and American

firms to scale back on their demand for labour. They do so because they are on the track for high returns in a short period.

The consequences for the rest of us are increasing unemployment, part-time work and unstable societies. It is, I suppose, one of the more obvious contradictions of Conservative policy.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I was interested recently by the Ekos model that emerged from a poll conducted by the federal government and some of the provincial governments. We have divided Canada's population, not into the traditional, upper, middle and lower class but into five segments, and they used the issue of security as the dividing line—those in our society who felt secure and those who felt insecure.

The top 19 they defined as insiders: senior management, professionals, white, middle aged and well educated, often knowledge workers who felt so secure that they were able to campaign for the reduction of public services.

The second tier, 24 percent, was deemed what they called the secure middle class. They have the second highest incomes, relatively little unemployment, but they have some concern about the future, as it is their children who are falling down the scale.

But that percentage, Madam Deputy Speaker, about 44 percent, are the only ones in this society who feel in any way secure. The rest of the population, the 16 percent, they defined as the insecure middle who are working in industry and who only had a less than average unemployment rate yet still viewed the future with a great sense of insecurity.

Twenty-two percent below that, they argued, were economically distressed, had low education, had low-skilled jobs or were pensioners and viewed the Canadian's future and society in general from a sense of great insecurity.

Most significantly, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I certainly encounter this in my own riding, is the bottom 19 percent who now feel very little connection with the political system, very little connection with government, who have been defined now as outside society. Indeed, that was the term that was given to them by the Ekos survey. Women and youth are overrepresented in this group, and they are a group of people who find very little sense of collective solution to the problems that they face in their daily life.

What is significant here is the scale of the group who are economically insecure. That is new for Canada, it is new for Manitoba, and my guess is that indeed the group is larger in Manitoba. That unstable, insecure society is one that has been created by a decade of Conservative governments in Ottawa and especially by the last six or seven years of the Tory governments of Manitoba.

Canada, the study concluded, is increasingly riven by social class differences, and they are replacing regional and linguistic divisions as the main characteristics of Canadian politics. It is the situation which has been deliberately created, and that is of great concern. The economic polarization that has hit the middle class in recent years seems to be leading to a political polarization as well.

In the long term it does not bode well for a Conservative Party which has been at pains to look after what, and the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister) is correct, Galbraith has called the comfortable majority, a comfortable majority in Canada and Manitoba which is becoming a comfortable minority.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that growing and unequal divide of Manitobans is the second major legacy of the Filmon years. I have spoken of it frequently on other occasions because I see it so starkly in my own constituency. Many of the people of West Broadway are amongst the poorest in the country. They are permanently on the divide of the insecure and the poor. They are

the ones who compose the families in poverty, who increasingly depend upon food banks, whose children start school with a deficit in nutrition and oftentimes continue that through many of their early years. They are the people for whom opportunities that would be inconceivable to their fellow citizens simply do not exist.

I often speak of the great divide in my constituency. Take that walk across the Maryland Bridge as you go from West Broadway into River Heights. Pass the Misericordia Hospital, and what do you see?

On the one side of that boundary, a very short divide, is a community of people who are 90 percent without property in the sense of homes compared to, on the other side of the river, a very large proportion of home-owning property holders. On one side of the river, you have a median income of less than \$15,000 or \$16,000, on the other side of the river, a family income of over \$50,000. It is indeed a tale of two cities, and the striking contrast so close together is one which I often remind both students and others of.

Indeed, Madam Deputy Speaker, in my first speech in the Legislature, I spoke of the difficulties which those constituents faced and which I compared to those in Winnipeg at the turn of the century. What has happened in the last five years is that that gap has become larger in economic terms and in cultural and moral terms. The government snitch lines, a demonizing of the poor and the single mothers, has made that a deeper gulf. It is a gulf which is now harder to speak across.

The voice of the poor has much greater difficulty in reaching that of the rest of us. Now they are called merely an interest group, lumped in with the manufacturers' associations in pursuing their special concerns of adequate food to feed their children, decent housing and some modicum of respect from those with whom they must deal on a daily basis. Those constituents,

like those in Point Douglas, Burrows, Rupertsland, the poorest constituencies in the province, have indeed become outsiders.

Nor is it just their own despair about government. They have become outsiders in their own land and through the actions of others. Those others have redefined the way we envision society. C. Wright Mills said long ago that the power of an elite must be judged by how it frames the issues of public deliberation as well as by the issues it refuses to confront or acknowledge.

In Manitoba we have a political and business elite which does not and will not confront the growing instability and economic inequities. We have an elite who, like the right-wing radicals elsewhere, have chosen to define society by using the common term "taxpayers."

How or when did we all, citizens of Manitoba, become taxpayers? I used to think that we were citizens, that we were all equal, but we have, over the last five or six years, some of us, become taxpayers. Citizens, whether we use that term in the imperialist sense of *civis Romanus sum*, or whether we use it in revolutionary sense of citizen, it meant a democratic sense of equality, that we each share the same relationship to government, that we each share the same sense of local democratic power.

The elites of Tory governments and of business and of multinational corporations have stolen that language. They have appropriated the term "taxpayer" and defined it to mean "those who have some role in the political forum." The elites have redefined us as taxpayers, or should I say they have redefined some of us as taxpayers.

\* (1530)

I have spoken on this a number of times recently and have looked for further discussions of it in some of the recent studies, and the best

description I found came from a book by Plotkin and Sheuerman.

Citizenship, they said, is a public political status. It is indifferent to economic standing. Citizens come from all classes, rich or poor, and from both sides of the Maryland Bridge. They are equal in public gatherings and have a common membership in a community which reflects their mutual interdependence. Citizenship is an inclusive concept, but they said, if it means anything at all, democracy means the power of the people themselves to direct how taxes will be raised and spent without being led around by elites, who regularly urge people to think and care about what elites think they ought to care about. Clearly because democracy threatens concentrated economic power, balanced-budget Conservatives, such as those on the other side of the House, who are stalwart defenders of private economic power, try hard to steer politics away from a focus on equal citizenship, public services or broad common interests.

Politics organized around taxpayer interests is a politics that can immunize private economic power from challenges by publicly oriented economic majorities. A politics that is preoccupied with the role of taxpayers, as though they are not citizens, is a politics that is bound to fracture the link between public spending and the public interest.

The term "taxpayer" continues to carry a very different symbolic meaning than that of equal citizens. The term "taxpayer" highlights the economic relationship between property owners and the government.

In West Broadway, 90 percent do not own property in the formal residential sense. They have become outsiders by definition, when tax defines the political relationship between individual and government.

They pay other taxes to be sure. Everyone does, but the image of taxpayer is that it is a vote

by Tory governments and their friends is not that of the corner store or of the bargain basement or of the sales tax but of the diligent homeowner struggling under the burden of taxation, a burden so recently shifted onto them by federal and provincial tax changes. These are the people whom the Tories now define as the only legitimate voice in the affairs of government: taxpayers, property owners, not citizens.

The government of the new right behaves as though the tax collector is a thief, that welfare is unfair to taxpayers and that its recipients are morally suspect. Honourable members will see, indeed, that the arguments will recognize some of those as the arguments of the Filmon team. They will see that the goal of this government has been to erode the legitimacy of citizen claims to social justice.

Madam Deputy Speaker, such governments are conservative in the most primitive sense. Their role is to keep the social order the way it is by denying government the fiscal or political power to change it.

Language has power. The widespread use and legitimacy that the term "taxpayer" and its substitution for "citizen" has acquired and the consequent loss of the ideal of shared citizenship is an important one for my constituents and also for Manitoba.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I do not think that I am overstating or exaggerating this case. I may be overstating the Tory capacity to articulate their version of social engineering perhaps, but others are clear.

I want to quote from a republican strategist, Lee Atwater. In the 1980 campaign, he said, we were able to make the establishment, insofar as it is bad, the government. In other words, big government was the enemy, not big business. If the people think the problem is that taxes are too high and government interferes too much, then we are doing our job, but if they get to the point where they say the real problem is that rich

people are not paying taxes, then the Democrats are going to be in good shape.

He, of course, underestimated the speed with which that overall sense of the right wing agenda, that conservative thinking, would speed in fact to the Democratic Party, as well. In Canada, too, provincial and federal levels, the people's money is being used to advertise and convince them that it is government that is the problem, that only taxpayers and property owners have and should have a voice in the public affairs of our province.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I think the unstable society, the insecurity that has been created, are one of the major shifts that Manitobans will recognize as a result of this Tory government. I think there is also, equally, a significant shift in the political landscape of the province, one that will leave a permanent mark, that of the taxpayer and not the citizen, and the long-term consequences of which will create outsiders who will no longer just be 19 percent of the population but will gradually become a much higher proportion of our Manitoba population.

I think that the long-term consequences of that are ones which even the Tories will come to regret.

**Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship):** It is a pleasure to have an opportunity to make some comments on the budget. Given the circumstances we find ourselves in, with perhaps little time for further debate on Estimates and some of the wonderful legislation we have brought forward, I will take the time to just say it is also an opportunity to say farewell to some members of this House who, on their own volition, are deciding to pursue other opportunities.

From the Liberal Party, of course, Senator Carstairs has left us in recent months, and I am sure that she will, as a critic of the Senate, over the years, find ample opportunities to be a part of



the reform of the Senate from the inside. Even though it has been a short time since she has left here and been in the Senate, we are not really anticipating those changes to come in our lifetime. I would also say that the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) and the member for Flin Flon, who both are resuming their education careers, we certainly did not agree with them very often and the comments that they made, but I did respect the fact that they did bring some exuberance to the House. I am sure that somewhere they will find an opportunity to continue to make a contribution in the education community.

I also say farewell to a number of people on this side of the House. The member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose), who was elected in 1990, has had a tremendous influence, I think, on our caucus and on the direction that our government has gone in over the last four and a half, five years. We say farewell to him and wish him well in his retirement.

The member for Riel (Mr. Ducharme) is ending a long and very distinguished career as a member of school board, as a member of City Council, and serving quite a number of years here in the Legislature. I think it is understandable to us who have been here for some time that after giving so many years to municipal and school board and provincial politics that we respect that decision to move on to other things.

The member for Morris (Mr. Manness) is also leaving us, and he certainly has been a major factor in government policy and ultimately our ability to bring in a balanced budget and balanced-budget legislation at this time. We know that he will have many opportunities to do other things in the succeeding years, but we certainly pay great respect to him for the leadership he has given our government in the time that I have been a member.

Finally, a dear friend, the member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard), someone who spent an

awful lot of time with me in '88, '89 and '90 and subsequent years in helping a newcomer to the Legislature to understand process and procedure and to give me an opportunity to be involved in some of the activities of the Department of Health at that time. I know that he will be missed by all in this House, and we certainly will carry on without him but with the knowledge that we are on a path that he made a major contribution to setting for us.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the budget, as others have said, is probably the most important policy document that a government brings in. So many other things that government is able to do flow from that budget document, and I am very proud to be part of a government, a cabinet that was able to bring in a balanced budget, a budget that is being recognized around the world, certainly across Canada and in the business community, and most importantly, with constituents. Hardly a day has gone by in recent weeks where when I have time to spend in my constituency that someone has not mentioned to me what a favourable budget this is, and that it is about time that a government has been able to balance the budget by not only dealing with difficult issues but dealing with it on the expenditure side.

\* (1540)

It is so easy in other jurisdictions, I think, to achieve some small steps towards balancing that budget by also raising revenue, and we on this side are so pleased that we have been able to bring about a balanced budget by dealing with the expenditure side and not doing it in one budget but doing it over the last seven budgets.

I certainly want to compliment the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) at this time for bringing in a balanced budget, to the members of Treasury Board and, as I said earlier to the previous Minister of Finance, all who have worked so hard and so diligently to make that a reality. I will get into some of the comments people are making about that at a later time.

There is so much to be proud of in the manner which this was done and so much to be hopeful for for the future even with the difficult decisions that our government has to make, and they are contrasted with budgets and decisions that are made elsewhere in the country. We know that there are other provinces with sales tax rates of 11 percent, 14 percent. We know that there are other provinces near us who have added to their revenue through taxation.

