



Fourth Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise, Hon.	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary	Concordia	N.D.P.
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Albert	Steinbach	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	N.D.P.
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	P.C.
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	P.C.
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane	Osborne	N.D.P.
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	P.C.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn	St. James	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	P.C.
NEWMAN, David, Hon.	Riel	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank, Hon.	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
RADCLIFFE, Mike, Hon.	River Heights	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack, Hon.	Niakwa	P.C.
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Gladstone	P.C.
SALE, Tim	Crescentwood	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	N.D.P.
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	P.C.
TOEWS, Vic, Hon.	Rossmere	P.C.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.
Vacant	Charleswood	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, December 1, 1997

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Ruling—Point of Order

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, I rise today on a matter of privilege, and I will complete this matter of privilege with a motion for the House.

On November 22, 1996, I raised a point of order in this House, the text of which I will now reiterate. November 22, 1996, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) was just—this is to you, Madam Speaker; I am addressing you—over on this side of the Legislative Assembly and threatened the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) in the following words: “Come outside and say that to my face, and I will kick your lights out, Timmy.” Furthermore, later on, I say, “I would like to complete my comments, Madam Speaker. The other side of the House made it impossible. I wanted to say that the member for Crescentwood is hard of hearing and fortunately did not hear the Premier's threats of violence and thuggery, but I did. I am insulted, and I think he should retract his words. This is a government that prides itself on its antiviolence programs,” and the Premier's comments are violent and ugly. “I am ashamed of this Premier.”

Madam Speaker, despite the passage of one year, two legislative sessions, and 76 sitting days, you have not ruled on this point of order. In fact, it would seem that you have consciously, even deliberately chosen not to rule on my point of order, and therefore I think you have diminished my status as an honourable member of this House. I have often heard you say that in this House we are all honourable members, but it does seem to me that some members are regarded as more honourable than others.

I would suggest that in view of the seriousness of my point of order, you have no discretion, that you

absolutely must rule on this point of order for this matter concerns a threat of violence, uttered not simply by one member of the Legislative Assembly to another member of the Legislative Assembly but by the Premier of this province to a member of the opposition. This, as I said earlier, is a province that prides itself on zero tolerance of violence, and yet the Premier, who should be a role model to all Manitobans, utters threats of violence. This Premier is often touted as the elder statesman of Canada and yet he has been allowed with impunity to utter threats of violence in this Legislative Assembly.

Madam Speaker, I understand that a matter of privilege must be raised at the first possible opportunity, and I would argue that in this particular situation that test is not applicable, as the very foundation of my argument is that you have no intention of ruling on this matter. I reiterate that one year and two sessions have elapsed since I first raised the point of order and brought to your attention the Premier's declared intention that he would kick out the lights of the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) if only that member would go out in the hallway with the Premier (Mr. Filmon), and I am certainly glad that the member chose not to.

If you had intended to rule, Madam Speaker, on this matter during this session, the logical time would have been Friday. Since you did not do so, I am raising a matter of privilege today, and I regret that you have not given this serious matter the priority that I think it deserves, that you have given it absolutely no attention. It is as if the Premier can roam the periphery of this Legislative Assembly issuing threats against members without being accountable for his words.

I understand, Madam Speaker, that the second test for a matter of privilege is that the member present a prima facie case. With this in mind, I want to recall the events of November 22, the ones that led to my point of order. The Premier, as I have indicated, was moving about the Legislative Chamber in what I am calling the periphery. I suppose you might also call it the circumference of the building. The Premier's very

posture struck me as being cocky and combative, but perhaps that is not fair and maybe I should not say that, but that certainly was my impression. That evening the Premier stopped immediately behind my chair—right there—and in response to something said by the member for Crescentwood, I think the member for Crescentwood—I heard a member wants to know what the member for Crescentwood said—I think—but I did not hear—the member for Crescentwood said something about the Premier hiding behind the skirts of the Speaker, and it was in response to this that the Premier said: come outside and I will kick your lights out, Timmy.

* (1335)

Madam Speaker, the Premier's words were heard by other members of the Legislative Assembly, by my colleague from Flin Flon and by my colleague from St. James. The member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) joined in the general advice to you that day, and he pointed out the following. I am quoting from the member for Flin Flon, November 22, 1996. The member for Flin Flon: Madam Speaker, on a new point of order—although it relates to the other point of order as well—it is not just a matter of catcalling back and forth. We are talking about the Premier coming on this side and not only saying the things—and then there is a break at which point you speak. Then the member for Flin Flon continues: "Totally apart from verifying what the member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) said, I also heard the Premier (Mr. Filmon) call my honourable friend from Dauphin a name that I will not repeat in this House, Madam Speaker. I do not think this is acceptable behaviour."

Madam Speaker, I heard the name that the member for Flin Flon did not repeat, would not repeat in the House, and I repeat it today for everybody to hear. The Premier called the member for Dauphin an asshole.

An Honourable Member: Shame.

Ms. McGifford: Shame, for sure.

Madam Speaker, my personal reaction that night, as a person who has worked both inside and outside this Legislature on violence issues, was to see the obvious. How can we have a province free from violence when

the Premier of this province, the so-called elder statesman of Canada, utters physical threats inside the Legislative Chamber? If any point of order deserves swift and immediate ruling, it should be the one that I raised that evening. The Premier's threats were an affront not only to me but to all members of this Legislative Chamber, though some members do not seem to understand this. I gather from the general murmurs and whatnot I am catching over here, the Premier's threats that evening were an insult to all members of the Legislative Chamber and, indeed, to all Manitobans and to the democratic process itself. Intimidation and threats simply should not be countenanced in this House.

Madam Speaker, on November 22, 1996, you took my point of order under advisement, and the next day the Premier admitted his folly in the Free Press. Here I quote from Friday, November 22. The Premier says: In a fit of anger, I said something I regret saying. That is a quotation from the Premier. You must have known that the Premier publicly and quite willingly cemented my point of order and yet you chose not to rule.

I want to point out that the Premier's breach is a serious one according to the rules of Parliament. Here I want to quote from Maingot on matters of privilege. I believe this gentleman is regarded as an expert on Canadian parliamentary privilege. Anyway, I would like to quote from him: Members are entitled to go about their parliamentary business undisturbed. The assaulting, menacing or insulting of any member on the floor of the House or while he is coming or going to or from the House or an account of his behaviour during a proceeding in Parliament is a violation of the rights of Parliament. Any form of intimidation of the member for or on account of his behaviour during a proceeding in Parliament could amount to contempt. That is a quotation from Maingot, who is an expert on Canadian parliamentary privilege.

Madam Speaker, I also want to quote from Beauchesne, who writes: It is generally accepted that any threat or attempts to influence the vote or actions of a member is a breach of privilege.

This type of incident, threats of physical violence and intimidation is the most serious complaint one member can raise against another and yet, Madam Speaker, you

refused to rule on this extremely grave and serious matter. You are often quick to rule on points of order which have none of the violent, ugly content inherent in the Premier's, the one I raised concerning the Premier. You are quick to rule on points of order that have nothing to do with violence and/or intimidation. For example, on June 25, 1997, you were, I am sure, aware that the NDP caucus had filed a matter of urgent public importance, yet you chose to preempt it and instead you chose to present a controversial ruling concerning the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). Of course, in this instance the Premier was the person who had been insulted by the member for Thompson because the member for Thompson had suggested to the Premier, and here I quote: that he was "lining the pockets of Bay Street brokers and his political friends." You certainly gave this matter quick attention. You demanded that the member for Thompson retract his words and the member challenged your ruling.

* (1340)

On this very day, the Leader of the Opposition brought up my point of order. I want to quote from the Leader of the Opposition's speech in this House on June 25, 1997. The Leader of the Opposition said: "Where is the ruling on the Premier on a very simple matter of making a statement about punching out the lights of the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale)—kicking out the lights—a point that he has never apologized for in this House. He has done it in the Free Press. He has never done it in this Chamber." Then, further on in his speech, the Leader of the Opposition said: "Somebody called the First Minister threatens to punch out the lights or kick out the lights of another member of this Chamber, the First Minister admits it in the newspaper, he apologizes in the newspaper, and the Speaker is too incompetent or too lacking in a backbone to give us a ruling within a couple of days of the session starting."

Now 76 days later, Madam Speaker, we still do not have a ruling on the point of order that I raised. Again, I want to make the point that apparently the sensibilities of some people are more equal than the sensibilities of other people, and yet you assure us that we are all honourable members in this House.

Madam Speaker, your duty as Speaker is to preserve order in this House and to protect the rights and

privileges of all members, though at times, including the time concerning me, I would think you have been derelict in your duty.

Madam Speaker, a strong, clear statement is required now in a matter so grave and so undermining to the principles of parliamentary democracy. There is no room—as I said earlier—for discretion. You simply must rule on my point of order. Furthermore, the arguments that you may not have heard the Premier's words really cut no ice. Not only has the Premier publicly admitted to his words, but if you did not hear them, the matter should have been referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections for inquiry.

By failing to rule on this point of order, Madam Speaker, you appear to be treating members unequally and therefore without the respect that all honourable members are promised. You, by failing to rule on my point of order, have belittled my integrity, dismissed my certain knowledge and disregarded my words. By failing to rule in this extremely grave matter, you have clearly communicated to members of the opposition that you have no intentions to protect them from intimidation nor to take their issues seriously.

Madam Speaker, I regret to say that your behaviour in this matter smacks of partiality and conclusion; some would even call it corruption. Quite clearly, your partiality and unwillingness to respect properly my rights and privileges as a member of this House interfere in my ability to perform my responsibilities. Your failure to rule on this point of order is in itself intimidation for it has a chilling effect on opposition points of order, especially when those opposition points of order concern the Premier who appears to be your special pet or favourite MLA and, of course, Speakers should have neither House pets nor play favourites.

Madam Speaker, I regret having to say that your refusal to rule on my point of order amounts to contempt of this House and serves to obstruct this House in the performance of its functions. In short, the intimidation, disrespect and inequality inherent in your failure to respond to my point of order does indeed constitute a prima facie case.