The Province of Saskatchewan, for instance, is taking hundreds of millions of dollars out of the pockets of their taxpayers to bring in a balanced budget. We are pleased that we have been able to do that without increasing taxes, without increasing the sales tax, personal income taxes or corporate taxes or the payroll tax, so this in truth is a true victory over the budget.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we are pleased that we are bringing in a balanced budget with guarantees. There will be a surplus starting in this current year, and that is one year ahead of schedule. We have said for a number of years that we had a plan, that that plan was working, and now we are able to achieve victory over that balanced budget one year ahead of schedule. At the same time, we have tabled legislation which will guarantee balanced budgets and the orderly repayment of the debt and a referendum before increases and major taxes can be contemplated in the future.

Again, many Manitobans have commented on that and have said, here is a government that means what they say, here is a government that is prepared to pass legislation, not only to secure the balanced budget that we have now, but to secure balanced budgets for the future and, over a period of 30 years, to pay that off.

It is no small task to have a tax freeze anywhere in Canada, and now this is our eighth consecutive budget with that tax freeze, no increase in any of our major taxes. You only have to talk to business people across Manitoba, to ordinary Manitobans, to see that they are now

enjoying the benefits of those difficult decisions that were made up to eight budgets ago.

I would say that we have done this and at the same time been able to maintain our social programs, that our spending on health care, our spending on education and our spending on family services has been maintained and in fact has grown dramatically since 1988.

I know that the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) has frequently talked about health care using the words "reduction" and "cutback," and I would ask him to be honest with the people, to reflect the major resources that we have put into health care since 1988. Half a billion dollars more is being spent in health care now than was spent in 1988. I know that he very skilfully likes to read from reports with little yellow stickies on them indicating that there have been changes that are destructive to health care in Manitoba.

I can tell you that we have made those changes, that renewal of health care, that reform of health care, in a very compassionate and sensible way. One only has to witness what has happened in other provinces: in Saskatchewan where 52 rural hospitals are closed; in B.C. where a major Vancouver hospital is closed; in Ontario where thousands and thousands of beds have been closed; in the Maritimes under Liberal governments where again they have taken a broad axe to health care spending.

In Manitoba we are spending more, we are spending it smarter and the renewal of health care is coming along very nicely. At the same time, we are providing more than adequate funds in education and, at the same time, bringing about change and renewal in the education system in Manitoba, changes that are going forward across North America in many instances. Yet, we hear, particularly from the NDP and to some extent from the Liberals, the only change, the only reform they can envisage is one where you spend lots more money. We on this side know and believe very sincerely that reform and renewal can take place without us

spending hundreds of millions of dollars more within education.

The final area I would touch on in the social programs is in family services. This government has poured again hundreds of millions of dollars into the social safety net for Manitobans who are less fortunate than ourselves. We have also put new resources into daycare, substantial new resources. We have put new resources into women's shelters. We have done this again by maintaining our priorities in health, education and family services. We have a very proud record in our expenditures in those areas.

I might just spend a few minutes contrasting our budget with the recent federal budget that came down. I am reminded of an editorial in the Brandon Sun recently which asked: Where were the 12 Manitoba members of Parliament during the budget discussions, particularly as it relates to the Crow rate. Most Manitobans, most farmers knew that there was going to have to be an adjustment in the grain transportation system. Charlie Mayer, when he was Minister of Agriculture, talked about a transition period of five or six or seven years, talked about resources of around \$7 billion to make the structural changes that needed to take place within agriculture on the prairies.

The Brandon Sun editorial very clearly states that the 98 members of Parliament from Ontario had their way. This was cut. There is no transition funding, and there is not enough funding to make the changes that need to take place within agriculture, particularly in western Manitoba where we do have a couple of members of Parliament who are members of the government. They have not only been silent, but they have been in hiding the last little while. They have not spoken out on the grain transportation subsidy at all.

I might also mention that we on this side are pleased that the federal government at least has it in their mind that they have to make change, that they have to reduce expenditures, but we

want a sense of fairness in the decisions that they make. That lack of fairness is also evident in the military cuts that are going to be pending here in Manitoba, some 800 to 1,000 jobs here at Air Command and related activities in Winnipeg, 285, perhaps more jobs, in Shilo.

There is a sense that there is a lack of fairness in the way these military decisions were made, that decisions made in Alberta were simply to move one base from Calgary and move the complement to Edmonton. Small changes in the complements in Quebec were highlighted as if they were having a great impact from the budget.

The most sinister part of this federal budget as it relates to Shilo is that there was no mention of it, that it was some days later that the information about Shilo started to leak out from sources outside the province of Manitoba. When attempts were made to find the local member of Parliament, the member for Brandon-Souris, he was not in town. His office did not know where he was. It turns out he was at the Winter Games out in Alberta. I am sure there were important things going on there, but I can tell you there was nothing so important as the decisions that the federal government was making within his own constituency, within the community of Shilo.

\* (1550)

Shilo is the greatest economic engine in western Manitoba, providing hundreds and hundreds of jobs. Again, all we are asking for is some sense of fairness in the way Shilo is treated. It has, even to this date, been impossible to get a meeting with the Minister of Defence. It has been impossible to get an accurate view of what is happening at Shilo. It has been impossible to get any information about these decisions.

I can tell you that the Liberal Party should be taking a little more serious role in this. Their absence at the committee meeting, the all-party meeting in Brandon, was noted that they sent no

representatives there to deal with the Shilo issue. One is led to conclude that maybe they really do not care about it. So there is a tremendous contrast that we have been able to deal with our budgetary issues by dealing with the expenditure side and to deal with it fairly and rationally.

Whereas other governments are raising revenue, again the federal government in their budget could not resist that temptation to add to the gasoline taxes here in Manitoba. This truly will have an impact on the transportation industry in Manitoba.

Much has been said about our balanced budget and our balanced-budget legislation. I will get into some of those quotations later. It has been very positive. People all over the country are recognizing how positive an initiative this is.

I am a little disconcerted by the fact that opposition parties, when we talked about this in December, were totally opposed to it. They were opposed to balanced budgets, and they were opposed to legislation. The only thing they would say is, let us see the legislation. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, now they have seen the legislation and they have yet even to make comment on the principle of balanced budgets.

The Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Edwards) says, yes, he believes in a balanced budget, perhaps, once every four years but do not include capital expenditures. The deputy leader, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), is giving me the thumbs-out sign. I knew that he was also a proponent of balanced budgets only once every four years, that he did not want to include capital in those budgets and he did not want to include the servicing of the debts.

So the Liberal view, the Liberal mentality of a balanced budget is to take major expenditure out of the budget and then once every four years perhaps balancing it. The member for Inkster, I am glad he supports his Leader. I am glad that the Liberals are of one mind on this, because it is

going to be a very interesting issue as we get into other events later this spring.

The members of the New Democrats, of course, are very loath to talk about balanced budget. In fact, their writer in the Winnipeg Free Press—and I forget her name now—but she is the only one who could write an article with a headline saying a balanced budget is a bad thing. But after listening to the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) I believe she could have written that article—[interjection] Well, as my colleague says maybe she did. To them, a balanced budget is not a good thing. There is a feeling that they can continue to drive up the debt and the deficit and that for some reason this does not have to be repaid, that we owe this debt to ourselves and by some miracle at some point it will disappear.

Well, all governments across Canada—and I would cite particularly Saskatchewan—have recognized that deficit and debt is something we can no longer tolerate even though New Democrats in Manitoba still feel that we could spend, spend, spend and tax some more and it does not matter. Their colleagues who are in government in other parts of Canada have a different view of things, and I am surprised that the Manitoba New Democrats still stand by that old adage that they can continue to spend and continue to tax.

We know that in the 1980s when revenues were 15, 17, 18 percent, they still managed to spend more money every year than they took in. I can tell you that if revenues had been at that level, we would have had balanced budgets in the late '80s and early '90s since we took government in this province.

I might also just add that in this time of restraint, in this time of making tough decisions, as the Minister of Culture I am pleased that we have been able to maintain our support for the major arts organizations here in Manitoba even though the federal government is cutting back substantially on the grants that they give to the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and the Winnipeg

Symphony. Even though the City of Winnipeg has done the same, this government from the Province of Manitoba has been consistent in maintaining that support for the arts, and I can tell you that people in the arts are very appreciative of that.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I might just take a few minutes to quote some of the comments that are being made by great Canadians in Manitoba and across the country and members of the media.

Close to home of course, Mayor Borotsik, in Brandon, who was here for the budget, was quoted as saying: Taxpayers in the community are going to benefit from it. Here is a very intelligent and shrewd mayor of a city in western Manitoba who recognizes the need to contain expenditures and to work within a balanced budget. He goes on to say: I can honestly say, I cannot think of anything that is negative about this particular budget.

It is going to be interesting to see with this vast acclaim of our budget how the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) and his party vote on this and how the New Democrats vote on this. I know that they may find some creative ways of saying nay to this budget, but I can tell you, they do so at their own expense.

Another great Manitoban from Brandon, John Burgess, the president of the Brandon Chamber of Commerce, says: By reducing interest costs, by balancing the budget we not only save money for social services now but more importantly in the future, and that is a benefit for all Manitobans. Here is a member of the chamber in western Manitoba who recognizes that our expenditures on social services have been maintained. As I indicated earlier, our expenditures in those three areas of health, education and family services have been maintained.

I might just digress a moment to say that we do have some concerns about what the federal

government might do here with the safety net program. The federal government has always had a responsibility to flow funds to provinces for families, flow funds for higher education and flow funds for health care. A former member of this Legislature who is the lead political member for the Liberal Party in Manitoba was in charge of looking at the safety net and talked about making major changes in the safety net in Canada. I understand now that those plans that were the product of many months of consultation have been shelved and in fact expenditures that they were going to make on daycare and other things have disappeared.

Following that of course, the Prime Minister, in his musing about health care, has indicated that the support for all of the tenets of health care are there but Canadians are going to have to get used to having a scaled-down version of health care. While he has not really articulated that, he is saying he thinks that health care should only be paid for by government when there are catastrophic circumstances.

I have not heard anyone suggest in any province in Canada more fundamental changes to health care than the Prime Minister is making in some of the musings that have come forth in the last little while.

At any rate, to continue with some of these comments made by others, John Granelli, from the Winnipeg Chamber: We now have a sound, reasoned sustainable program for fiscal responsibility. Well done.

This has been the trademark of our government and our budgeting for the last eight years. It has been sound. It has been reasoned. It has provided fiscal responsibility in Manitoba, something that was sadly lacking in the past.

We, of course, are always dependent and curious and hopeful that some of the bond rating agencies will understand the budgeting that is happening in Manitoba and make comment on it. I notice a spokesperson from Standard and

Poor's says, I think that it sends out a very positive signal. I think for investors, the government's commitment to reducing deficits without relying on tax increases is a very positive signal. This is the same signal that we have been sending for eight years, that we have to make the changes. We have to change the direction of this province, not by adding more taxes, but by working on the expenditure side. It is wonderful to see people from other parts of the world recognize the changes that have taken place.

\* (1600)

A couple of comments from agriculture. Alan Ransome, who is the past president of Keystone Agricultural Producers, said, the province's new budget is being given quick endorsement by his organization. Here is a grassroots agricultural organization in Manitoba which is very, very close to politics in many ways, which reads the budget and the budget documents and the direction that government is going on their budget, which gives great praise for this balanced budget, another sector of the economy making that recognition.

I would also like to read another quote from someone in the agricultural area, a James Bezan, Manitoba Cattle Producers' Association. He is their CEO. He says, I think the important thing here is, they are trying to get the debt under control, and they are committed to that. I think that is something the farm community will be fairly supportive about.

I know that Liberal members here do not have any relationship with the farm community at all, but I can tell you that the agricultural spokesman for the Liberals should be in contact with people like the Cattle Producers' and KAP to get a better understanding of their thoughts on the budget. If he does so, he may want to vote for it this evening because—[interjection] Well, he is saying, even though he supports the producers, he is against the budget even though they are for it.

You know, it is important that we also, as I said earlier, listen to our own constituents. I can tell you, it has been unanimous in the constituents that I have talked to at bonspiels and hockey tournaments and community events in the last number of days and weeks, they are proud that Manitoba has balanced a budget. They are proud that they have done it without adding new taxes, and they are very, very supportive of it. I know that if the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), soon to be the former member for Dauphin, would get out to his constituency once in a while, he would hear the same thing, that citizens who used to vote for him would be saying.

Probably it is important also that even unidentified citizens who do not hold a title, who do not hold an office, who were involved with just on-the-street comment, were saying—this was on MTN TV: I am glad they are balancing the budget. It is something that definitely has to be done—again recognition by the ordinary citizen, by the average citizen, that the government has brought down a budget which is acceptable, which sets a direction that people are very much in favour of.

The Manitoba Chamber of Commerce is very pleased with the budget. This is from their president echoing the comments made by the president of the Brandon Chamber.

Let me perhaps move to a person who is involved with the Manitoba Taxpayers Association, a person by the name of Peter Holle. Members of the Liberals, particularly, groan because they, I think, do not have any feeling for the number of people who are represented by this spokesperson, people from across the province who make small contributions that enables them to open an office and to pay two or three staff to represent the Manitoba taxpayer.

I can tell you that is the disdain that the Liberals have for the taxpayer. That is the disdain that they have for the average Manitoban

when they want to disregard what the taxpayer is saying and to guffaw when I mention the Manitoba Taxpayers Association. These people very much have their finger on the pulse of Manitoba. They speak for the average citizen. They speak for the Manitoba taxpayer, and I am very pleased that they have come out so strongly in favour, not only of the budget but also of the legislation that has been proposed.

He states in his article: The response from the silent majority who bear the burden of big deficits, debts and taxes is relief and quiet approval. Those are what real Manitobans are saying about the budget and budget legislation. I would advise the members of the Liberal Party to take heed to what taxpayers are saying and not guffaw when Peter Holle and others speak on behalf of taxpayers.

This, of course, is, he goes on to say, the first balanced budget in 23 years. I think that it is important that members recognize, as Mr. Holle has, that this is quite an achievement, that it was accomplished the hard way through expenditure restraint instead of more taxes. He uses Manitoba as the example of doing it the right way.

Then he goes on to talk about Saskatchewan. He says: Unlike Saskatchewan which balanced its budget by hiking taxes by \$4,500 per family since 1991, the Filmon government has doggedly controlled its spending while leaving tax rates alone. [interjections]

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Manitoba's family tax burden is now among the lowest in Canada.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I am experiencing difficulty hearing the honourable Minister of Culture.

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** I thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, because I know that you want to hear these comments, because I know that you

support a balanced budget. I know that the Liberal Party and the NDP party are not supportive of this budget and probably will demonstrate it later today. They are not supportive of balanced-budget legislation. They are afraid to get up and say that. They are reluctant to talk about the principle of a balanced budget. They are reluctant to put their thoughts on the record.

I would say that this is an opportunity for them here today, before we vote on the budget, to make their comments on the legislation and, you know, give their thoughts on that.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am nearing the conclusion of my comments with, again, an article in the paper today by a staff writer for the Winnipeg Free Press, one Fred Cleverley, who, I think, originally came from a small community in western Manitoba. He talks in favour of the balanced budget and he talks in favour of the balanced-budget legislation, and he makes the comment that some politicians are willing to trust us, the people, instead of insisting that we trust them. He has caught a very important aspect of this legislation, and that is to give the people of Manitoba an opportunity, in referendum or plebiscite, to make comment, to give approval before we change the payroll tax, the sales tax, the income tax, and I am not sure why people across the way are so nervous about that.

I think the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) might want to support this. I think it means that he would be somewhat handcuffed when he puts forth that tax-and-spend mentality. So I compliment Mr. Cleverley on bringing up some aspects of this budget that perhaps have not been highlighted by other columnists, particularly from that particular newspaper.

He goes on to say the budget and the legislation are reasonable. He goes on to say that there is the ability, that there may be exceptions if there is some sort of catastrophe, and he recognizes the same as Mr. Holle did, that

budgets will have to be balanced by adjusting expenditures to fit revenues. This is a new concept, I know, for the members of the Manitoba NDP, to make the expenditures fit the revenue. They always tried to adjust the revenue to fit their expenditures and were never able to do it and now are reluctant to support legislation which would make that mandatory.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I think at this time that I will conclude my remarks by saying that I am going to join some of the great Manitobans that I have quoted from here today in supporting this budget, and I would urge all members of this House to do so.

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** Madam Deputy Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak in yet another Budget Debate. I will speak in very significant terms in a few minutes in terms of where this budget stands in political history, certainly as I see it and many others see this budget.

I do want to begin by indicating that no matter what happens shall we say 36 days from now or whatever number of days from now, it is going to be a landmark.

\* (1610)

The bottom line is, I think we should all pay tribute to those members who are going to be departing from public life, certainly in this forum. There are a number of members who know they are going to be departing. There may be some members, Madam Deputy Speaker, who do not know. So my comments are addressed to both. I do not think anyone in this House should ever take anything for granted, given the great changes that we have seen politically the last number of years. I take the federal election as an example and many provincial elections where we have seen dramatic changes.

So I would like to suggest that we all be a little bit careful when we talk about members

departing this House, but I did want to pay tribute to a number of members.

I think it is important, Madam Deputy Speaker, to point to the fact that in a lot of cases I really believe that, all partisan politics aside, a lot of what is done by members of the Legislature is often not recognized. I say that having had the opportunity to sit in government, to sit as a government backbencher and having had the opportunity to be in opposition and, in fact, rather interestingly, I have had the chance in my political career to spend half the time in government and half the time in opposition.

I would say, it is an interesting experience, because I found some of the comments from the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose) very interesting when he talked about the perspective of the back bench. I found certainly in government back bench, what often happens is, the contributions that members make within their caucus are often not recognized publicly, but it is often significant. Often someone who may not get the profile, say, of a cabinet minister in terms of the media often contributes, I would say, just as much, because I know from personal experience, having sat in a government caucus, that that is the case. I certainly welcomed his comments and wish him well in the future.

I want to make some reference too to some other members who are going to be departing. I want to say, too, and I do not mean this to be too critical, because in the spirit I am saying it, I really do not mean it as an attack on the Deputy Premier, but I thought he was rather unfortunate in his choice of words the other day when he was referring to a number of our members who were departing as if they had no longer anything to contribute in this House, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I would suggest, there is not one person who is retiring this election, intended or unintended, who is going to sit back, kick off their shoes and do absolutely nothing in terms of public affairs for the rest of their life. I cannot believe the



member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose), the member for Riel (Mr. Ducharme), the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness), the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Orchard), the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) or the members who have already departed are going to not contribute to public life. I do not believe that is the case. I think it is important to mark their departure from this arena by indicating that they will contribute.

I look to the member for Riel. I thought he gave some very good comments. He has been involved in various levels of public life and, I think, has certainly been a credit to his area of the province and certainly deserves recognition for that.

The Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Orchard), Madam Deputy Speaker, I am always careful when I talk about the Minister of Energy and Mines because, quite frankly, we have not agreed either on policies or even approach. I will put it this way, in the same way that Tie Domi is a key part of the Winnipeg Jets, I think probably it would be fair to say that the Minister of Energy and Mines is a key part of the Conservative caucus. In fact, he certainly shares some of the characteristics in terms of Tie Domi in his approach to politics. The one thing that I do appreciate with the Minister of Energy and Mines is you know where he stands. Boy, do you know where he stands. I get the feeling while he may not be sitting in the corner seat on a regular basis in Question Period heckling the opposition of the day or the government as he was doing when he was in opposition, I get the feeling he is going to be in some way, shape or form contributing and we will be hearing from that member.

I cannot leave out, of course, the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) because I was elected—

**An Honourable Member:** Wayne Gretzky.

**Mr. Ashton:** No, Tie Domi. I do not think the member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) would ever be eligible for the Lady Byng award of politics.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to say a few words of tribute to the Minister of Education, who was elected the same time I was. I sat with the member, and once again, I think politically we have agreed maybe once or twice in the ensuing years since we were elected. The issues escape me currently, but I had the unique opportunity, apart from debating economic policy back and forth as I have over the years with the member for Morris, I have had the opportunity to work also as House leader, and I can say he is a very honourable individual. He says what he means and means what he says, and I do not think that is going to change outside of public life. I found that to be a tremendous asset when I was working with him as House leader.

When I happened to be in the city the day on which he announced his retirement from politics, I took the opportunity to wish my best to him personally, and I say that here today. He has been a credit to this Legislature. I wish him well in the future and, by the way, I think we will be hearing from him as well, too. I do not think he is finished with—he may not even be finished with public life either, but we will see on that.

I want to talk too about some of the members of my own caucus, one of whom has departed, the member for Flin Flon. It was interesting, he was back here just a couple of days ago sitting in the loge. I was elected in 1981 with the former member for Flin Flon, and we have shared many a long hour on buses, trains, planes, pretty well every form of conveyance you could imagine.

**An Honourable Member:** Bicycles.

**Mr. Ashton:** Not bicycles, that is the only thing we have not done, Madam Deputy Speaker. I consider him a real friend. He was a great colleague to work with. It is interesting, now he is gone from travelling around the North in one form to travelling around the North in another. [interjection] He has been on 391. He has been on pretty well every road in the North. I found once again, you know, the kind of times you share with a colleague. We went through some

good times politically and some tough times politically, and it was always a pleasure to work with him.

I also want to pay particular tribute to the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), because another class of the '81 alumni—and when the member for Dauphin announced his retirement I thought my wife summed it up the best when she said, one of the nice guys. Because he has been one of the people that has been the binding spirit of our caucus, and I am going to miss his involvement in public life, certainly at this level. I am sure he is going to contribute a lot in the future. You know, I emphasize that, because the member for Dauphin—I think everyone that I have mentioned—is certainly going to contribute. I think the member for Dauphin for personal reasons has decided perhaps, given the family circumstances and the challenges of returning to the teaching career, that now is the time to make the departure. [interjection]

Well, we are getting some more hockey comparisons here as well, but certainly I will miss—in fact, what I find almost scary in a way, Madam Deputy Speaker, is the change that has taken place in this Legislature over the last number of years, the many fine people that have moved on, some voluntarily, and, as I said, some involuntarily. I, quite frankly, cannot imagine what it is going to be like without the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) and some of the other members I have mentioned, the member for Flin Flon, in certain terms of our caucus or even this Chamber because I think the character will change even just with the departure of those that I have mentioned.

I really want to wish the member for Dauphin well. He will be speaking later, I am sure very eloquently, in terms of his comments on this place. I have, by the way, appreciated a number of the comments that have been made by some of the departing members, because I think that is sometimes, unfortunately, the time at which the focus is placed best on what is good about this place, what is good about public life.

You know, Madam Deputy Speaker, over the years I see one of the most unfortunate things is the fact that it is becoming tougher and tougher, I think, to attract people to public life because of some of the cynicism about politics and politicians, and, by the way, some of which is imported from the United States. I do not think it is something that really reflects the experience here in Canada. I think that is unfortunate.

I think it is time that people who are interested in public life, regardless of their political persuasions, stood up and said, as I have said publicly, that I have been very pleased with the time that I have been able to represent the constituents of Thompson, and I look forward to representing them as long as they see fit, as any member in this House does.

You know, I think it is about time that we said something positive for public life, for representing people, for politics, the political process, because, quite frankly, without politics, without political parties and without the political process we would not have the democracy, the quality of life that we have in this country today. I think it is important to recognize that. We too often, perhaps even ourselves, dwell on the more cynical aspects of politics, and it is about time we said, as we do when people depart this place but also on a regular basis, that the political process is important.

I want to talk today about politics in a broader sweep, because I do not believe as we enter this Budget Debate we can strictly talk about this particular budget, Madam Deputy Speaker. I think we have got to go somewhat beyond that, because we are dealing with a political era, and as someone once said, a week is a long time in politics. This government has been in now for seven years. We can look at that era, that seven-year period. We can look at the previous seven years. We can look over, say, the last 25, 30, 35 years in Manitoba politics and, I think, put this budget into context.

\* (1620)

I found that interesting, because as we go into the next period of time with the election obviously imminent, sometime in the next few hours, days, whatever, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is interesting how each person that has contributed in this debate tends to put their own, sort of, interpretation on the events.