I now move, seconded by the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale),

THAT this House no longer has confidence in the sitting Speaker and that this House censure the Speaker for failing to rule on my November 22, 1996, point of order.

* (1345)

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, of course questions of privilege ought to be, as set out in Beuchesne, extremely rare and ought to be treated very seriously. I believe the issues raised by the honourable member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) have in the activities of this House been treated seriously in the previous session. There have been a number of occasions since the difficulties of a year ago about which all honourable members are aware—there have been many expressions between all parties in this House of a willingness to work together to put the concerns of the people of Manitoba ahead of our personal concerns and to do the work of the people of Manitoba. We demonstrated that last spring during the flood of the century. There were numerous times in this House when accommodations were made by our members for opposition members, by opposition members for our members so that they could be involved in their communities helping their constituents and their fellow Manitobans in dealing with the flood of the century. There have been numerous opportunities to show that the spirit in this House is moving in the right direction again and we are getting the work of the people done.

The fact that we are sitting here today, Madam Speaker, dealing with the throne speech and a day or two has been set aside also for further business of this House is another example of the kind of co-operation that can prevail around here when we put the interests of the people of Manitoba ahead of those narrow interests and concerns we might have.

I think the honourable members opposite are having a little trouble putting the past where it belongs and dealing with the issues that we have before us. I think the Premier (Mr. Filmon) has made his position known about the matters raised by the honourable member today, and it seems somewhat gratuitous that this matter should be raised by that honourable member at this particular time when efforts are being made by honourable members on all sides of this House to work

co-operatively and to put the interests of the people of Manitoba ahead of our own.

I ask you to view this matter in that particular light and the matter will be disposed of in whatever way it will be disposed of, but nothing the honourable member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) does to try to bring back difficulties of the past, Madam Speaker, will alter our determination on this side of the House to continue to put the interests of the people of Manitoba ahead of our own and ahead of all others.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Deputy Opposition House Leader): I would like to make some brief remarks regarding the motion that is before the House.

There are two passages in Beuchesne that I would like to quote. The first is 93. "It is generally accepted that any threat, or attempt to influence the vote of, or actions of a Member, is breach of privilege." What could be more clear as a threat than the remark "Come outside and say that to my face, and I will kick your lights out, Timmy."?

I think that despicable remark certainly fits with Beuchesne 93, and your inability or unwillingness to provide a ruling on a point of order is also very disappointing to members on this side of the House. It could have been dealt with expeditiously as soon as the Premier (Mr. Filmon) took his seat again. You had numerous opportunities not only to make a ruling after Question Period every day as you normally do, but during the course of the sitting you could have made a ruling and asked the Premier to stand up and apologize, as you frequently do in this Chamber, as you frequently have to do with the Premier and ask him to apologize for remarks that he has made.

I have been here seven years. Every time you have asked him to apologize he has apologized. That would have been the end of it. We would not have had a matter of privilege. We would not have had a motion of censure against you if you had taken that very simple act of bringing in a ruling either after Question Period or during the sitting and asked the Premier to do the right thing and apologize.

* (1350)

As you know, we could not have brought it up again. We would not have brought it up again. The matter would have been over, but as long as you do not bring in a ruling for a whole session and other days as well, this is the result, that it is still festering and it is going to fester until either you bring in a ruling and order the Premier to apologize or the Premier does the right thing and gets up on his feet and apologizes on his own—[interjection] or the Speaker resigns, as one of my honourable colleagues suggests.

I would also like to quote Beauchesne 99. “Direct threats which attempt to influence Members' actions in the House are undoubtedly breaches of privilege. They do, however, provide serious problems for the House. They are often made anonymously and it is rarely possible for the House to examine them satisfactorily. The common practice today is to turn the responsibility for investigating them over to the ordinary forces of the law.”

I think Beauchesne is suggesting some rather serious implications here and that is that we had a choice and you had a choice that we could either bring it up as a matter of privilege or a point of order, which was done, or it could have been referred to the police force to investigate, and certainly the Premier (Mr. Filmon) would not have wanted that course of action. This is a much less serious way of dealing with it by having a point of order, and yet you chose not even to rule on the point of order. I think you should have at least examined Beauchesne and foreseen the implications of these various precedents and done the right thing. Regretfully, we once again—not for the first time but for several times in a row now—express our lack of faith in your office and your ability to carry out your office as Speaker. Thank you.

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): Madam Speaker, I look at the children who have come to view the proceedings today, children from the constituency of my colleague from St. Boniface, and what are we talking about? What are we talking about? Let us get on with governing. Let us get on with talking about important issues and quit talking like little school children about little things. [interjection] If anybody was concerned about violence, would they be here today? Come on, let us get on with it, and let us get on with important issues.

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, first in response to the member for The Maples, no school in this province tolerates violence or threats of violence in its schoolyards or in its halls. Violence or the direct threat of violence is not acceptable in any of the schools that you served as a trustee for or in any of the schools that any of us have in our ridings.

Madam Speaker, I will be very brief. The matter before us today is simply twofold. The substance of the threats made against me—though I did not personally hear them—have been acknowledged and admitted in the press. They have never been acknowledged and admitted in this House. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) has never apologized to me personally either privately or publicly. The second is the issue of privilege itself, and that has to do with your ruling and your failure to rule.

Madam Speaker, one of the issues of a matter of privilege is whether it is made in a timely fashion. In some ways that criterion has to be seen as one in which we have exercised the greatest of patience. We had many opportunities in which we could have gotten up and asked you why you had not ruled. We deliberately gave you as much time as we thought was possibly reasonable. You had months and months of this House sitting; you had last week. You had many opportunities to make your views known on this matter, this question of order that was raised by my colleague. You have chosen not to do so.

We have been more than patient. It is time to lay this matter to rest, and it is time to get on with the work of this House in a way in which the public has confidence and in a way in which the Premier conducts himself with honour and not having to apologize so frequently. So, Madam Speaker, we await your ruling on this question, and we think it is very important.

* (1355)

Madam Speaker: Given the seriousness of this matter, I am sure that the House would want to debate it at the earliest opportunity.

Therefore, the question before the House is: I move, seconded by the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale), that this House no longer has confidence in the sitting

Speaker and this House censure the Speaker for failing to rule on my November 22, 1996, point of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I trust that you are calling for a question on that particular motion. If that is the case, I would like to put a few words on the record prior to the vote. [interjection] There will be a question today. Well, I do want to at least get on the record in terms of some of my thoughts with respect to this particular issue.

In the past, both as Chairs, Deputy Speaker, yourself included, points of order are raised on numerous occasions, and to the very best of my knowledge I am not convinced that all of those points of order that have been taken as notice from the Chair or the Speaker have not necessarily been reported back on. That is not necessarily to defend the Premier. I do believe the Premier was wrong, and the Premier should have done what was honourable to this Chamber, stand up and apologize for the remarks. He did that to the media; I see no reason why he could not stand up today and do likewise for the Chamber.

But having said that, I listened to what individuals were saying from the NDP and from the government House leader. When I hear issues such as pet speakers or the Speaker has pet MLAs, I hear about the intimidation. I will not play a game on that particular issue. Speakers in the past, whether it was Myrna Phillips—I believe it was Sharon Carstairs who walked up with the NDP Leader at the time to bring in the Speaker because the Conservatives were upset with the Speaker. When we talk about intimidation, how much more intimidating can you get when you have two or three MLAs visibly walk across the Chamber floor and hold threatening gestures towards the Speaker? All of us—and, again, it is not necessarily to take sides—you always have to put into context what was actually occurring. It does not necessarily justify the actions. I would equally—not only would I like to see the Premier (Mr. Filmon) stand up, Madam Speaker, I would like to see the individuals that walked across the floor, the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) to stand up and apologize, because that was not a positive day for parliamentary process.

Madam Speaker, I do believe that given the seriousness of that particular point of order, there is an

obligation from the Speaker's Chair to come forward and make some sort of a ruling. In addition to that, I would suggest that maybe it is necessary that we revisit the way in which points of order and matters of privilege are in fact reported to the Chamber. I can recall others where there has not been a report back, or at least to the very best of my knowledge, even in the case of a matter of privilege. Again, because I was not forewarned of this occurring this morning, I do not have the actual incident, but I do know there needs to be more of a reporting back to this Chamber when serious things occur inside this Chamber where there is a need for some sort of recourse.

I am going to sit down on that, but I would like to see and I invite the Premier to stand up, and following the Premier, Madam Speaker, I would also like to see the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh), I believe it was the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) also apologize for their behaviour on those ugly days back in November of '96.

* (1400)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I appreciate very much the remarks that have been made by some of the members who have spoken today. I want to say that as the government House leader has indicated, we had hoped that by virtue of the actions that we were taking and the endeavours that we were making to try and heal wounds, to try and work with the opposition to plan the session, to invite their participation in a variety of ways and decisions that have to collectively be made by this Chamber, we could put behind us a good deal of the nastiness and the ill will that was felt here about a year ago in this Chamber.

Madam Speaker, I know that this is not a time that we should be just simply repeating old arguments and old matters, but because the member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) has invited the discussion, I think it is important for us to even use her own references, the reference to Maingot saying that members going to and from the Chamber should not be insulted or provoked. That is precisely what led to the circumstance that we are debating. I was going out of the Chamber to, as it turned out, the men's room and was being screamed at by the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers), the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale), in insulting

manners yelling coward, Nazi and all of those things. As I said at the time, regrettably I responded in a manner that I was certainly not proud of, and I said to the media—I immediately owned up to it and said to the media, yes, I had said it. I had not said it on the record, I had not said it as a part of the record of this Chamber at any time, but I was not in any way denying it.