I found the Minister of Energy and Mines' (Mr. Orchard) interpretation to be particularly interesting, because he entered this House in 1977. What I found interesting was his sort of argument was to suggest that he was elected to deal with budgets, deficits, restraint and that somehow now in 1995 that is happening, and that he is happy to leave politics with that particular thing happening.

But what I find interesting is, in a way, history is repeating itself, because that member was elected in 1977, and indeed the Sterling Lyon government was involved with some massive restraint in this province at the time and very early on achieved the reputation for being mean-spirited and being interested largely in perks.

Around 1980-81, the time that the member talked about when he entered cabinet, they tried to shift course. In fact, what was interesting is in the 1980-81 budget they had record increases in MGEA contract salaries; they had record increases in a number of areas. After cutting significantly for a number of years they went and turned 180 degrees and they started trying to buy their way out of the political difficulties they were in—the deficit. The deficit at the time was running close to \$300 million in 1981. In fact, we were leading the country into the recession at the time. So they did not either balance the budget and they did not really achieve many of the goals they set out.

Well, the 1981 to '88 period we went through some difficult times, in '82, '83, '84, the recession that took place at the time. But you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, by the time we hit 1986-87 we were dealing with Limestone being

a reality. We had record growth in terms of jobs at that particular point in time. What I find interesting, when once again members have tried to rewrite history, is that by the time 1988 came around and the deficit, we dealt with it at that time, you know, the last balanced budget. Whether you want to give credit to the previous NDP government that had basically set up the initial budget—[interjection] Well, I am going to deal with that.

I want to say to the Minister of Highways (Mr. Findlay), because all the Conservative government that basically came into office sat there, having criticized pretty well everything in the budget, and basically kept most of it in place. The interesting thing, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the Conservatives try and do is, they try and talk about the predicted number for that year.

You know, the predicted number for that year would not have been for a surplus, but it was because of some of the changes that took place, some of the changes, the mining industry that—this is not my word that you have to take for it. All you have to do is look at the word of the Provincial Auditor, and the Provincial Auditor has made it very clear that there was a surplus in the 1988-89 fiscal year.

Look at what the Conservatives did next, because I want you to look—

**An Honourable Member:** You tabled two budgets.

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, you see, the Minister of Highways (Mr. Findlay)—and I know he knows better than this because what the Conservatives then do—Madam Deputy Speaker, if you want to go on their budgeted numbers, it is a tale of two governments because, if you take from '88-89 through to this year, this government in office has, I think, maybe, in one year, been close to its predictions. But, you know, in the other years, was it off by \$5 million or \$10 million? Was it off by \$20 million or \$30 million from its projected deficits? They were off by as much as

\$290 million. Look at the statistics, the figures for the 1991-92 fiscal year.

You know, I even wonder what is going to happen in terms of this particular budget, because who can believe this government when it comes to financial projections? They have been wrong each and every year, bar maybe one. So we are dealing with six out of seven years they have been wrong, Madam Deputy Speaker. You can see the difficulty.

If they want to cling to this fantasy world of projected numbers, I would remind them to look at what happened in Saskatchewan, because the Saskatchewan NDP, you should look at the \$1 billion deficit that they inherited. Guess what, the Saskatchewan NDP government, the budget that the Conservatives ran on, was closer to \$300-million deficit. The deficit ballooned by approximately \$700 million over what was projected.

I just hope that whoever forms government after the next election does not inherit that kind of situation because, no matter how this government tries to rewrite history, to bring in, Madam Deputy Speaker, what I would call the big lie of politics, if you repeat it often enough, people are going to believe it.

The last balanced budget in this province was not 1973, the Schreyer government, it was '88-89. That was the last balanced budget in this province, basically the budget of Eugene Kostyra.

Fine, the Conservatives were elected; they introduced basically the same budget. But that was the last balanced budget, and in fact, if you look at the record of the NDP government from '81 to '88, what it did, it made a conscious effort to emphasize job creation during the economic downturn, severe economic downturn of '82, '83, '84, and reduced the deficit as one would expect when times got better, when Limestone started, when there was significant employment, and in fact the numbers support that, Madam Deputy

Speaker. So, when you are looking at where this government stands today, I think you have to take it, first of all, with a grain of salt what they are talking about in terms of the historical background towards this budget.

Let us go one step further, Madam Deputy Speaker, because I think it is important with this government to recognize what it did this year. Since this government has been in office, since 1990, where has been the single largest growth in terms of revenue in this province? Has it been from income taxes or retail sales taxes because the economy is booming? Has it been from the payroll tax because companies are hiring more employees?

Madam Deputy Speaker, the single largest increase has been in terms of gambling revenue. They have increased gambling by, on an annual basis, \$160 million a year. Gambling alone—and I find it interesting that members get defensive. They say it is only 4 percent of our revenue but, you know, the increase from 1991 to this current point in time, it has been 50 percent of an increase in its revenue.

Well, we have the highest per capita level of VLTs in the province, but let us look at what they did this time around to bring in this so-called balanced budget.

On an annualized basis, this government would have still failed to bring in a balanced budget. What it had to do was, take the sales, the proceeds from last year at Manitoba Mineral Resources and A.E. McKenzie, put that into this year. They also took all of the \$150 million or so which is in their lottery reserve account, and they dumped that into this year.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it was interesting, because I was talking to someone recently, and reference came up to a community club, and I think what probably is the best analogy to what this government has done. Imagine for a moment that you are on the board of a community club or perhaps even, say, the

Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, which is running a deficit. I find that interesting.

You know, what the Conservative government is doing to try and deal with the fiscal situation in this province is akin to the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce going to its board members and saying, empty out your savings account, dump it in this year's budget, and we will not look like we have a deficit.

The fact is, Madam Deputy Speaker, that this government has brought in a budget that is based on Lotteries revenues. I find it interesting, because the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) talked about not robbing children of their future inheritance and, indeed, I found that an interesting comment, because what this government has done is, through its own addiction to gambling, it is robbing kids. Let us not kid ourselves. There are kids who are going hungry in this province. There are families that are breaking up, marriages that are breaking up because of gambling addiction.

You know, Madam Deputy Speaker, I really find it unfortunate that we are at the point where we have had a wholesale increase in gambling with not one iota of a public review that the government had the cynicism to appoint a review going into an election that will not even report till after the next election.

\* (1630)

It has not even called the Lotteries committee into this Legislature for close to two years now. That is how ashamed they are, embarrassed they are in terms of VLTs.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, that is the one side of the equation, the fiscal bottom line. Let us look at some of the other aspects of this budget and where we sit, because I think it is important. I am going to put this in direct context, Madam Deputy Speaker, because let us look at what is happening to the services Manitobans expect from this provincial government.

Start with health care. This government has cut health care. Do not let them kid you. It has cut health care; it cut the hospital budget by 2 percent. It has taken about \$65 million out of the health care budget. I know that from personal experience, because in my own community we used to have a hundred beds at the Thompson General Hospital.

I recognize that beds are not the only parameter one has to use to judge how a government is doing, but the interesting thing, Madam Deputy Speaker, is we are already reduced to 85 and that has had an impact on the quality of patient care.

This government now has brought in supposed rural hospital guidelines that are going to reduce it once again. In the case of Thompson, we could lose upwards of 20 nursing positions, a similar number in Flin Flon, a similar number in The Pas.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) likes to say that there was consultation on the process, but I have talked to people who were part of that supposed consultation, someone who sat on the main steering committee who called it a farce. The government allowed no comparison with other rural facilities, urban facilities. It allowed no unique indication of the situation in northern Manitoba. I will give you one statistic. Thirty-six percent of the deliveries of the Thompson General Hospital are high risk. We have the highest morbidity rate in the province. It is not reflected in the kind of guidelines that were brought in.

Madam Deputy Speaker, a constituent of mine whom I talked to recently, Shirley Ann, who just had an experience with the hospital, in this case in Flin Flon, said very clearly—and I will not quote in detail, because I thought it was very interesting what she said—where she saw the difficulties the nurses were faced in the Flin Flon Hospital. She talked about the lack of proper staffing now, because some of the cuts had

already taken place. She said if this is true now, think what might happen if further staffing cuts are made. It is too scary to think about. End of quotation. That is the real concern with health care in this province.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I will go one step further because I already believe that if this government were to get re-elected with a majority and God forbid—and I do not think it is going to happen—but you know I think it would be Alberta. They have been sort of the Alberta light, Ralph Klein in training here. The bottom line is Alberta light, given the election is going to be Alberta triple X, because you can see the constant attack that is taking place on those most basic services, such as our health care service.

Is it just health care we should be concerned about, Madam Deputy Speaker? Well, let us look at our school system. Once again, I know in my own community both of my kids are in the Thompson school system. In fact, they are here today thanks to the Filmon Fridays which have been loaded all into one week extra as spring break. I guess it is one of the more positive sides of them not having the week at school. But they know themselves this government has cut 10 percent from the school system in Thompson in the last three years. It has cut 4.3 percent of the entire province. So we are the hardest hit school district in the province.

It is going to impact. It is already impacting on the kind of programs that my kids see in their school. They do not go to a private school. They go to a public school in Thompson. You know what? I think it is about time we said something positive for our public school system because I am a graduate of R. D. Parker Collegiate in Thompson. I believe I got a good education. But it is a heck of a lot better today. When I look at the kind of programming and opportunities my kids can have, it is tremendous in terms of that potential opportunity.

It disturbs me because there has been mention of the taxpayers association. They wrote an

article. It was in the local paper. [interjection] No, this one is not on the budget. It is on education. I think even the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer) might have some difficulty with this, because I know his concern about educational issues and background and education. They got up and basically said, well, we are spending more on education than we did in 1971. Then they turned around, basically their bottom line was, they were saying, we were better off in 1971 than we are in today, education.

Now, I do not even know if members opposite would say that, but I can be a good benchmark on this, Madam Deputy Speaker, because I graduated from R.D. Parker Collegiate in Thompson in 1972, one year difference. I can tell you, when I graduated, I did not have the technovocational addition which we built in the 1980s. Maureen Hemphill was Minister of Education. There was none of that opportunity available.

Computers—I mean a computer was a calculator, you know, a slide rule. We did not expect our kids to become computer literate. In terms of some of the life skills training that is available now in Thompson, through Home Ec and Industrial Arts, I mean, Home Ec, when I graduated, was something that only one gender followed. It was considered sort of a dead-end type of area that prepared one for staying at home. Right now, my daughter is in Grade 7. She takes Home Ec. Everybody takes Home Ec. It is a very important part of learning life skills.

Talk about preventative health, she has brought back some of the material that they are learning about in Grade 7, and I am learning things. I mean, you learn things continuously. Those things did not exist in 1972.

I could talk about the music program. We have got one of the best band programs in Canada right in R.D. Parker Collegiate. I mean, I could run through all the things that have happened and teachers that we expect so much

more from. I had some good teachers, some of whom are still there in Thompson today. But we expect so much more from our education system today.

I think it is important to put that into context because, when the taxpayers' federation, for whom it represents or what it represents, says, we should roll back the clock to 1971, they are wrong. I think we should make a clear stand for a public education system. I think it is about time we said that one of the things that makes Canada what it is, is our public education system.

I was disturbed when the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) had the opportunity to do a little bit of congratulatory speaking about our public education system when we did well in some of the testing that had taken place nationally. The minister said it was not good enough. I can appreciate that. It is never good enough. But, you know, Manitoba does fairly well in comparison to a lot of other school areas. As a country, we like to crow about being the No. 1 country according to the U.N., according to the quality of life. Why? The bottom line is because of education.

Now you can argue, we can spend this better or we could do that better, and we can get into that debate, but the main reason we are No. 1, according to the United Nations, is because of a balance of factors and including our commitment to public education. So let us start being more positive about some of the good things about our education system.

That is why I think this is going to be such an important issue in the next election. I have seen first-hand in Thompson the impact, some of the cuts that are taking place because of a 10 percent decrease in spending. In many ways, I think, once again, we have become a guinea pig in the North for this Alberta-style fiscal approach.

I have heard the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) in this House and I have heard the

previous Minister of Education say that money does not matter when it comes to the school system. I do not often do this, but I remember when the Liberal Leader, Sharon Carstairs, got up, and this one time I certainly agreed with her on an issue when she said, you know, you cannot say that. Why do private schools charge upwards of \$9,000 for tuition? If money did not matter, they would not charge a cent.

The fact is that money is not everything. If you buy into this idea that you cannot have proper funding, a funding commitment to the public school system, and maintain education quality and improve it, you are wrong. I think the Minister of Education, who I respect as an individual, is dead wrong when he brings in the New Directions: The Action Plan and expects school districts that have faced a 4.3 percent cut in funding at a time when inflation is around 5.2 percent—that is a real cut of approximately 9 percent in the space of three years. You cannot expect school districts to be cutting on the one hand and bringing in whatever your version of stances are.

By the way, I think the New Directions policy brought in by this government—and I am not criticizing everything that is in it, but I think it is an attempt in itself to roll back the clock to the 1950s style of schooling. I think it is not in keeping with what the people of Manitoba want. In fact, I believe that Manitobans do want the basics. Basics have changed. Basics now include being computer literate. It includes being able to keep up with the rapidly changing aspects of society.

\* (1640)

I will predict, Madam Deputy Speaker, I believe that education is going to be an important issue in this election, along with health, in a way that it has not been for many years. Often in elections, if you ask people, they will say health is an issue, education is an issue. When it really comes down to it, in many elections they will say that, but it will not necessarily play a key

role in deciding who they are going to support in the election.

I believe in this case it will. If the people support a Conservative vision of education, they should go and vote for it. If they believe what is happening in our school system because of the reduction of spending, the offloading onto the property tax is positive, they should vote for it. I have told people that in Thompson.

If they believe a 10 percent cut to one school district bigger than anywhere else in the province is a positive thing, they should vote for it. If they are concerned about public education, I think they should be looking very seriously how they vote in the upcoming election.

I have talked about health. I am talking about education. I want to go and deal with the economic situation as well, because we are living in a time where once again—I go back to what the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Orchard) said when he tried to suggest that somehow everybody was doing what he had been talking about in 1977. That is wrong. Let us not lose sight of the fact that there are very significant differences, particularly in the area of economic policy.

I could make comments about the economic policy of this government. I have talked to many people who say that the government has been more interested in self-promotion than it has been in terms of job creation.

What is interesting is, with my kids here they might understand this. When I saw the most recent publication from Rural Development put out by the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), I mean we are getting to the point now where the next version of the document on economic development—I do not know if anybody has heard of the series of books called *Where's Waldo*.

It is a little character that appears on each and every page of the book, and there are about 500

other characters, Madam Deputy Speaker. Well, they have done the same thing now with the minister of economic development. He put out a newspaper in which there were seven, eight pictures—

**An Honourable Member:** Fifteen, I think.

**Mr. Ashton:** Fifteen. Well, we are still trying to spot him. I do not think it was left out of any particular—they spent \$44,000, Madam Deputy Speaker, on self-promotion, and that is minor compared to what they spent on those self-serving commercials that they have been putting out.

You know, I mean, if they create even 10 jobs, they probably create just as many if not more in the advertising industry when it comes to what they have done. I mean, the cynicism of this government to try and advertise its record in terms of job creation is unbelievable.

**An Honourable Member:** They removed the clock at the casino, you know. They removed something else there on the weekend.

**Mr. Ashton:** They have removed the clock at the casino, I am advised by the member for St. Boniface. I hope it is not the Minister of Rural Development's (Mr. Derkach) picture. I hope it has not been replaced by that.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the numbers speak for themselves. When the NDP was in government between 1981 and 1988, the number of jobs increased by 9.3 percent. Well, since 1988 with the Conservatives, how much has it increased? You know, I will give credit; here, there, a bit, it has increased. You know what it is? By .6 percent.

We have had a Conservative experiment in this province for close to seven years now. We have got one of the lowest minimum wages in the country. We used to have one of the highest. Okay? They have rolled back the payroll tax increasingly on larger businesses. I understand



they are still promising to get rid of the entire payroll tax. I do not know how they are going to manage that.

If you look at what they have done, they have cut Workers Compensation rates at the expense of injured workers, but that has been part of their ideology. I mean, I accept that. I do not agree with it. They have rolled back many of the labour law changes, including, in particular, final offer selection. They have made significant changes in terms of labour law, in terms of minimum wages. In terms of economic policy, they have cut many job creation programs.

What they have done, of course, is, they moved away from the 1980s when we had development under Hydro. We currently have no development whatsoever in terms of something equivalent to Limestone, and we have seen a Conservative agenda. I mean, let us not kid ourselves here, this is what Conservatives do when they are in office. They do those kinds of things. You know, let us look at the record. Under this government they have failed even by their own barometers.

You know, Madam Deputy Speaker, one of the areas that was the strongest in terms of growth in this province, one of the only things that is really getting the numbers even close to the national average after three out of four years being below the national average is, guess what? Public utilities. You know why? Because of Limestone and the NSP power sale, developments brought in by the NDP in the 1980s, opposed by the Conservatives and Liberals at the time, but that is now what is the most positive part of our economy. Manitoba Hydro is second only to Lotteries in terms of revenue growth because of those particular developments.

So the fact is that their approach is not working. You can look at other provinces. Are they leading the country? Would they lead the country in 1991, '92, '93, '94? No. In fact, what I find interesting is, the two provinces that are

leading the country are also provinces that have brought in what might be considered a typical NDP agenda, like Ontario and British Columbia, where they have brought in changes in labour law. They have raised the minimum wage now to the highest level in the country; in fact, B.C. and Ontario are well ahead of what is happening here. You know what, Madam Deputy Speaker, I do not hide from that comparison because we have said very clearly here we do not accept the negligible increase in the minimum wage brought in by the Conservatives on the election eve. We believe out of fairness that there should be an increase in the minimum wage in this province.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that is important. I think that is important because I believe we are at one of those political crossroads. We are seeing increasingly that the Conservative Party has had seven years to implement its agenda. Now if you agree with the health and education cuts, if you agree with what I consider a poor record in the economy, if you want a party that is committed to health care and education, if you want a party that is committed to the kind of job growth we saw in the 1980s, the NDP has proposed alternatives.

You will notice that I have not mentioned the Liberals because, quite frankly, I have gone through issue after issue and the bottom line is that the Liberals have talked like New Democrats during election time, and when they have been placed on the spot, they have supported the Tories. They supported them on labour law; they supported them on health care. The Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) will remember this. They supported Tory health-care policies. They supported Connie Curran. They have supported the emphasis on private schools. You know, in other areas they have been silent. We have a major concern in northern Manitoba about our highways. What do the Liberals do? They have not raised northern highways once.

You know what they have done, Madam Deputy Speaker. They have raised one question.

They have asked how many Orbit garbage cans there are across the highway system in Manitoba. Now, I have no problem once again giving the people the choice in northern Manitoba between the Conservatives, what they have done on highways, and by the way they have been cutting back on the construction budget apart from this announcement today which is election eve.

You know, the Tories always do that. They used to do that when I was a kid. They paved 20 miles of highway just before the election. They did that up until 1969 at which time people got the message. They got rid of them, they put in the NDP and we got the entire thing paved. But the bottom line is the Liberals have said nothing. I believe that despite everything that commentators will try and say that there is no difference between the parties, I do not agree with it. There is a difference.

I stand in Thompson on our positions on health care and education, our position in terms of jobs, our record in improving education through ACCESS, New Careers, the high school addition, improvements in health care such as the Northern Patient Transportation and Air Ambulance, improvements in northern highways, the kind of jobs in development we had through hydro development and many of the job creation programs. I stand on that.

You know what? I respect the Conservatives because they are not going to be able to hide from what they have done. I assume they are going to run on it. In fact, I hope they run on it, Madam Deputy Speaker. But you know that is the clear choice that we are faced in this election. I believe, my personal view is that people are ready for change in this province. I really believe in the upcoming election they are going to ask one simple question and it is going to be who do you trust, on health care, on education, on jobs.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I will say this and I will say this today that I believe that given that

choice the vast majority of Manitobans will make one clear choice and it is not going to be Liberal and it is not going to be Conservative. It is going to be the party that brought in medicare in Saskatchewan, that fought for health care, that brought in major health care improvements in Manitoba under Schreyer and Pawley. It is going to be the party that stands for public education, not our private schools. It is going to be the party that is committed to jobs, because we are the party that is built on the roots of working people and labour. It is the party that stands for fairness for all regions of this province, the only party that has MLAs in all three regions.

That party, Madam Deputy Speaker, is the New Democratic Party. We look forward to the next election. We look forward to the next NDP government being formed in 36 days.

\* (1650)

**Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert):** Madam Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to stand and speak on this government's eighth budget with no increase in any major taxes, and I did say major taxes, and the first balanced budget in Manitoba in 20 years.

Budgets of today cross all political lines and all political parties understand, there must be a revisiting of our social contract if we want to protect the social fabric of our nation. Madam Deputy Speaker, the people within our province and our country are paying as much as they can afford.

Before I get into the overall budget speech, I would like to pay tribute to a number of our colleagues who have chosen not to run for re-election in the next coming election.

The honourable member for Riel (Mr. Ducharme), the Minister responsible for Government Services, who has been a friend to all on this side of the House and whom I have always, not always, but 95 percent of the time

got along with and agreed with—once or twice we have had a few disagreements but we have usually got along—I know he will be missed. He has represented his constituents and worked for this government very responsibly over the nine years that he has been here in the provincial Legislature.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Orchard) was referred to as the Tie Domi of the Conservative Party by the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). This is the first time, I have to say, I do agree with the member for Thompson. He is our Tie Domi. He does get in the corner and scrap and he will always defend us when we need the defender.

If we are going to speak about the analogies of hockey players and members of this Legislature, I think we can bring Wayne Gretzky in, because we have Clayton Manness, who can outskate just about anyone. The honourable Minister of Education will be missed. He has taken his duty very seriously and has contributed to the province of Manitoba in his two departments that he has fulfilled for this government in a very honourable fashion.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we also have the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose) who is going to be leaving. He has been a seatmate of mine for the past four and a half years. He will be sorely missed. Every one of his speeches that he has given in this House has been a keeper, and I think that over the years that those who have the opportunity to read Hansard will always enjoy reading the honourable member for Turtle Mountain's responses. He has always spoken from the heart and has stood by what his constituents elected him for. I know I will miss him. I know that government will not be the same without him.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we also have a number of members from the other side of the House that have chosen not to run this time—the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman),

who is always very eloquent in his speeches. Even though I do not agree with him on his philosophical side, I do have to say that he will be missed, because I think you do have to have that mix within the House of both the social fabric as well as the fiscally responsible. I think we have seen the contrast of what can happen when you lose the social fabric as we did within the federal election with all the NDP gone from the federal scene. The Liberals can now act more like Conservatives than the Conservatives ever did.

Balancing our budget is the key to the protection of our health and education funding. I just heard someone the other day saying, I am glad someone finally had the guts to stand up for the taxpayers of this province. For years all we have been talking about is deficits, and no one has really been attacking the issue of what the issue is, and that is the debt. The debt is costing us \$600 million every year in interest alone. Those \$600 million would be a lot better spent in education, in health or in social services.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we are putting \$600 million more per annum in the health care system than was the case back in 1988. Even though the federal Liberal government does not see health care, education and social services as a priority, as we can see by the cuts in the last federal budget, our government has made these areas our top priority. We have maintained funding to these priorities despite reductions in federal funding of \$24 million this year, \$147 million next year and \$220 million in '97-98. Federal contributions in these areas will fall 14 percent this year to 10 percent by 1997-98.

Our government has increased funding in these areas from 66 percent of our budget in 1988 to 72 percent today. Job creation and enhanced economic activity in our province is due in large part to the initiatives put forward by our government. On spending we moved from grants to loan-based programs, reducing cost to the taxpayers and enhancing the benefits to our province. Over 4,000 new jobs have been

created, and 2,000 more are guaranteed under contractual commitment.

Clearly the Manitoba economy is growing stronger. Economic growth in '94 was the strongest in a decade. Retail sales growth hit a nine-year high. Foreign exports surged 29 percent last year, the best performance in the entire country. Fifteen thousand jobs were created in the last 12 months, and yes, 10,000 of those jobs were full-time jobs.