Those are things that regrettably happened during this period of time, this very, I think, unfortunate period of time at which the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) came rushing down here, put his face within inches of mine, shouting at me and attempting to intimidate me during that whole period of time, Madam Speaker. I did not move. I did not move, because that we understand. We understand the level that we are dealing with in terms of members opposite. Some of those are the same members opposite, I might say, in that unfortunate strike of 1987 at Westfair Foods, at Superstore, who went out and joined in with groups of people harassing and intimidating elderly people, vulnerable people, coming out of the grocery store. Single mothers and others who were terribly vulnerable were being harassed and intimidated by the likes of the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) at that particular time. These are the tactics that they know well.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), as a former union leader, knows the tactics and understands them very, very well, and they are part of the process that they support. We do not support those kinds of things. We did not support, Madam Speaker, the very pious member from Burrows (Mr. Martindale) rushing out and attempting to challenge you physically in the hallway. He had to be stopped by the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), among others, and he has the audacity to talk here about physical intimidation.

Point of Order

Mr. Martindale: On a point of order, Madam Speaker. On the day in question, I was leaving the Chamber to see where the Speaker was going, and if anyone misinterpreted my intentions I apologize.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Burrows did not have a point of order. It was a matter of clarification.

* * *

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, all of those matters, as I said, were matters that none of us should be proud of, and I certainly have not been apologized to by the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale), or the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) who I have not heard apologize for giving Nazi salutes here in this Chamber. I have not heard the member for—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, the Premier is simply digging himself into a deeper and deeper ditch. I did not, nor did my colleague beside me, ever use the word “Nazi” or give a Nazi salute and for him to put that on the record simply makes this whole issue much worse.

Why will he not do what he should do and apologize and get it over with?

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Crescentwood does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) has been shown on the record and in photographs as having given the Nazi salute in this Chamber, and he has never apologized for it. The members opposite from Crescentwood and Dauphin will not deny that they were shouting “coward, coward, coward” as I was leaving the Chamber for the washroom, and other insulting remarks. All of those things are a part of the record that I think most of us want to put behind us.

I will take the advice of the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) as good advice. I will say despite the fact that I did not put any of the comments that I have acknowledged on the record here in this Chamber, I will apologize to the member for Crescentwood for those remarks to him. I hope that will be satisfactory to him, because I do it in the fullest extent. I do not in any way want to ever stop him from doing his job here in this Chamber, just as I would hope he does not want to prevent me from doing my job in this Chamber or any

other person on this side of the House, nor you, Madam Speaker, from doing your job in charge of this House.

I would hope that the kind of bullying that has gone on from members opposite to some of our female members from time to time in the debates in this House would be a part of the past.

I would hope that we would all investigate and review our own actions and say let us get on with it. As the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) has said, let us get on with the business of the people of this province. Let us stop all of those negative tactics of the past that New Democrats in this House have utilized far too often for any of our liking, Madam Speaker, and let us get on with the future.

So I say to the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale), I give him the full and complete apology for any comments I made in the heat of battle under the kind of shouting of insults that he was giving to me. I will withdraw my remarks completely from him so that he does not feel badly, and I hope that that satisfies, as well, the member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) in her presentation. Thank you very much.

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): I remind all members of the Legislature, particularly those across the way, that the ultimate intimidation, the most effective intimidation is to have 19 minutes left to speak on a bill and not to be recognized by the Speaker and have your microphone turned off, Madam Speaker. Do not ever forget that in this House.

Now that the Premier has apologized for his threat and his intimidation on that day in question, the question before the House remains. It is, Madam Speaker, why you did not rule on a timely basis on the point of order of the member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) and, second of all, why you took 77 days to remind us on each and every one of those sitting days that you are there as an adjunct of cabinet, and that is the worse thing a member could say about a Speaker.

You, Madam Speaker, are partial, and despite the shroud over you, you continued sitting after sitting to refuse to rule on the point of order. This is not an ordinary point of order. Extracts were read from Beauchesne which clearly shows that threats, intimidation of that nature, can also be characterized as privilege. This is the most heinous kind of allegation

that can be raised on a point of order, and you sat silent, instilling in us to an even deeper extent the fact that you are not there to protect all members of this House. You are not there to watch out for us, particularly when the Premier's (Mr. Filmon) interests are at stake.

* (1410)

I thought of what the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) said. He thought it was unfortunate that the children in the gallery today had to watch this House do what it is doing. What it is doing today, Madam Speaker, is the essence of public business. What we are doing today is the precedent and the conditioned precedent for the democratic process in this very province. I had the same kind of thoughts about what the children must think of in the gallery as I heard the member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) characterize again what the Premier had said and particularly the language used against the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers). I was saddened that the children in the gallery and all those watching at home have to now have greater insight into the character of our Premier.

I think back on the Premiers of this province, of all parties, and I am proud that they were Premiers despite ideological differences. We have been blessed in this province with good premiership, with good role models, and I am saddened that the children in the gallery had to have that insight. I would urge them to learn something positive from what happened today. You, Madam Speaker, can be part of that positive lesson. You can resign. Thank you.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, I just want to say that I accept the Premier's apology, as in the unqualified nature of it, and I thank him for it. Although it is late, I do thank him for it, and I hope we will get on with the business of the House.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

The question before the House is that this House censure the Speaker for failing to rule on the November 22 point of order.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Formal Vote

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Yeas and Nays.

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

Order, please. All those in favour of the motion, please rise.

Division

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

Yeas

Barrett, Cerilli, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Evans (Brandon East), Evans (Interlake), Friesen, Jennissen, Lathlin, Mackintosh, Maloway, Martindale, McGifford, Mihychuk, Reid, Robinson, Sale, Santos, Struthers.

Nays

Cummings, Derkach, Driedger, Dyck, Erms, Faurshou, Filmon, Findlay, Gaudry, Gilleshammer, Helwer, Lamoureux, Laurendeau, McAlpine, McCrae, McIntosh, Newman, Penner, Pitura, Radcliffe, Reimer, Render, Rocan, Stefanson, Sveinson, Toews, Tweed.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Yeas 20, Nays 27.

Madam Speaker: The motion is accordingly defeated.

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Madam Speaker, I was paired with the minister of multiculturalism and immigration. Had I not been paired, I would have voted in favour of the motion.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, I was paired with the Minister of Industry,

Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey). Had I not been paired, I would have voted in favour of the motion brought forward by the member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford).

Mr. Kowalski: I was paired with the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson). If I was not paired, I would have voted against the motion.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Winnipeg Education Centre

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT under the banner of the University of Manitoba, the Winnipeg Education Centre has had 25 years of success graduating specialists in inner city education and 16 years of success graduating specialist in inner city social work; and

THAT the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) has announced that, "primary responsibility of the teacher training component of the Winnipeg Education Centre will move to the University of Winnipeg"; and

THAT the co-existence of education and social work programs is crucial to the survival of the Winnipeg Education Centre; and

THAT the Winnipeg Education Centre is valued as a community within the framework of the University of Manitoba; and

THAT no rationale has been given for dissolving this relationship.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLYPRAY that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) to consider immediately reinstating the inner city education program to the University of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT under the banner of the University of Manitoba, the Winnipeg Education Centre has had 25 years of success graduating specialists in inner city education and 16 years of success graduating specialist in inner city social work; and

THAT the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) has announced that, "primary responsibility of the teacher training component of the Winnipeg Education Centre will move to the University of Winnipeg"; and

THAT the co-existence of education and social work programs is crucial to the survival of the Winnipeg Education Centre; and

THAT the Winnipeg Education Centre is valued as a community within the framework of the University of Manitoba; and

THAT no rationale has been given for dissolving this relationship.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) to consider immediately reinstating the inner city education program to the University of Manitoba.

* (1420)

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT under the banner of the University of Manitoba, the Winnipeg Education Centre has had 25 years of

success graduating specialists in inner city education and 16 years of success graduating specialist in inner city social work; and

THAT the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) has announced that, "primary responsibility of the teacher training component of the Winnipeg Education Centre will move to the University of Winnipeg"; and

THAT the co-existence of Education and Social Work programs is crucial to the survival of the Winnipeg Education Centre; and

THAT the Winnipeg Education Centre is valued as a community within the framework of the University of Manitoba; and

THAT no rationale has been given for dissolving this relationship.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) to consider immediately reinstating the inner city education program to the University of Manitoba.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the following reports for the Department of Justice, copies of which have been previously distributed. I will read out the reports I am tabling.

The 1996-1997 Annual Report, Department of Justice; 1996-97 Annual Report, Seizure and Impoundment Registry; Civil Legal Services, Special Operating Agency Annual Report for the year ending March 31, 1997; 25th Annual Report, Legal Aid Manitoba; Human Rights Commission 1996 Annual Report, Human Rights Commission Annual Report on the Administration of The Discriminatory Business Practices Act, year ending March 31, 1997; the 1994-95 Annual Report Victims Assistance Committee; 1995-96 Annual Report Victims Assistance Committee; 1996-1997 Criminal Injuries Compensation Board; 1996 Manitoba Law Reform Commission Report on Stalking; 1997 Manitoba Law Reform Commission Report on Section 270 of The Highway Traffic Act;

Fatality Inquiries Report for the years 1995-96, 1993-94; '95 and '96 Annual Reports of the Officer of the Commissioner Law Enforcement Review Agency; 1996-1997 Annual Report of the Public Trustee.

As indicated, all of these reports have been previously distributed.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the Annual Report for the Food Development Centre, copies of which were previously distributed, as well as the Annual Report for the Department of Rural Development.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table several annual reports for which copies have been previously distributed. Firstly, the Annual Report for the Ministry of Agriculture, the Annual Report for the Canada-Manitoba Crop Insurance Corporation, and the Annual Report for the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation.

Hon. Mike Radcliffe (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, I, too, would like to table some reports today. The 1996-97 Annual Report for the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs; the Annual Report for the Automobile Insurance Appeal Commission; the Annual Report for the Special Operating Agency of Vital Statistics; and the 1996-97 Annual Report for the Corporations Branch.

A number of these reports have already been circulated.

Madam Speaker: I am pleased to table the following annual reports this afternoon, the Annual Report of the Provincial Ombudsman with relation to Section 55; The Freedom of Information Act for the year ended December 31, 1996; and the Annual Report of the Provincial Ombudsman for the year ended December 31, 1996.