Madam Deputy Speaker, at 7.7 percent, Manitoba has the second lowest unemployment rate among the provinces. Forecasts for this year predict continued strong growth in the economy.

Manitobans have told our government that the preservation of our health care system is a top priority. We have worked side by side with the stakeholders throughout our health care system to ensure that Manitobans continue to receive the quality health care they have come to expect.

In addition, our government dedicated a greater percentage of its budget to health care last year than any other province in Canada. We will continue that distinction again this year.

Madam Deputy Speaker, our government has also worked throughout its mandate to target precious resources in the areas within the health care system where it was needed the greatest. We have substantially shifted resources towards long-term and community health alternatives. Funding has been increased for community-based mental health services.

We will be establishing nursing resource centres to increase opportunities to work with families and the community to prevent disease and promote health and postpone disabilities. We are committed to more community-based alternatives to hospital care, and we are taking aggressive actions to expand services and ensure that medical care continues to be available on a timely basis.

Madam Deputy Speaker, our government has made health care, education and family services our top priorities, as mentioned earlier. In addition to our financial commitment to health care, funding to these priority services now accounts for 72 percent of every dollar our government spends, up from 66 percent when we came to power in 1988.

I would like to thank the people of St. Norbert for standing with me and working with me to make a difference for St. Norbert. Over the years I have had the opportunity of listening to my constituents on a number of different issues.

Yes, some of them were NDP and some of them were Liberals. Some of the issues that they brought forward I guess would not have looked large when it came down to the issues brought forward in this House.

I was here when the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) brought forward some of his questions, and I do have to admit that never once did I have anybody bring forward the issue of Winnie the Pooh. They were issues that were very carefully drawn.

As a matter of fact, there was one Liberal that brought forward an environmental concern within our constituency. It was a little bit on the environmental side as well as it was towards the Department of Highways. Our government was able to take care of that problem that this constituent had. We did not ask him for his political card. We did not ask him who he supported as far as a political party. We took care of his needs because he is a Manitoban.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we have to treat all Manitobans fairly and equally, and when we get elected to this House, sometimes we get into the Chamber, and we seem to forget that there is a real world outside.

I think we have to look at what is happening in the real world. In the real world people have

to live within a balanced budget. If we ran our household on deficits and deficits and deficits, eventually we would have absolutely nothing left for our children.

\* (1700)

Madam Deputy Speaker, we are bringing in balanced-budget legislation. Balanced-budget legislation will see that our children will not have to pay for the mistakes of the past.

I think when it comes to education, it is important that you go out and you listen, not only to those within the educational field but to the parents who have their children within those facilities.

I have had the opportunity over the past while of working not only with some of the teachers but with some of the children within our schools, and, Madam Deputy Speaker, I must say that I have a lot of respect for what the teachers have to go through.

In a lot of cases, teachers do not have the opportunity to teach anymore. In some cases, they are acting more as babysitters, nurses, and I think the parental responsibility has to be brought back into the institution if we really want to correct some of the inequities from within.

We cannot expect teachers to be everything within the educational community. Teachers were meant to teach, and I think we have to see they have the ability to do exactly that. I think that we have to see that the parents of the children within the public school system and within the private school system have more involvement, that they have the commitment to see the results received by their children coming forward.

Madam Deputy Speaker, for the eighth consecutive budget, our government has not raised any of the major taxes, and Manitobans have told us over and over again that they are

paying all the taxes that they can afford, and we have listened.

I am sure that a tax freeze is something that the overtaxed souls in our neighbouring provinces to the east and to the west can only dream of, but in Manitoba our tax freeze has not only been a reality for seven years, it is a tradition that all of us on this side of the House are very proud of.

This is, by far, the longest running tax freeze of any jurisdiction in North America. Our marginal income tax rate is now the third lowest of all the provinces, compared to the situation in 1988, where Manitoba had the highest rate in all of Canada.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Manitobans are now expressing optimism for Manitoba's future. Our economy continues to create more jobs for Manitobans. There have been no increases in any of the major taxes. Our province's budget is balanced and balanced-budget legislation will ensure that it stays that way.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I dreamed of the day that I could say this. Manitoba's debt is being repaid for our children's sake. Health, education and family services have been protected and are now sustainable well into the future. Manitoba's climate for investment in growth is among the best in Canada. We continue our efforts to make Manitoba the best place in Canada to live, work and raise a family. We are making Manitoba strong.

Over the four and a half years in office in the constituency of St. Norbert I have had the opportunity of working with members on both sides of this House, and I have considered a lot, I would say 99 percent of them, to be friends. If rumour has it right we will be at an election in probably the next day or two. I think the people of Manitoba will have a clear choice to make.

The choice is going to be on a balanced budget, on a government that represents the

people of Manitoba and respects the need for quality health care, quality education and sets those priorities ahead. We cannot do as the federal Liberals did and make promises in a red book and then not live up to those commitments. They have not lived up to the commitments. I mean, I remember the honourable—she is the Deputy Prime Minister, I believe. She promised that she would resign within a year if the GST was not gone. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is more than a year, and the tax is still there.

They are cutting on the health, education and social services side to the tune of \$220 million. If that is their priority, then I have a problem with what our federal Liberal government is doing.

In closing, I would like to thank the people of St. Norbert constituency for giving me the opportunity to represent them in the Legislature over the past years, and I look forward to the chance to represent them again for the next four to five years.

I would like to close this evening by wishing Manitoba a very happy 125th birthday. Let us all work together to make 1995 a year to celebrate our success at making Manitoba strong.

**Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples):** Madam Deputy Speaker, I will keep my comments short because many people have already addressed many of the issues of concern to me in this budget.

Before I start talking about the budget, I want to take advantage of this time that I have to speak to be a little bit parochial and brag about some wonderful things that are happening in my constituency, some active volunteers in our community—I think I have mentioned their names before here—who are involved with The Maples Youth Justice Committee. They have now embarked on another project.

The Maples Youth Justice Committee made the decision to make an application under the

Youth Services Canada program. They formed an ad hoc committee. The members of that committee are Tracy Sumka, who, I think you may remember, received the Premier's volunteer service award last year, Doug Simpson, Veronica Dyck, who is a teacher at our high school, Jean Caban, who is a vice-principal at our junior high, Marabella Ruta, Trevor Zorich, Mohinder Baja and myself.

These people did a lot of work and made an application under the Youth Services Canada project and they were successful. I would like to think that in some small part the support that myself, Dr. Ray Pagtakhan, our local M.P., and our regional Minister Lloyd Axworthy showed for this program, our support helped with the approval of this grant. This grant will give \$90,000 for a program to address safety concerns in The Maples. It shows how working co-operatively with the federal government can benefit this province.

This program will allow The Maples Youth Justice Committee to hire a co-ordinator for this project. This co-ordinator will get 10 young adults from our community to work on projects for up to nine months, nine months on concerns addressing safety, crime prevention, including provisions of safety for seniors, personal safety of youth in the community and general health and safety in our community. Thinking what 10 young motivated adults could do in The Maples during the length of this project is exciting. I congratulate those individuals for all the time and effort they have already put into this project.

Before I go further, I would also like to note that with the pending election, we will have some members who during the short period of time that I have been in this Chamber I have grown to respect, as I do all honourable members, and those are the members for Riel, Dauphin, Pembina and Morris—their contributions to Manitoba will always be noted as everyone who gives service to the public.

\* (1710)

While we are congratulating people, I wanted to note that congratulations are in order for our Leader. He and his wife had the proud event of the birth of a child today. Let the record show how happy we are for that occasion.

As I said, I am very proud of our Youth Justice Committee. I know I have spoken in the House, suggesting that all MLAs show a leadership role. I am happy to see that other MLAs are joining in with that effort. I know my colleague from Inkster now has a Youth Justice Committee. I understand my colleague from St. Johns and possibly even the Justice minister may be considering a Youth Justice Committee, forming one in her area. I am glad they are continuing the efforts, because I still believe this is one way of addressing the problems associated with youth crime and violence.

It was interesting to note the Justice minister's remarks in Question Period today. I echo them. The majority of young people, Manitobans, are good; they are contributors to this province. Our youth in this province contribute more volunteer hours per capita than youth anywhere else in this country. I think sometimes we forget how good the youth of Manitoba are.

As I said, I have been asked to try to keep my comments short to give others an opportunity to speak. I only make note of that because I know my colleagues from the other opposition party sometimes make note of what I have not said in my speeches as opposed to what I have said. Although there are many important issues to be dealt with today, I will speak on just a few of them.

I would like to speak about the provincial budget. I think that is important to note, because so much of the debate that has gone on in this Chamber made me think sometimes that I was in the federal Parliament and that we were the party in power and we were facing two opposition parties. At times I wondered if the government and the other opposition party had joint caucus meetings before Question Period because it

seemed they were tag-teaming the provincial Liberal Party, asking questions more about the federal budget than about the provincial.

Again and again I can say I am proud to be associated with our federal Liberal Party and our leader. I guess it is a lot easier task than to be associated with their federal parties and their leaders, whoever they are. I am not too sure I remember who their leaders are.

This provincial budget is tough, as the federal budget was tough, but the difference is this one is unfair. This budget uses \$386 million in lotteries revenue to balance the books. Of this, \$145 million was from a slush fund that has been built up for several years and is now being used as an election ploy.

I do not know if in future years we will be proud to say that the way we obtain a balanced budget here in this province is through the efforts of what would have many years ago been an illegal activity. Gambling—20 years ago, when I started off as a police officer, the number racket was illegal. Then it became 649, and the government got their share, and all of a sudden it became legal. So I am not very proud of the fact that we have used lottery funds as a way of balancing the budget.

What are the major concerns about this budget? I think our Leader has pretty well defined it. The two issues are reliance on gambling and the priorities of spending. You know, we know it is tough times for everyone, as it is a tough time in many family budgets, but just as a family has to decide about its priorities, so does this government. I think this government's priorities are wrong.

This government has gone on and on about no increase in taxes, but that is not a clear fact. I know personally this year when I sent in my Pharmacare receipts that there was \$385 in Pharmacare receipts that last year would have been covered, and this year they were not. To me that is a tax increase. I know that school

taxes have increased because the tax credit has been reduced by \$75. I know that the base for the sales tax has increased. I know that the gasoline tax was increased in the last budget. Altogether, by these measures, the last three that I mentioned, \$114 million more revenue was generated by these increased taxes. How can you say no increase in taxes when \$114 million in more revenue is raised by these measures, which is equivalent to a 5.5 percent increase in personal provincial tax?

**An Honourable Member:** That is terrible.

**Mr. Kowalski:** It is terrible.

What about their proud claim, this government, that they have balanced the budget? Well, they have racked up \$4 billion in debt during their tenure—\$2 billion that was theirs and \$2 billion from Crown corporations—and suddenly they think balanced budgets should be legislated. Well, let us look. What was the deficit in the '93-94 years? It was \$217 million. What was the deficit in '92-93? It was \$430 million. What was the deficit in '91-92? It was \$566 million. What was the deficit in '90-91? It was \$334 million. In 1989-90, the deficit was \$290 million.

Now this balanced-budget legislation that they put forward with the penalty clause, it has already been talked about. They owe us money if it was retroactive. So I look upon this legislation very cynically, that after running years of deficits, now using gambling revenue they are going to balance the budget.

So let us look at how this dependence on gambling, this addiction, this government's addiction to gambling revenues have increased. Well, we have seen a 400 percent increase in revenue during this government's term in office

There has been absolutely no accountability to this Legislature and 90 percent of the gamblers are Manitobans. This is setting a poor example for children.

Today the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) typified the other opposition party's Justice critic and summed up his philosophy as hug a thug.

Well, this government's policy seems to be to chain kids to desks, lock them up, keep them in poverty. So if we want to use simplistic models of how this government views children, I think we should be careful before we start criticizing others on our philosophy dealing with children.

This government, how cynical to build up a bribe fund, a bribe to Manitoba voters of \$150 million, \$145 million of lottery funds over three years for this election bribe. I think Manitobans are a lot smarter than to buy that.