Prior to Oral Questions, when I introduced the pages on the opening day of this session, unfortunately there was no sound on the coverage for the viewing public. Therefore, the introductions meant very little to the viewers across the province. Consequently, with the

indulgence of the House, I am reintroducing the pages today.

Beginning at my extreme right, they are Robyn Beninger, Boundary School Division; Sophia Radwanski, Seven Oaks School Division; Sara Katz, Winnipeg School Division; Melody Drolet, Winnipeg School Division; Andrea Stevens, St. James-Assiniboia School Division; and Dave Grabowski, River East School Division. On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you.

* (1430)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Budget Information Release

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the First Minister. I would like to ask the Premier: can he confirm that his government has conducted a prebudget poll costing close to \$50,000 paid for by the public?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): The answer is yes. We are doing many things in preparing our 1998 budget. As the Leader of the Opposition knows, we hold public consultations, but across our province we are holding 12, four in Winnipeg, eight outside of Winnipeg. We do a series of other things. I meet with individual groups, and this year, yes, we are doing some public polling and surveying on various issues relating to the '98 budget and beyond.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, in light of the fact that the Minister of Finance has stated he will not release that information to the public, in light of the fact that many jurisdictions, including the federal government, have now changed their policies, and market research, paid for by the public, conducting views of the public, is released to the public, I would like to ask the Premier whether he in fact will ask his Minister of Finance, on behalf of the public, to release those findings so the public hearing process will have access to the information that they in fact paid for.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I will take that under advisement, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Doer: I would like to ask the Minister of Finance then, in light of the fact that the federal government now releases polls that are paid for by the public, many provinces release polls that are paid for by the public—we understand that market research is conducted by the Conservative Party and therefore is confidential to the Conservative Party, but obviously if the public pays for market research dealing with public opinions on matters of major public importance such as the budget, then the public surely should have the right to that information. In fact, the public should have the right to that information in the public hearing process that is taking place for the budget consultative process. Will the Minister of Finance now take the shroud of secrecy away from this market research and release it to the public who have paid for those results?

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, one can make the argument that the Leader of the Opposition makes on absolutely everything government does, and there are occasions that sometimes information is confidential for various reasons that he well knows. He has served in government; he has served in cabinet. This document at this stage is part of the policy document that will make its way through cabinet as we work on our '98 budget, so he has heard the answer from the Premier. It might well be an issue of timing as to when information can be made available, but I assure him that he will see the results of this survey and polling reflected in the 1998 budget.

AIDS/HIV Prevention Strategy

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, AIDS is an entirely preventative disease and yet last year, in 1996, 45 additional Manitobans tested positive for HIV, the virus leading to AIDS. The lifetime direct and indirect costs to the Manitoba economy are respectively \$7.5 million and \$30 million for a total of \$37.5 million, and yet this government, which prides itself on wearing AIDS ribbons and on sound management, sits on its AIDS strategy.

I want to ask the Premier, Madam Speaker, since moral arguments have not moved him, if his government will act, if he will please listen to the economic arguments and begin implementing the government's provincial AIDS strategy.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I certainly want to assure the member for Osborne that we have been acting with respect to AIDS. The member may well know that the government spends more than a million dollars above and beyond the services provided by Manitoba Health directly to patients with respect to HIV and AIDS, including funding for the Village Clinic, including an information line at the Village Clinic, including funding for Mount Carmel Clinic and for community nurses. The member should know that that matter is being pursued very vigorously by the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik).

Ms. McGifford: Well, I could argue with the minister, but I suppose this is not—

Madam Speaker: Question.

Ms. McGifford: Madam Speaker, since this government claims to care about child prostitution and since the more than 2,600 child prostitutes in Manitoba are a high-risk population for HIV, I want to ask the Premier once again if he will commit himself to take the necessary remedial steps in order to save these children.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Acting Minister of Health): I will take that question as notice on behalf of the Minister of Health.

Ms. McGifford: That was a very brave answer.

Madam Speaker, since estimates—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the honourable member for Osborne that there is no preamble required on a second supplementary question. Would you please pose your question now.

Ms. McGifford: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. Since estimates are that by the year 2000 one in four persons north of the 60th parallel will be positive and since in the throne speech this government flagged aboriginal people, will the Premier deliver and implement an AIDS strategy that targets aboriginal people?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Speaker, I know that the member would want a full and complete answer, and

for that reason I will take it as notice on behalf of the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik).

AIDS/HIV Public Housing

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Speaker, we are concerned that in the last session's throne speech a number of promises were made that have not been kept, and this session's throne speech simply makes similar promises. The government promised in 1997 in March to provide housing assistance to high-risk groups as well as promised a new integrated model for palliative care. Certainly these are unkept promises to people with HIV and AIDS.

I want to ask the Minister of Housing—an issue which I raised in Estimates last year in April or April '97 when he said there is lots of room to accommodate the individuals that I was mentioning then—with 1,300 vacancies in Manitoba Housing Authority properties, what strategy do you have for housing people with HIV and AIDS?

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Housing): Madam Speaker, I believe what the member is referring to is possibly an overlap between programs in Housing and programs under the Urban Affairs, under the WDA, the housing for high-risk groups. There is an allocation of funding under the Winnipeg Development Agreement for assistance to high-risk groups which would include people with high risks and victims of family violence, disabled persons and aboriginals. I am not too sure whether the member would like me to answer the questions under the WDA initiative or under the Housing initiative.

Ms. Cerilli: Madam Speaker, given that the minister is negotiating an agreement with the federal government to take over management of CMHC properties, are you going to include strategies to work with community groups to ensure there are subsidy and designation of units through the Manitoba Housing Authority and your government for HIV patients and AIDS patients similar to Artemis Housing Co-op on Furby Street?

Mr. Reimer: Madam Speaker, under the Manitoba Housing Authority, there is the initiative that we are looking at in trying to work with the Health department

in trying to utilize some of the spaces we have in our housing complexes where there can be a sharing of resources or sharing of directions for the sake of housing some of the high-risk units. We are in a negotiating process with Health, and hopefully we can come to some sort of agreement where we can get the best utilization not only for the patients but for the utilization of vacancies in our housing stock.

* (1440)

AIDS Hospice Government Actions

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): My final supplementary is for the Premier. In March '97 the Minister of Health said that a recommendation for an AIDS hospice was certainly worthy of consideration, and he was sure that it would be brought to his attention.

I want to ask the Premier: what has his government done to follow through on this community action plan recommendation to his government for an AIDS hospice?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, because I know the member would want to have that answered as fully as possible, I will take that as notice on behalf of the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik).

Gambling Addiction Treatment Programs

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Madam Speaker, my questions are to the Minister of Finance.

Approximately 40,000 Manitobans are problem—or addicted to gambling. Many families are experiencing the horrible consequences of these gambling addictions with only less than 900 individuals receiving help from the AFM.

Will this government now increase its funding for public awareness and treatment programs for gaming-related addictions from its meagre 0.5 percent? Less than 1 percent of gaming revenues is put towards the help of people to deal with those issues. Will the minister provide more for treating and helping families?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act): Madam Speaker, several years ago approximately \$500,000 a year was provided in funding for the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba to deal with gaming-related issues. Within a year or two the Addictions Foundation requested almost an additional \$500,000, bringing the total up to just under a million dollars. That money was provided at their request at that time to provide education, counselling and so on. Since then, there have been no additional requests for support.

But as the member, I believe, knows, just in the last few weeks a working group with representation from the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba, the Gaming Control Commission, the hotel industry, the restaurant industry and the Lotteries Corporation has gotten together to work on what is called an aggressive intervention program. They are working on the framework of just how that will unfold. There are passive intervention programs now, phone numbers, ways of steering people to the appropriate counselling and so on. This is intended to become a much more aggressive program, and we are awaiting them to finalize both the details and the elements of that program and the financial cost related to it. We expect that very shortly. We will be dealing with that as well.

Video Lottery Terminals Community Decisions

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Madam Speaker, my second question to the Minister of Finance: now that we have seen so many tragedies in a very short time frame related primarily—as these families say—to VLTs, will the minister finally agree to allow those communities, our communities in Manitoba, to decide whether they want VLTs and whether they want these machines in their own communities, as is done in Alberta and Saskatchewan and was recommended by the Desjardins report?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act): Madam Speaker, the member refers to the Lottery Policy Review group which was chaired by Mr. Desjardins, most commonly called the Desjardins report. That was released to us at the end of

1995. We immediately took some actions from that report, the establishment of an independent Gaming Commission. We actually went further on the whole issue of VLTs. If she will recall, the report suggested no change in the number of VLTs. We reduced VLTs in Manitoba by some 15 percent or 650 machines during 1996. Another recommendation they made was on this whole issue of whether or not communities should be holding referenda and what should happen with proceeds and so on. That issue has been referred to the independent Gaming Commission. We expect them to deal with it and report back very shortly.

Minister Responsible for Lotteries Conflict of Interest

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Will this minister admit that he is in an inherent conflict of interest as being both the minister of gambling and the Minister of Finance, and will he immediately relinquish the gambling portfolio so that we, the people of Manitoba and the provincial government, can have a Minister responsible for Lotteries who actually cares about the people and the effects of gambling on those families, not only money?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act): Madam Speaker, I will admit no such thing. I think our track record in terms of dealing with gambling is in a responsible fashion. We are the only province in all of Canada to have done two reviews of this entire issue by one of the world's most foremost experts, Dr. Rachel Volberg. We have said all along this is not an issue that is driven by money. In fact—

An Honourable Member: Baloney.

Mr. Stefanson: We hear “baloney” coming from the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), from a party that introduced gambling in Manitoba—the ultimate hypocrisy.

The member for St. James only needs to look at the changes that have taken place within the last year where we do have a minister responsible for the Gaming Control Commission and the Gaming Control

Commission is responsible for the regulations, for the licensing, for policy recommendation and so on. Manitoba Lotteries Corporation, which I have responsibility for, is responsible for the facilities here in Manitoba, so there is a distinction, there is a difference and she should take the time to look at the current structure that is in place.

Video Lottery Terminals Government Strategy

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Finance. The negative social costs of gambling in the province of Manitoba have been horrendous. There have been seven known cases of suicide. The social costs of family breakup, financial problems have been, simply put, overwhelming. The gambling policy from this government has been driven for revenue generation, and we find that the government's action with respect to the commission or report by Larry Desjardins to be very lacking in addressing the issue.

My question is to the Minister of Finance. The chairman's remarks for change were first and foremost, cap the present number of VLTs while it develops a plan for redistribution of the said machines. Has the government moved in any direction in addressing the very serious issue of VLTs in the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act): As the member just referred to and read from the Desjardins report, the report was to cap the machines at the existing level at the time of the report. We went further than that. We reduced the machines by 650 or some 15 percent of the VLTs. We also put in place that there will be a review of gaming in Manitoba, particularly as it relates to VLTs, at least every two years, and that review is now scheduled to take place starting in early 1998, which will be almost the two-year anniversary of the information from the Desjardins report. So not only did we take immediate action, which went further than the Desjardins report by reducing VLTs by some 650 machines, we put in place a review process that will require a total review every two years.

Mr. Lamoureux: Will then the Minister of Finance commit today that there will in fact be a redistribution of VLT machines so that we do not have VLT machines scattered in every corner throughout the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, I do not think I should prejudge the review and consultation that the Gaming Control Commission will do. The member for Inkster does recall in part how VLTs originated in Manitoba and I believe elsewhere in Canada was at the request of the hotel industries across Canada. Some concerns about some of our smaller hotels in some of our rural communities, that was one of the reasons that VLTs were originally introduced, but I want to indicate to him, I do not want to influence what they will find from their consultation, from their review and their analysis, and they will be undertaking that in 1998.

Gaming Control Commission Standing Committee Appearance

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, will the Minister of Finance allow for the Gaming Commission to come before a legislative standing committee so that members of the opposition can hold them accountable for the lack of action in terms of trying to address some of these very serious social problems, because this government has refused wholeheartedly to try to address the serious problems facing Manitoba as a direct result of this government's craving for revenue generation through lotteries?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act): Madam Speaker, again I disagree with a great deal of what the member has said in terms of if you look at the things that we have done over the years in terms of dealing with gaming in a very responsible fashion, in terms of doing the only study, not once but twice, by one of the world's foremost experts in terms of the issues of problem and pathological gambling, in terms of establishing a lottery policy working group chaired by Mr. Desjardins, but not only having Mr. Desjardins, having some 13 other individuals from right across our province representing a broad cross-section of our community from law enforcement to religious organizations to municipal organizations and so on, a very reflective organization

that brought a whole range of views and ideas to the issue.

* (1450)

Not only did we deal with the Desjardins report very quickly upon receiving it, in many cases we took actions that went beyond the Desjardins report, and the one I refer to very specifically is the issue of reducing VLTs by some 15 percent or 650 machines.

So I would argue with him that we have been very responsible. We take this issue very seriously. We take the events of the last few weeks very seriously, Madam Speaker, in terms of the kinds of things that we need to be doing in this province as we move forward. We will be having further discussions with the Addictions Foundation to ensure we are doing adequate education up front, providing adequate resources for counselling and doing all of the things that we can to ensure that gaming and gambling does not become a problem for the citizens of Manitoba, recognizing they have the opportunity to participate here in Manitoba, right across Canada and in most parts of the United States.

Parents' Forum Public Discussions

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): My question is for the Minister of Education. Madam Speaker, the Manitobans who attended the government's parents' education forum this weekend had naturally expected that they could speak publicly to the minister, that they could express their own views and listen to the views of others from across the province. They were angry and disappointed, to say the least, to find that they were faced with five straight hours of lecture and 15 minutes of questions with civil servants that the minister only agreed to as damage control after pressure from parents.

I would like to ask the minister to explain why she designed her forum or her lecture series to enable her to avoid public questions and public discussion on matters of serious concern to parents across Manitoba.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): The member is wrong, for starters, very wrong. Her time lines are wrong. Her premises are wrong. I appreciate she was there for a few hours in

the morning to hear the guest speaker, Dr. Bill Randall, who is chairman of the National Assessment Committee for Standards and Assessments of the United States of America following through on the president's initiatives in the United States. That was a guest speaker. He did speak for the better part of an hour, but during the course of the day, Madam Speaker, we had in all approximately two and a quarter hours of chance for the participants to take part.

The member unfortunately left midway through the day, was not there for the rest of the day. Many, many parents expressed interest, and I appreciate their interest in having yet another Parents' Forum on the same topic following the same pattern, Madam Speaker, which we would be pleased to provide at another time. The member is wrong in her premise. She maybe should have stayed for the rest of the day and would have known what went on.

Ms. Friesen: I spoke to people who were there in the afternoon, and they gave me exactly that result.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the honourable member for Wolseley this is not a time for debate. The honourable member was recognized to pose a supplementary question to which no preamble is required.

Budget

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Would the minister tell us what her budget was for the Parents' Forum and whether it includes provision for a published summary of the comments of parents, many of whom were appalled at the minister's lack of public accountability in her own forum?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I regret the member opposite was not present for the conclusion of the day. I regret that the member only listened to a small component of her friends—of the people who were there.

Madam Speaker, I regret that the member does not care more for the whole premise of that forum, which was a feedback accountability session from the

government to the people, as was explained at the forum and was stated in the presentation.

At our first forum four years ago, parents clearly asked for the government to implement standards and have them measured. At this particular forum—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Ms. Friesen: I wonder if you could direct the minister to answer the question, which asked for the cost of the forum, for the budget, and whether it included provision for a published summary of the comments of parents at that forum.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Education, on the same point of order.

Mrs. McIntosh: When the preamble and the question are intermingled so that one cannot determine which is the preamble and which is the question, then I am answering points that were raised in the member's remarks. I have no way of knowing which was intended to be preamble and which was intended to be question. I am going to answer all of it. I will answer all the points she put forward.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Wolseley, I would ask that the honourable Minister of Education and Training respond to the question asked.

* * *

Mrs. McIntosh: The question asked included a question about the purpose of the forum, and that portion of the answer is as follows. That was the first part of the question, and that portion of the answer is as follows. The forum was a commitment made by this government to present back to the public how we had fulfilled their request of the first forum. It was designed to be a day in which we would provide feedback to the input they had given us four years ago. That we did. As well, of course, the day did include question-and-answer periods at the end of each session, followed by an hour and a half question period at the end of the day.

Madam Speaker, the cost for the conference, which was another part of the question, came to—I do not have the exact figure but I can—I think it is in the vicinity of about \$10,000, which included everything from the preparation of the kits, the guest speakers, honorarium, the rental of equipment, et cetera, plus the bag lunches for the students, but that money for the participants went back to schools because it was prepared by food services departments in a local regional school. I can get her the exact figure though, if she would like it.

Immigration

Professional/Technical Accreditation

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): I would like to direct my question to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) or the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) or whoever is acting as Premier. Yesterday President Fidel Ramos of the Philippines visited Manitoba on an historic basis. While here, the president noted the problems many Filipino immigrants and other immigrants have in having their professional and technical accreditations not being recognized by self-seeking organizations in this province. Regrettably, this issue has not been a priority of this Tory government in all the years, nine years more or less, of their governance in this province.

My question to the Premier, or whoever is acting on his behalf, is this: what is this government prepared to do with the doctors and engineers, like the Premier, and other professionals, so they can get the job they are trained for?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Acting Premier): Madam Speaker, the information that the member brings to the House is certainly something I will bring to the attention of my colleagues with relative responsibility in that area, but certainly this community and this province have always been very welcoming to all the members of the Filipino community and others and certainly support their seeking opportunity within this province.

Mr. Santos: A supplementary, Madam Speaker. Will the Acting Premier consider exercising his enlightened leadership in removing the artificial barriers to new Manitobans so that they can contribute their training, skill and knowledge on an equal basis as any other Manitobans?

Mr. Cummings: Madam Speaker, I think there might be some debate around the words "artificial barriers," but let me assure the member as I did a moment ago that we do want to welcome the Filipino community and all others to exercise the best opportunity to make a living in this province.

* (1500)

Head Tax

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): My final supplementary, Madam Speaker. Given the challenges facing families attempting to reunify due to the federal head tax and the declining immigration levels in this province for the last six years, will the Premier urge the Prime Minister of Canada that scrapping the head tax should be a priority of the next federal budget?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I want to thank my honourable friend for his point of view on this issue. Like him, I had the pleasure of being yesterday at the gathering in honour of President Ramos. I also had the pleasure of being with Team Canada in the Philippines this year. I want to say to him that we have always argued to the federal government, and I will continue to do so, that they should not be placing barriers in the way of an open immigration policy. The limits that they have placed on the numbers that Canada is willing to accept are not limits that we in Manitoba support. They are designed for a one-size-fits-all policy for Toronto and Vancouver where there is some opposition to continued open immigration, but we do not support that. We do not support the head tax that the federal government has put on which is indeed a barrier to many who would choose to come to this country.

I will say to him though that as a result of the Province of Manitoba entering into a federal-provincial agreement on immigration, we have finally stemmed the reduction in immigrants coming to our province, and last year for the first time in half a decade we had an increase in the numbers of immigrants coming to our province versus the previous year, and this year it appears as though we are up again over last year. So, by getting involved provincially, by showing our support, by assisting in the process of identifying and recruiting immigrants, we have turned around what we think has been a series of negative policies by the federal government, but we think we could go further,

and his suggestion of scrapping the head tax is certainly something that we would endorse.

Budget Income Tax Revenue

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, the Premier and the Minister of Finance refuse to make public the results of their publicly funded research into the attitudes of Manitobans towards their upcoming budget. The Minister of Finance knows also that he is misleading Manitobans in regard to his budget revenues.

Will the Minister of Finance acknowledge that he is actually trying to tell Manitobans that, although last year we received \$1.653 billion in income tax, he claims that we will receive this year some \$27 million less than last year? Will he confirm that he is telling Manitobans that our income tax revenues this year will be lower than last year?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I will not confirm in any way that I am misleading Manitobans. I think that statement is coming from somebody who should know, but we are going through the process of budget consultations, providing information for a whole series of documents, one of them being our 1997 budget. I will be bringing out the second quarter report shortly, and I encourage the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) to wait for that report.