\* (1720)

So let us look at the spending priorities of this government, okay; youth programs being cut, home care being cut, a decrease in environmental enforcement, a decrease in ACCESS programs, a decrease in K to 12. Where are the increases? Well, grants and loans to business have increased by 50 percent. This government protects the privileged and the powerful, in contrast to the federal budget where you saw a 60 percent decrease in grants and incentives to business, where you saw a 50 percent increase in the provincial budget. It shows where this government's priorities are.

We could go on and on arguing about labour force statistics, but I know my neighbours are seeing their children, grandchildren leaving the province to get good jobs. If we do not believe that this government's funding of education is poor, let us listen to a letter from a constituent of our Speaker in Notre Dame de Lourdes, Diane Beresford, who wrote in her letter to the editor in the Free Press, and I will read just the last paragraph where she states: In fact, total cost of public school education in the province in real dollars, adjusted for inflation, has not increased for the last few years. It is just that the provincial government is making local property tax pay a greater and greater share.



So that shows that the voters of Manitoba are not fooled by the government's assertion that they have not raised taxes.

Again, looking at priorities, if we look at the Department of Justice, the Community and Youth Corrections budget is decreased, while the area for community Correctional Youth Centres has increased, which shows this government's priorities. Community and Youth Corrections, where the much talked about youth justice committees have operated, where all three parties have said they support it, the support for those justice committees in that department, Community and Youth Corrections, has decreased.

I think that accounts for the fact that the volunteer co-ordinator, Jocelyn Barnard, has not been replaced, and that for two years, we have not had any training sessions for the liaison committee of Justice committees. The government has said fine words about youth justice committees, but where is the support? Where is the training? Where is the budget?

Another area that was noted in this budget, showing where their priorities stood, under Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, Multicultural Grants Advisory Council went from \$584,000 to \$384,000 of grants, going down, but the department headed by someone who I know quite well, David Langtry, the Multiculturalism Secretariat and Community Access Office, their budgets increased.

So the money available to cultural groups has decreased, but the departments administering them have increased their budget. Where is the government's priorities?

Again, as I said, I often felt that I was in the Parliament of Canada with all the attacks on the federal budget, which has shown to be one of the most popular federal budgets in Canadian history. I am not a financial wizard, but looking at the summary of Estimates of Revenue, I look at the line that says Government of Canada. Last

year, the money received from the Government of Canada was \$1.723 billion. This year, it is \$1.798 billion, so an increase by 4.3 percent more from the federal government. I know I am not a financial wizard, but more is more. Unless I am reading the summary of Estimates of Revenue wrong, we have seen an increase of funds from the federal government.

You know, that is one thing that all the provinces ask the federal government. All governments know that they are looking for places to save money. One thing that the provincial Finance ministers asked the federal government to do was give us notice, let us plan ahead of time. The federal government was fair.

They said, in the last two years of their mandate, that was when the cuts would start coming. They told the provincial governments right from the beginning. They notified them so they could make adjustments in their provincial budgets. I wish, when I was a school trustee with the Seven Oaks School Division, I would have had the same notice to plan our school division budget, knowing what kind of cutbacks we were going to get from this government.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I know the popular concept in this arena is that if you vote against the budget, this government will say you are against everything.

This budget includes everything from health care to education. Does that mean I am against health care? Does that mean I am against education? No. We are concerned about the dependence on gambling revenue, and we are concerned about the spending priorities of this government, where grants to businesses go up by 50 percent and cuts to many of the most important parts of our society, have increased. It is a question of priorities.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to keep my comments short to allow others to speak. Thank you very much.

**Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Madam Deputy Speaker, before I launch into a discussion with respect to our budget—referred to by one of my colleagues as the budget of the century—I do want to pay tribute to some of the retiring members who will be leaving this Chamber at the call of the next election.

Firstly, the member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard), whom I have had the opportunity to sit with for the last nine years, I have come to respect greatly his abilities to direct both the department and his abilities as a Legislator.

It was said to me one time that the member for Pembina, during his tenure as Minister of Health, was one of the most respected Ministers of Health in the entire country, that he had the confidence of every other Minister of Health in this country. That was told to me by the former member for The Maples, Dr. Gulzar Cheema, the Health critic for the Liberal Party, and I have had that confirmed from a number of other people I have talked to in other governments from across this country, the great respect they held for the member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard). Manitoba has been served well by his tenure.

The member for Morris (Mr. Manness) is another person with whom I have been able to spend some considerable time over the past several years. As a matter of fact, during his tenure as Minister of Finance I sat on Treasury Board since we came into government in 1988, and I have great respect for his ability and his commitment to try and balance the books of the Province of Manitoba. Madam Deputy Speaker, he will be sorely missed as well.

My colleague to my left, only figuratively geographically speaking, the member for Riel (Mr. Ducharme), someone whom I have served with not only in this House but during the time that I was fortunate enough to be elected to the City of Winnipeg Council. We have served together since I believe 1980. When we first came into contact in 1980, we were not on the

same side, I might say, Madam Deputy Speaker, but—

\* (1730)

**Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Government Services):** But I learned.

**Mr. Ernst:** That is correct. Madam Deputy Speaker, we did come to a meeting of minds and, of course, as we have served in this Chamber as members of the Progressive Conservative Party we have served well and my colleague has served very well as Minister of Urban Affairs and Housing and latterly as Minister of Government Services. So he will also be missed by both his constituents and by all the members certainly on our side of the House and I am sure even some members on the other side who have a little inkling of the kind of commitment that it takes.

My colleague from Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose) also will be retiring at the call of the next election. Here is someone we have not had a long time to serve with, just one term. Nonetheless, his understanding, particularly his grasp of rural issues and with respect to his ability to succinctly put many of the thoughts that we have had but were not able to quite match that quick wit that he has will also be missed.

The member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), who will no doubt follow me in this Chamber speaking, Madam Deputy Speaker, he and I, I am sure have had disagree—well, I do not know that we have ever had an agreement on anything, but nonetheless I respect him for the fact that he has offered himself for public service.

It is not an easy thing to do. There is a substantial commitment that I do not think the public really understands, a substantial commitment from every person in this House regardless of their political stripe for the fact that they offer themselves for public service to the detriment of their spouses, their children, their

extended families, because the commitment here is onerous. Regardless of which side you sit on, the commitment is extremely onerous.

It takes people out of the prime of their earning career in most cases. It takes people away from potential career paths, promotions and things that might otherwise have stood them well in the long run in terms of their life path and in their retirement years. Nonetheless, they do it anyway. They go out. They commit themselves to the public. They serve their constituents and, in some cases, in the government as well.

So, to the member for Dauphin, I wish him good luck and success in whatever he chooses to do following his career as a legislator. He will know that that career as a legislator is one that he can be proud of in the fact that he knows in his own mind of the commitment that he has given to the Province of Manitoba to try and make it a better place.

As I said, Madam Deputy Speaker, I have had an opportunity to serve on Treasury Board for the past eight budgets. Treasury Board, for those who may not understand or know, of course, prepares the spending Estimates that are attached to the budget and form the basis of the budget.

I spent, on six of those budgets, under the direction firstly of the Premier (Mr. Filmon) who took it upon himself when he first became Premier of this province to direct the fiscal expenditures of the province by taking the chair of Treasury Board himself; for the next four budgets after that it was the Minister of Finance himself who chaired Treasury Board and, as I have indicated, for whom I have a great deal of respect for his ability and his commitment in trying to balance the books of this province.

It is a lot of work, it is a lot of time. But let me tell you, it is an understanding that no one will ever get doing anything else with respect to how the government works and where the money is being spent. You can read those

Estimates books, but until you have the opportunity of seeing what is behind them, until you have the opportunity of discussing with ministers of departments, deputy ministers and other staff as to how the money is spent, where it goes and why it is done and the kind of programs that follow through that, then you get a real genuine understanding of the kind of things that go on within government.

We talk in this Chamber all the time about this program is good or that program is bad or whatever. The fact of the matter is I have never seen a program come across my desk as a member of Treasury Board in eight budgets that did not have redeeming value, that did not have some reason, some good behind it.

But the fact of the matter is we cannot afford to have everything that comes across the table, so you have to make choices. Those choices are difficult, and they become more and more difficult as time goes on if at the same time your expenditures are increasing and you do not wish to raise the taxation levels on the citizens of Manitoba.

So that is the difficult choice that has to be made. One that, as I said, gets tougher and tougher and tougher each year that you make those choices while trying to maintain the fact that you do not want to increase your revenue base because of taxation, unlike my honourable friends across the way who, when they were in power under the Pawley government, did both.

They increased the deficit and increased the taxes. I believe it was somewhere in the area of 22 percent over six years they raised the taxes, and they still had a half million dollar deficit every year.

Well, that is not our way. We came through the second worst recession this country has every experienced without raising major taxes and without having to run a deficit nearly as high as those of the former government—the second worst recession in this country's history.

I want to talk for a few minutes about the budget that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) presented to us in this Chamber eight days ago. I think the best possible birthday present that Manitobans could ever have is a balanced budget. Our Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) brought that balanced budget to the people of Manitoba, and he did it on the basis that this is Manitoba's 125th birthday. In 1995, the celebration of 125 years in this province, he brought in a balanced budget. Not just a balanced budget, but a commitment to the future to say that future budgets would also be balanced, provided the projections for the next period of time, next two or three budget years, an indication by '96-97 we can have a surplus in this province and start to pay down the debt that has been accumulated for heaven only knows how many years.

It is not just the balanced budget itself, but the commitment of this government. You know, there is some question about a billboard, as to whether it is law or not. The fact of the matter is, Madam Deputy Speaker, you elect this government again, it will be law. We are the people who have brought this forward, and we have a commitment that we will pass a balanced-budget law so that the people of Manitoba know what they are going to get in the future.

On top of that, we are prepared to indicate not just the balanced-budget law, but the fact that if you want to increase any of the major taxes in the future, then it is going to be by way of referendum. The people are going to have a say, the people of Manitoba, the taxpayers of Manitoba, those who foot the bill for all that we do. I mean, my colleague from Lakeside (Mr. Enns) has said this many, many times. Governments have no money, governments own nothing; the taxpayer owns what is held in the common interest, and the taxpayer pays for it constantly. So it is time that the taxpayer had a say as to what those taxation levels should be into the future. They are the ones who pay; they ought to have a say.

I heard from the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) just a few minutes ago that this budget was balanced based on lottery revenue. It is interesting, Madam Deputy Speaker, that somehow this is not real money or somehow this is wrong. What the heck do you expect the money to be spent on if the money comes into the government? What better way to spend it than to balance the budget? Why should we be out borrowing money all the time? That is the answer from the Liberals over there and from the NDP. God forbid you should use the money you have. Go out and borrow it. Spend some more so our debt will rise and our interest costs will rise. Well, I do not believe that. This government does not believe that. The fact of the matter is if the money is there, what better way to balance the budget than to use that money.

\* (1740)

Now somehow, I think in the minds of some people opposite, this is tainted. I do not understand that. I mean, most of the time the Liberals make policy by geography. That is wherever they are, they tell the people what they want to hear, but the fact of the matter is, where is their commentary on the issue of revenue from liquor? For 50 years or more in this country governments have benefited from the revenue from alcohol. Not a word about that. Somehow that is okay. We do not have to talk about it.

The fact of the matter is that, if you want to look at the problem, the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba will tell you that 1.2 percent, according to Dr. Rachel Volberg, of the adult population of Manitoba is at risk with respect to addictions to gambling, but 6 percent of the adult population are at risk from alcohol. In fact, the Addictions Foundation have said to me and others, they wish they had the kind of publicity they got out of the gambling side for the alcohol-and substance-abuse side because that is where the big problem is. That is where the major problem is.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I do not know, I have some concern that the members from the Liberal Party in particular somehow think that this is tenable. We have not heard a policy from them. On the one hand, we have their newest candidate in northeast Winnipeg saying, no, gambling is bad and it is out of control and it has gone too far and they are putting them in supermarkets. Well, none of that is true. At the same time, his employer just signed an agreement to benefit from \$350,000 worth of lottery revenue. Where is the hypocrisy here? But we have not heard a policy from them. We do not know where they stand.