Mr. Sale: Will the Minister of Finance not simply confirm what he has already published in Public Accounts on page 1-4, that the income tax revenue for last year was \$1.653 billion, and in his budget for this year he estimates \$1.626 billion? As a matter of fact, will he not simply acknowledge the fact? He is trying to tell us we are going to get less revenue—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, I encourage the member for Crescentwood to look at the information that is being provided. He will see the source is the 1997 budget if he takes the time to look at the source of the document. We did outline in our first quarter report that we are performing better when it comes to our own

source revenues. Some of that is offset by some other reductions in some other areas of our funding sources, but I will be coming out very shortly with our second quarter report that will outline very clearly, even so the member for Crescentwood can understand, just what our revenue sources are for the upcoming year.

Floodproofing Assistance Scotia Street

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, to the Minister of Natural Resources, the government has allocated \$58 million for floodproofing properties or communities ravaged by the flood on a prioritized basis and understandably so, but would the minister explain to those approximately 700 owners of properties at risk, such as the Scotia Street neighbourhood, why the government advised me, for one, that monies became available for floodproofing these priority three properties on August 28, advice, by the way, that I passed on in writing to affected constituents, when on October 9 it was reported that there is in fact no such assistance?

Did the government not know what is going on, did not understand the costs, or is this some manipulation of flood victims?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Natural Resources): Madam Speaker, I certainly do not want to leave the member with any apprehension about ~~whether~~ or ~~not~~ we intend to deal with those properties within the city of Winnipeg, I believe are the 700 properties referring to, and in fact ~~there~~ is an issue. Certainly we fully ~~expect~~ that support will be available for those properties, and that is the premise upon which we have been dealing with some who have taken initiative to deal with their properties on the short term, and we are working with the City of Winnipeg to develop a flood response so that we can jointly prepare all of the information.

I think the member would concur that it is not unreasonable to expect that we should work hand in hand with the City of Winnipeg, and part of that is to receive and to work with them in quantifying their position vis-a-vis the response, and that particularly includes these properties.

Mr. Mackintosh: Will the minister, who has said that support will be available, now advise these property owners, and the people of Scotia will be relying on the minister's answer, specifically when will assistance be available for floodproofing for these properties, and in particular when will money at a minimum be available for feasibility for these studies, given that we have hundreds of millions of dollars in this rainy-day fund?

Mr. Cummings: Well, Madam Speaker, the member may want to provide a shot about dollars being available, but he should recall that this government announced \$34-million worth of additional funding, under which we have not yet received a joint agreement with the federal authorities, so I would remind him that our commitment already is in excess of \$100 million for the support of the recovery from the flood.

To be specific about the property owners on Scotia Street and a number of others, we will be moving as quickly as possible in conjunction with the City of Winnipeg to look at all of the appropriate measures. I do not know if the member is thinking of specific actions around Scotia Street, but certainly that is one area where it is extremely difficult to develop a dike protection proposal that does not significantly impact upon their properties and upon the quality of life in that area. That is the nature of some of the discussion that needs to occur.

Mr. Mackintosh: Again, will the minister tell these property owners and Manitobans when will the funding be available? Because I detected a blaming of the federal government in his answer, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Cummings: Madam Speaker, as I said on Friday, there is no way that I or anyone else on this side is hiding behind the federal skirts on this issue. The fact is that I am attempting to have the member and those who are of 700 families and households that are affected along the riverbanks appreciate that this is a program that will be dealt with in conjunction with the city.

Again, I am not pointing to the city in terms of timing. I am pointing to them in terms of working with us to develop a plan much the same as we have done with almost every other jurisdiction in the Red River Valley right down to the smallest municipality, where

we asked the municipality to become involved with their ratepayers, put forward a projection for ring diking or for, in some cases, even personal diking where there are implications for public property, and that all that come together under a plan.

Yes, the member can assure his constituents that we will work with them to develop what is an appropriate response. That is all part of the package that we are putting together with the City of Winnipeg. Certainly I believe that it would be the appropriate way to respond, because what we are trying to do is get an investment that is appropriate so that we no longer have to face as dramatic an increase in costs whenever a flood should occur.

*(1510)

Hog Industry Expansion

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): We have heard this government say that they want to see the hog industry double by the year 2000, and we have seen growth in that industry, but it has not been without difficulties. There are many examples such as the people at Gardenton concerned about their water, meetings in Ste. Anne where people have raised concern, concerns in the Interlake about water supplies.

I would like to ask the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) or the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) what steps are being taken to ensure that the livestock industry can expand in an orderly fashion rather than in the way that it is where we see conflicts and the possibility of putting this industry at risk.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Environment): Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable member for raising the question, because there are expectations of growth in this particular industry in Manitoba now and in the future. Indeed, we have already seen significant growth in the industry.

Madam Speaker, issues related to water and air quality and the quality of the soil itself are all issues that surround the growth in the hog industry. The Department of Agriculture in conjunction with other departments and in some cases led by the Department

of Environment are all involved in trying to ensure that orderly growth does indeed occur. For my part, of course, the concern for the environment in which we live and any health or environmental concerns that come to the fore are very often looked at by those who oppose growth and also looked at by those who are genuinely concerned about our environment.

In any case, the issue is appropriately the subject of discussion amongst producers and the government and other interested parties with respect to our waste regulation that we have now, and there are those who feel it is not strong enough and others who feel it is too strong, and work is proceeding on a regulation that will see us well into the future.

Madam Speaker: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Melvin and Elaine Penner

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise today in recognition of the accomplishment of a young couple from the Plum Coulee area, specifically the Thames district, and the names of these people are Melvin and Elaine Penner. They were recognized as Canada's outstanding young farmers at the Toronto royal exhibition last week. Mr. and Mrs. Penner have been involved in a farm organization that was started by their mom and dad. Mr. Penner's father passed away when Mr. Penner was at a very young age, but he and his brother stayed on the farm and worked with their mother to expand and build the farm operation to where it is today. They on their farm had raised sugar beets, which are now no longer there. Mr. Penner was a member of the board of directors of the Manitoba Sugar Beet Growers' Association. As well, they grow beans, corn, sunflowers, lentils, peas, canola, barley, wheat and oats on their farm. They also run a small on-farm processing operation whereby they add value to what they raise on their farm and export directly much of what they raise.

Mrs. Penner is involved in an automobile dealership in town, and so between the two of them they are involved in many community committees, boards and

do a tremendous amount of work in their community as well as the surrounding communities. Mr. Penner is one of the members involved in the establishment of a pasta plant, an industry development in the Altona area, and the two of them need to be congratulated for the tremendous amount of work they have done in their community and the tremendous success they have demonstrated and their ability that they have demonstrated in operating their farm operation in the Plum Coulee area.

Philippine President Fidel Ramos

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): May I have leave of the House to make a member's statement?

Madam Speaker: The honourable member does not require leave. He was recognized to make a statement.

Mr. Santos: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I wish to make a statement on the significance of the visit of the president of the Philippines to Winnipeg, Manitoba. This is the first time any president of the Philippines ever visited our city of Winnipeg and our province of Manitoba. The immigrants from the Philippines and elsewhere came to reside in Manitoba during the decades of 1950s and 1960s. I remember there were approximately less than a dozen of those pioneering souls who were mostly professional people like medical doctors, nurses and teachers.

It was not until the year 1968 that the first airplane loaded with seamstresses and garment workers came to Winnipeg, Manitoba. Almost every week, these workers who were recruited from abroad came to help the garment industry in this province prosper and progress. From dozens to hundreds to thousands, the members of the Filipino community grew rapidly to become one of the most visible minority groups in our city and in our province. Currently, there are approximately 45,000 Manitobans of Philippine ancestry. I suppose this tally probably includes children and infants as well. Within a time span of three decades from the 1960s onward, Manitobans of Philippine cultural heritage, despite artificial disabilities imposed upon them preventing them to use their professional and technical education, training and experience, have contributed much to our social, economic and political advancements which are

essential to our achieving a position of competitiveness in a global economy.

Finally, may I say that the Premier of this province had acted wisely and with a forward-looking vision when he explored with the president of the Philippines the possibilities and economic opportunities for mutual ventures and mutual investment relationships between our province with about a million population and approximately \$70 billion of renewable and unrenovable resources with an Asiatic country with a customer population of approximately 70 million and equal amount of resources.

Pembina Constituencies

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): The opening line in Saturday's Winnipeg Free Press sums up what I have known all along, and I quote: "In a province known for its generosity of spirit, the town of Winkler is No. 1."

In fact, two of the top-four generous communities happen to be in the constituency of Pembina. Why, you may ask. The answer is twofold. First, I noted in my moving of the throne speech, Pembina constituency is blessed with tremendous economic growth and the resulting employment opportunities.

* (1520)

The second reason has to do with the Mennonite faith prevalent in the area. As Frieda Neufeld said in an article, and I quote: "It's my involvement in our faith . . . We are our brothers' keepers to a great extent." This was a theme in my recent speech, that we are responsible for our own behaviour, we are responsible for the children we bring into this world, we are responsible for loving our neighbour as ourselves. The people of Pembina constituency have taken this belief to heart. They practise what they preach, and the result is a giving community with a strong sense of values. I am proud to represent the constituency of Pembina where people are proud to share and help the country and province that helped them out when they came here as refugees from Europe.

Madam Speaker, I would like to end with the words spoken by Jack Suderman, executive director of the resource commission of the Conference of Mennonites

in Canada, and I quote: "We have a long history of the Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite Disaster Services . . . This kind of history comes back to inspire and motivate."

No truer words were spoken. Thank you.

AIDS Prevention Strategy

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Madam Speaker, today is International AIDS Day, a time to remember those who have died from AIDS and those who continue to fight for their lives, the day to reflect on the global situation, the millions infected in Africa, the galloping numbers of people affected in Asia. Today is a day to mourn, a day to renew our energies as we work to combat this devastating disease.