We know where the NDP stand. They promised to give them a casino in The Pas as soon as they get elected. Of course, what happened in the newspaper was you had the Leader of the NDP on the front page saying, that is okay, we will give you a casino as soon as we are elected, and you had the critic on page 8 saying, we should cancel it altogether. So maybe that is a policy, I am not sure.

We do not get any policy from the Liberals. As I said, they do it by geography. Wherever they happen to be they tell the people what they want to hear. That will catch up to them eventually. They will eventually have to say, we have a policy. In fact, not only do we have a policy, we have implemented it, Madam Deputy Speaker. Let not the members opposite talk about that at all because they are the ones who will be found wanting, not only on this issue but a lot of others.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we have had a lot of discussion, and we hear the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) and others from that era when they were in government suggest to this Chamber that somehow the budget that Jim Walding voted against was a surplus budget, that somehow Jim Walding as a member of the NDP found voting for a budget that contained a surplus of warrant, and voted against it. Well, it would have been surprising for him if it had been a budget that had a surplus because they never,

ever had one before, certainly not the Pawley government in any event, but the facts of the matter are on the record. The facts of the matter are the history of the Chamber of this House, and the facts of the matter are it was a \$300-and-some million dollar deficit, not a surplus, as members opposite try to claim and try to fool the people of Manitoba once again. I do not want to go on very much longer because I know that my honourable friend the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) wishes to speak shortly.

The fact of the matter is I am intensely proud of the fact that our government for the first time in over 20 years has produced a budget that is balanced, that the taxpayers of Manitoba deserve that balanced budget. We have done it while still maintaining the highest expenditure for health care of any province in Canada, by providing considerable new revenues for education and for family services, the highest priorities of our government. We have seen, through this budget process, it can be done, and I look forward to seeing that budget implemented along with the legislation that will require future governments to do the same.

Thank you very much.

**Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin):** Madam Deputy Speaker, I contemplated not speaking on the budget. I thought, well, I have given my final speech on the throne speech in December. I thought that is fine, my colleagues who are running again would need the time. But when I saw the budget and I heard the speeches that are being made trumpeting this budget, I thought I could not let this go by.

So today during Question Period I penned my speech, and it is in sharp contrast to the bell ringer that I wrote in 1981 when I was first elected, the Speech from the Throne speech, because I spent a great deal of time writing and rewriting that and double spacing it and putting it into capitals typed so that I would be able to deliver it in this House. I can say that we were well coached because the former member for

Churchill at that time was coaching us, Jay Cowan, prior to the 1981 election.

He said that the rule of thumb is that you spend one hour preparing for every minute you speak. Of course, this is for the toastmasters and for sermons I guess for ministers, my colleague the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) tells me. So he was using this rule of thumb at that time, and that is one of the reasons we prepared at that time so well. Now, of course, it is one Question Period.

I heard the member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) yapping in his seat a few moments ago, and it reminded me of that great Manitoba senator who said that the Tories could run a yellow dog in southern Manitoba and it would be elected, it would win. I see the yellow-dog syndrome is alive and well in the head and body of the member for Pembina here yet in this House right to the end, right to the bitter end.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this budget is enough to make anyone want to either quit politics and stay away for good—and they cannot accuse me of that because I already made my decision prior to the budget, or it is enough, as my colleagues are doing, to dig deeper to ensure that this bunch that is sitting across the way is not allowed to run this province in government one more day, hopefully, not more than one more day and never again for many, many years in this province. That is exactly what my colleagues are going to do as a result of the budget and the record of this government over the past seven years.

If anything, this government's actions remind me of the utter futility of serving in public office. I should not be that negative about it because in a lot of ways it has been very rewarding. But the futility of it when you see, after 14 years, that we have come to almost the same spot that we were when I ran in 1981.

**An Honourable Member:** Sterling Lyon.

**Mr. Plohman:** That is right. My colleague mentions Sterling Lyon in 1981. The more things change, the more things stay the same. The people come and go. We see new faces in here, but ultimately, the policies are very similar to what they were when Sterling Lyon was in government at that time. He had destroyed the province's economy in four short years.

The major economic indicators were lagging, were slipping, for Manitoba in comparison to the rest of the country. That was certainly a fact. People were fleeing the province in record numbers, as they are now, to look for work and get away from this government. Yet the people who are back from that government, the Lyons—of course, some of them not any longer—the Orchards, the Downeys, the Enns and the Filmons that all were saying at that time—and I am not talking about the MLAs now, Madam Deputy Speaker. They were saying, we are sitting on a gold mine. Do not stop us now. Their great slogans of 1981, of the election, the same refrain sounds very similar. We are hearing the same thing again at this particular time.

Now we have very similar kinds of development of issues to try to gain public support. In 1981 it was megaprojects, a gold mine just waiting to be developed, the hydro grid and the potash mine, and all of these things that were going to take place were going to make the future of Manitoba so rosy, not that they had made it rosy over four years, but it was going to be.

Here we have, after seven years of deficits, suddenly, another contrived issue. They sat around the cabinet table into the wee hours trying to come up with a slogan, trying to come up with something that would get them re-elected. They said, well, we have got to balance the budget this year, and in desperation, they said, we will do it this year. Maybe we can swing this.

\* (1750)

I think that this budget should be, rather than the themes of a balanced budget and no increase in taxes, as they like to say, really quite different. The theme should be something like a government attempting to fool all of the people all of the time, because they have practised for seven years, Madam Deputy Speaker.

In fact, over the past seven years we have heard stories that were incorrect. In fact, deception has been practised by this government. I think it is time for them now, after seven years, to go to the people with the truth and say, this is the record, this is us with all our warts, and here it is—

**Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona):** And they have lots of them.

**Mr. Plohman:** Of course, as my colleague the member for Transcona mentioned, there would be an awful lot of warts, but at least they could go with a clear conscience and say this is what we did, these are the facts, please re-elect us. If the people decide not, that is the fact. Do not try to go on this theme really that we can see underlying this budget, that you can try to fool all of the people all of the time, because that is what you are trying to do. Unfortunately for them I do not think it is going to work.

It started right with this Minister of Finance seven years ago—the former Minister of Finance, the member for Morris (Mr. Manness) at that time, when he refused to give credit for the budgets that were left to him in 1988 by the previous NDP government, by, yes, the increased revenues that were brought in by the New Democratic government, but also the additional revenues that came from the federal government late in that spring which these members refuse to acknowledge even to this day. They practise that deception.

They refuse to acknowledge that it was not the budget at the time that Jim Walding voted against, but it was the subsequent windfall revenues, not very different than the windfall

revenues that this government got from lotteries this year of \$145 million that they used. It is okay if they have windfall revenues—one time only—to balance the budget, but that is not proper to talk about the additional revenues, because in fact there was a \$58-million surplus. Then by jockeying around with the books, the Minister of Finance at that time, the member for Morris (Mr. Manness), managed to run it into a deficit and create the rainy-day fund.

Let us not fool the people on this. There was a surplus. Let us put it in context. These ministers know it, and they refuse even in this House to acknowledge it. That is what bothers and pains me about it, because I think they at least could stand up and have the integrity in this House to do that at this point.

I remember the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) just a week ago when a caller phoned CJOB and asked him about this surplus, he absolutely refused to acknowledge it existed—I do not know what you are talking about; Jim Walding voted against a deficit budget when he voted against it. He never put it in context. He refused to do that.

We heard the same thing today from the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) when he talked about having the greatest budget in health care in the history of this province, the greatest support for health care.

Of course, over the last seven years with inflation—very deep in addition to the cuts that have been made, huge cuts. Over seven years, counting inflation, there would be more dollars in absolute terms going to health care, numerical dollars, more dollars there. He calls that the greatest support in history, but he does not talk about what those dollars can do and what kind of services they are providing.

Madam Deputy Speaker, again we have seen these ministers practise deception, both in public and in this House, and I think that is unfortunate. Again, I say to them, go out with all your warts,

run on your record, but provide the facts to the people, not twist them and leave the impression that you did something that you did not do.

Now let us go to the facts. Why do they not say, yes, we raised taxes \$115 million in the budget three years ago? Why do they not say that? In '93, yes, we raised taxes, personal taxes, taxes taken from persons, personally paid for by people. They raised them. Elderly people had the school tax assistance taken away from them. The tax credit was reduced by \$75 per homeowner. The sales tax was expanded, the base was expanded so that it brought in another \$45-50 million.

Say, we raised some taxes. We raised personal taxes. Tell them because it is going to be there and the people are going to hear it. You might as well come truthful with it and tell the people that, yes, we did. We have kind of been couching our words a little bit, to say, to put it in a nice way.

Now, you know, that is all I am asking. Say it, admit it: Yes, we raised personal taxes during our time. Why not say, yes, we have cut education and health care? Be truthful about it. I mean, we have seen the absolute cuts in the last three years. You cannot fool the people on that.

**An Honourable Member:** You would throw more money at it, John, would you not?

**Mr. Plohman:** Well, I will tell the member for Springfield that he may want to consider the relative importance of education in the overall budget and make decisions based on that. I do not believe he has done that. He might also say, yes, we have a phony balanced budget. I would like him to at least admit that the members opposite, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the members sitting around that Cabinet table, that yes, we have a phony balanced budget, that the Lotteries windfall of \$145 million, the one time only, will not be there again next year, Madam Deputy Speaker. What are they going to do then?

They did not build in the federal Liberal cuts in transfer payments for post-secondary education and health care, and they say they are going to bring in balanced-budget legislation which is going to prevent raising additional revenues, so what is going to happen to health care and education scenario that is certain to happen under this government?

Who are they trying to fool? They cannot go back to the Lotteries again for another windfall. They can get their \$220 million, but they are not going to find an extra 145 or 160 or whatever it might be. They may find some because, unfortunately, the revenue from Lotteries continues to grow because of the temptation that is out there. I have to say, that is something that has caused a great deal of hardship for a lot of people in this province.

**An Honourable Member:** Maybe they are going to expand the VLTs again, John.

**Mr. Plohman:** Well, I am sure they would find a way. That is not taxing, though.

**An Honourable Member:** Well, that is what it is.

**Mr. Plohman:** No, no, people have a choice. No, we are not going to tax them. We would not dare tax people. The poorest people are tempted, though. Why do they not say, Madam Deputy Speaker, yes, we have caused thousands of people to flee the province once more because they do not see the opportunities in Manitoba, just as during the Lyon government when he said, do not stop us now, we are sitting on a gold mine? Yes, we have given tax breaks to Great-West Life, the banks and other large corporations in this province. Yes, we have given handouts to large corporations, to car dealers, to train their staff. Yes, we have. Admit it, say it, that is our priority.

For education, we are giving it to Bob Kozminski and the other car dealers who have successfully applied, and yes, we are ignoring



the plight of the poor and the needy in our proposed balanced-budget legislation. We are not considering how that is going to impact on them if that was passed into law without any other caveat except—what is it—war, if there is a war or natural disasters and a 5 percent drop in revenues. Now is that not nice of them to think about war? Yes, they are off the hook if there is a war. They do not have to pay from their pockets if they increase the budget. That is something that is really right up there.

What about health care needs? What about the poor? What about poverty levels? What about unemployment levels? Is that something they consider? No, not important, but war is the one we have to look after here just to make sure we do not get stuck with a big bill. Why do they not say we are going to make it retroactive if we get into government and all pay up on it, because they ran a deficit for seven years? Why do they not make it retroactive?

That would be a truthful thing to do to the people, to go forward in an honourable way. No one is going to criticize you for that. No one

will criticize them for doing that. All the people would feel, you know, they put their pocketbooks where their mouth is on this. They are prepared to go back seven years, but is that not phony? Do they really think the people are going to believe that after seven years? I mean, come on. It is stringing them along, is it not? The members opposite know, the members of the government know that they are stringing them along.

I have to say this, Madam Deputy Speaker, I could just stand here and say all kinds of nice things, and they would say, oh, that is class. To me, if I have exhibited that kind of class today I am playing into their political agenda, and I am not going to do that. We have had seven deficits and it is now time for them to consider whether they want to make this retroactive.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The hour being 6 p.m., I am leaving the Chair with the understanding that this House will reconvene at 8 p.m. at which time the honourable member for Dauphin will have 24 minutes remaining.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, March 20, 1995

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