Here at home in Manitoba our attention quite naturally turns to the not-implemented provincial AIDS strategy. We have heard before in this House the story of the strategy, how it grew from the government's embarrassment when Justice Krever was in Winnipeg and unearthed this government's dismal record regarding HIV and AIDS education, prevention, care and treatment. To this date, the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik), like his predecessor, has sat on his hands. AIDS is an entirely preventable disease. The watchword is prevention, prevention, prevention, and yet this minister has sat on his hands. The physical and emotional trauma, the tragedy of family grief and dislocation, the unfulfilled promises, the young lives cut short are beyond the quantifiable measure, and yet this minister sits on his hands.

The estimated direct and indirect cost to Manitoba's economy stemming from the 588 cases of AIDS are \$90 million in direct costs and \$353 million in indirect costs for a total of \$443 million, and yet this minister sits on his hands. It appears that the AIDS strategy is another political ploy. Once again people living with AIDS and their families must also live with disappointment, with broken promises, with immortality of inaction.

Today I ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon) on behalf of Manitobans living with HIV and AIDS and their families to honour his commitment, demonstrate some leadership and undertake moral action.

Economic Growth

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): It is a pleasure for me to rise in the House this afternoon at the beginning of a new session on the first day of December. It is ironic that after our neighbours to the south just celebrated Thanksgiving, Madam Speaker, we in our province are realizing how much we have to be thankful for as well and how much reason we have to be optimistic.

Madam Speaker, this is something that I have difficulty containing in the projection of my enthusiasm for what the province is accomplishing these days. Our province has been a remarkable renewal over the past decade and a province where the young people can now look at home for opportunity instead of looking abroad.

We have, through strategic stewardship on behalf of this government, become a province that enjoys strong economic diversity that has resulted in strong job growth. Our government has fostered an economy the envy of many of our provincial neighbours. We are a province that has balanced its budget for the past three years and have developed a provincial savings account that will ensure that we are prepared to absorb any future occurrences that threaten our finances. As a government, we have listened to those who have said that they are paying enough, and we have held the line on all major taxes for 10 years.

We have also helped the federal government balance their budget by absorbing cuts to the federal transfer payments. Today Manitobans have a unique luxury. Instead of debating where we must cut and save, we now are in the position where we can sit down and decide together where we should reinvest the fruits of our labour. Manitobans should be proud of the contribution they have made to our province's renewed strength, and they should feel confident that even better times are here and better to come.

To the young people of Manitoba, I say the future is yours and you shall inherit a province that is prosperous and promising. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank all Manitobans for their contributions to making Manitoba even stronger.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

(Second Day of Debate)

Madam Speaker: To resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), standing in the name of the honourable Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer).

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise again to respond to the Speech from the Throne, and it is indeed a privilege to return to our seats in the Manitoba Legislature, albeit perhaps a different colour than we had before we left here, but it is a privilege to again be back here representing our constituents and representing the people of the province. I want to start my comments by welcoming our new member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurichou) and paying tribute to him. I enjoyed his comments last Friday. I had an opportunity to listen to him, and I had a chance to meet his extended family that were in the gallery listening to his comments in what I am sure was a very proud moment for them, and I thought he did them proud, and I am sure his family felt that last week.

I also want to pay tribute to a member who has left us in this Chamber since the last session. I want to pay tribute to the former member for Charleswood, one Jim Ernst who has left us. I liked the former member for Charleswood, Jim Ernst. I obviously did not share too many ideological positions with him, but I always found him to be honest. I always found him to have a good sense of humour. I always found him respectful to deal with. I also found him very interesting to deal with. I found when we asked questions on the Pines project, when we knew there was a secret report dealing with the recommendation from the Department of Transportation and Highways to not proceed with the Pines project, that he as Minister of Housing would let us know in very animated expressions on his face that we were perhaps on the right vein of questioning and that would allow us to continue on that line of questioning with some confidence in our position as we proceeded.

I know that he is a person who is well respected in the sports community and well respected in the Roman

Catholic community, which he serves, I know, as a volunteer, and I know that there were a lot of people very angry when he was dropped from the government cabinet last January and February, and on our side we felt that the kind of fingering that goes on from the Premier's communications staff quietly throughout the hallways of this building that he was responsible for the mixup last year on the telephone system. I found that very regrettable.

We, of course, moved another motion of non-confidence in you, Madam Speaker, today, and it is very serious. It is very serious for us, and we regret that we have to do so. We also felt that the actions that took place last year were directed from the Premier's Office to implement the Premier's agenda because it was the Premier (Mr. Filmon) who broke his promise that he would not sell the Manitoba Telephone System to the public. So we hold the Premier accountable for the way in which his promise was broken, and we hold the decisions that flowed from that to you in terms of your accountability, but we will continue to raise issues of substance in the Chamber.

We would say on the record that we found Mr. Ernst, the member for Charleswood, to be a person whom we respected. We found him to be an honourable person, and we look forward to trying to win the seat of Charleswood. It is not one that we win normally in by-elections, but one never knows. I just want to say on a personal note that I miss him in this Chamber, and he was a person that we certainly respected on this side.

* (1530)

Madam Speaker, that is why we have moved a motion as a positive alternative. We have moved a motion we think that you would probably support and that perhaps the Deputy Speaker, who is standing beside you, would perhaps support and others would support in this House. We have proposed—and I say to the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurichou), who may not have been tainted by the lack of democracy last year that took place in this Chamber, that we had proposed an elected Speaker, a Speaker to be elected by secret ballot as a positive alternative to move Manitoba, dare I say it, into the 1990s, let alone the 21st Century. We had proposed a way in which you and Mr. Ernst and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) could get out of this

undemocratic bind of last year and, as pundits had said, the most undemocratic process that had taken place. We had proposed a positive way of dealing with that by having an elected Speaker.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

We did not want to have to challenge the Speaker again today for failure to bring back a ruling one year later, but we could not rise in the end of June last year and have a ruling on the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) and not have a ruling on the Premier on a matter of such significance as articulated by the member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford).

Why are we back into this today? People say, let us turn the page. I agree with the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), let us turn the page; I agree with the Premier, let us turn the page. But I do not agree by the way in which we are proposing to do it. We will not forget. We will never forget what happened last year, and we will never forget this Chamber being turned into a one-party state. We say the only way to turn the page is to bring in an elected Speaker and have a vote in this Chamber, and then we will not have the debate taking place.

We have a positive alternative, one that makes sense, I believe, to the majority of Manitobans, and we will continue to be critical when we feel that criticism necessary. We do not apologize for that. We will continue to be principled when we feel that principles are necessary. It is not a matter of convenience at the start of Question Period, but we had questions we wanted to ask at the beginning of Question Period; to us, it is an issue of principle. A Speaker being—[interjection] Yes, there are people that have been appointed in the past by governments, and you know you can go a long way back. There have been people appointed by governments to be Speaker, but you always give them the benefit of the doubt. I did not act like the Premier with the former member for Wolseley. I went up with the current Speaker because that was the parliamentary tradition that I respect, and I always believe a person should start from a basis of respect and have the opportunity to rule and be judged accordingly.

I did not like to see the former Speaker removed from the Chair, but the Premier was in the old ways of doing

things. We had proposed an elected Speaker that day. He rejected our new way of doing things, and we, in fact, had to live with his decision. Out of our respect to the parliamentary tradition, we did not act like the member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon), when he was Leader of the Opposition. We, in fact, tried to take the high road, but also we gave a standing ovation to the former Speaker because even though he was a Conservative and is elected as a Conservative and will run as a Conservative, he was, in our view—he did not give us our way a lot of times, but we thought he had ruled this House with fairness, and he had not broken the rules of this Legislature. Faced with the biggest challenge that we had, faced with the biggest challenge that we had in the history of this province from that chair, where the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) is sitting, the former member for Rupertsland stood up and said that his rights as an individual member had been violated by the manner in which the Meech Lake Accord had been placed on the Order Paper.

He stood up on a point of order. The Speaker, after five hours of research, came back and ruled that he indeed was correct, and no matter what former Prime Minister Mulroney was saying and the former head of the Senate was saying, Lowell Murray, all the pressure that was going on, and believe me there were phone calls into our office. The Chamber here and the Speaker ruled on the issue of principle. Now, were people offended by that issue of principle? I dare say yes. I dare say yes.

Were there people in support of that decision? I dare say yes again. But having said that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the principle of democracy for individual members to be maintained by the presiding officer, the principle that each and every one of us, no matter whether it was the Premier or whether it was any other member of this Chamber, we are all equal. That principle was totally violated, I believe, in the first decision on racist policies. I believe it was broken again dramatically last year when members here had to speak through the bells. We had to speak through the bells and never will our words be recorded in Hansard on that very important debate. Votes were called before speeches were completed, and we believe it happened to be based on the timing of stockbrokers who stood to make \$35 million rather than the public. That is our biased feel of it but, nonetheless, it does not

matter what the issue was, the principle of democracy was broken. We think the only way we can turn the page collectively is to have an elected Speaker.

We think that Manitoba is at a crossroads. We believe that the Speech from the Throne is full of words, but we, of course, like Manitobans, will judge this government on the basis of action or lack of action on behalf of the people. We believe this government has practised nine years of policy, a deliberate policy of low-wage policy here in Manitoba. Our view of the future in dealing with the global economy, our crossroads, our different direction is to proceed into the future with a high-skill strategy—low-wage strategy of the Conservatives, high-skill strategy of the NDP.

We believe this government is conducting itself, and of course with the decision last year with the telephone system—who are the great benefactors of the telephone system sale? Shareholders, stockbrokers, certainly not the seniors of Manitoba, certainly not the consumers in municipalities. We believe this government is governing for the privileged few. We believe it is time in Manitoba, as we go into the 21st Century, to have a government that is willing and able to govern for the hardworking, fair-minded majority of Manitobans.

We also believe that we have a different set of values when it comes to looking at the province and the people of this province in terms of how we should conduct our affairs. We believe the Conservative Party has demonstrated that they believe in the values of a corporation, downsizing, rightsizing, CEOs making huge amounts of money and people being laid off and let go. We believe in the values of a family where you live together, you work together as a family, you celebrate each other's successes as a family, you co-operate as a family, you support each other, and when a person is down you give them a helping hand, and that is where we are very different from the members opposite.

Oh, I know there will be all kinds of words from the government to try to appear to be community-minded but, when you really come down to it, you have the values of a corporation, and you practise that in every decision you make. We have the values of a family, of a community, of a co-operative way of proceeding to the future. I think those are interesting challenges as

we proceed into the future. I think we saw that last Friday morning. I thought we saw that documented last Friday morning when we asked the CEO, and, you know, it would be nice to see some people on that side kind of standing up to that CEO because you are a political party, you are not a corporation.

But we asked the Premier of this province to apologize for his comments dealing with people living on a flood plain, because wherever we went, whether we talked to a Conservative or a Liberal or a New Democrat, and there are some in Morris, Manitoba, but wherever we went—and this is not a partisan issue. We were not raising these issues. We were raising them because the public need. Wherever we went, we heard the anger about the Premier last May saying, you live on a flood plain; you must take the responsibility for being victimized by this flood. Of course, we all live on a flood plain. We all live on flood plains. We have all taken public money and invested it in measures that will collectively protect us, hopefully as many people as possible, from the ravages of a flood.

The whole province of Manitoba I think, except Birds Hill, Stony Mountain, Baldy Mountain, a few other places, is a flood plain, an absolute flood plain. You know, that should have been a value that all of us in this Legislature understood, and I could not believe on Friday—I actually had five other questions listed down—because I expected the Premier to do the honourable thing and say, I made a mistake. It is not the tradition of Duff Roblin or Ed Schreyer or even Sterling Lyon or Howard Pawley; it is not the spirit of former premiers to blame the victims for living on a flood plain when we all live on a flood plain. If Duff Roblin had had that attitude, we would not have a floodway. If Ed Schreyer had had that attitude we would not have had the Shellmouth project to complete the third stage of the flood protection for Winnipeg.

* (1540)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I expected the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to say, I am sorry, I made a mistake. Because he did make a mistake. But he made it worse. He did not make it better on Friday. He gave me, you know, this province and that province and Harry Harapiak. He went on and on and on. Well, you know, the square of the hypotenuse and everything, and he, you know,

babble, babble, you know. What do they say in Seinfeld? Yada yada yada.

But that was a very important question. What did he say? Oh, the Leader of the Opposition and I have decided to live behind the protective devices that have been provided for, and we live in places that are protected by the public purse. Well, you know, what kind—what do you say in that caucus? Do you sit there like automatons, or do you stand up to this person?

An Honourable Member: Stand up.

Mr. Doer: Stand up, because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what are the farmers of the Red River Valley supposed to do? Are they supposed to move their farms and their farm homes to Tuxedo to live behind protected devices? Are the people of Ste. Agathe, three generations of people that have lived or four generations of people that have lived at Ste. Agathe, supposed to move their homes to Lindenwoods to live behind the protected devices that the Leader of the Opposition lives behind and the Premier? Was not Dominion City the first place where we put a plaque up for the RCMP, one of the first settlements after the aboriginal people had settled here 6,000 years ago? Was that not one of the first settlements that we had?

But for the Premier to say you decided to locate in a flood plain to people who have been there three and four generations, some of the first settlers after the First Nations people settled in the Red River Valley, what kind of Darwinian attitude do we have from the Premier, and why do members opposite not start acting like one community, like one family, and tell the Premier he is absolutely wrong to blame people for locating in Ste. Agathe and ask the Premier, and demand the Premier, in caucus apologize to those people and to the people of this province?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the flood was the best of times, I believe, for this Chamber and the worst of times. I pay tribute to the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) for all the work he was performing, and I know all other members were performing equal work. I know the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh)—to single out two people is difficult, but I am just going to single, I know members in the Liberal Party too. I want to choose everybody. There were lots of people that

were doing lots of work and spending lots of time and going through lots of anguish. The ministers were too, and the government was, obviously.

I want to pay tribute. We tried to work in a very co-operative way with the government. We cancelled all the votes. We cancelled all the count. We cancelled all quorums in committees. We said that the priority was helping our neighbour and helping our community and acting together as one province. All of us knew that that was the first priority, and we are proud to work with the government in a co-operative way. But do you know where we departed company from the government? We departed company on the Premier's comments that they chose to locate on a flood plain. They, the victims, chose to live in a flood-prone area. That is what divides you from us. We do not believe that we should choose they and us. We believe all of us were in this challenge and this crisis together and all of us should be treated with equal dignity, equal respect and equal support from our fellow citizens here in the province of Manitoba.

Let me give you a couple of examples. The Premier (Mr. Filmon), on Friday he was going on, you know, your limit was that limit and my limit was this limit. I do not have my book here, but we did not prance around the province saying, the limit was already typed out and printed at \$30,000. We paid credit to you when you raised the limit. We pointed out to you that the federal government would pay 90 cents, the federal government, to their credit. I was on the radio, Lloyd Axworthy was on the radio, and then the Premier was on the radio. It is not the right way to make decisions. We had come into this House with all kinds of research about what had happened in Quebec and what had happened in Alberta. We came into the House and said, let us get rid of the \$30,000 limit, because it has been jettisoned in Alberta, it has been jettisoned in Quebec, and the way in which the Disaster Assistance Board actually—a board, by the way, you got rid of—the Disaster Assistance Board had a different view of the \$30,000 anyway, because their view was, the guidelines were to be used to get people back on their feet. They did not use the guidelines to deny people the essential items, but they used the guidelines to get people back onto their feet—no more than before a disaster; no less than a disaster.

That is why we proposed these alternatives in the House. We came in here day after day after day with positive alternatives. Why we are somewhat critical of the government for not responding is because we feel again, after the flood there was a total breakdown in terms of the community spirit by the government, albeit with an unprecedented number of claims to be dealt with, from the time of the crisis to the time that the victims were left to deal with the situation. If we can build a Brunkild dike in four days, and that was a correct decision, and we supported you on it—nobody knew what the impact would be—but if we can trust contractors to build a dike in four days to stop the water from coming into, dare I say it, those places that were supposed to be behind protective devices like Lindenwoods and St. Norbert and Tuxedo, if we can do that, why could we not put measures in place to get people back on their feet? And why could we not put a process to adjudicate claims with trust of the victims in the same manner in which we trusted the contractors to build the Brunkild dike?

Why did we treat victims of the flood differently than we treated the contractors in terms of the way in which we acted? We had one set of authorization and trust with contractors dealing with tens of millions of dollars, and we had another process for victims dealing with their homes. Now, these people went through a lot. They went through a lot. I know the minister went through a lot. I watched the minister a couple of times trying to change the policy. Every time that he said that the door is open to change something, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) went and shut the door, because he believed people were responsible.

We actually thought, and I should say that we actually thought the minister was trying to make some changes to adapt to the modern-day disaster assistance programs of Quebec and Alberta. In Alberta they had claim adjusters in place to immediately settle the claims, and then they went back to check those claims after the fact. What do we do in Manitoba? Hundreds and hundreds of people had to go through the indignity of having to plead for the government not to deny them or to evaluate them on the basis of the double whammy of depreciation and deductibility.

Now, we raised this in this House. In May and in June we said to the government, do you understand

your policies? Do you understand that if you take a furnace that is worth \$1,500 to \$2,000, and if you depreciate 15 percent per year and then you take 20 percent off of that furnace, a person would be left with \$300 or \$400 maximum in terms of the coverage that would be provided? Now can anybody in this province live without a furnace? I dare say not. In fact, my furnace was on—[interjection] I beg your pardon? Well, I had to put my furnace on this October, the second weekend. But that is what we said to you. We begged you, on behalf of the victims, to look at the double impact of depreciation and deductibility. We asked you to get a heart. We asked you to look at what the former Disaster Assistance Board did, in fact, as opposed to what the manual said in technical terms. Because you combined the Disaster Assistance Board with the Emergency Measures Organization. You, the Conservative government, combined both bodies together and were ill-equipped to deal with the administrative matters before you, and you were not equipped to deal with the compassionate issues before you as well.

Why did we have to wait till November, a week before this session sat, for the government to change its mind based on what we had said for months, that you cannot depreciate and deduct on a furnace and still expect people to get back on their feet? The furnace is only one example—hot water heaters, fridges, stoves, all the essential items. People could not get back on their feet because the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of this province had said to the adjusters and he had said to the people administering the program, you live on a flood plain, tough luck, you have to suffer the consequences.

* (1550)

That is the kind of leadership we had from the Premier of this province, and we say to the government that the delays in compensation are unacceptable, the kind of challenges that people had are unacceptable, and it all starts from the top. You have a Premier without a heart; you have a program without compassion, and we say the only way to deal with that is to have an alternative group of people that will have a heart and will have compassion and will be fair with people when they have to go through the tragedy of a disaster like that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, another area in this Speech from the Throne—in fact, I have the 1994 Speech from the Throne in here. I just want you to know how cynical some of you are. Some of you were not around in 1994, but you know there are a lot of xeroxed pages. I mean I know that the group opposite is smug, and I know that a lot of them starting from the Premier are arrogant, and I know a lot of them are tired, but I could not believe that all they did, this entire smug group opposite, all they could do was xerox the 1994 pre-election Speech from the Throne when it came to our most vital and important asset and that was the future of our children. You know, here is a group saying this is the most important priority we have and what did they do? They do not even have the intellectual energy, let alone the kind of real dedication to write bold new initiatives because they do not have a bold new addition left in their bones. They are a tired, tired, smug group, except for maybe the new member for Portage (Mr. Faurchou). I say the rest of you got to go, and we will have the new member for Portage on probation until the next election campaign.

Well, speaking of tired government, how many times can the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer) announce another sports camp? You know, this is a recorded announcement. This is the Minister of Urban Affairs responsible for the Winnipeg Development Agreement. I had the same announcement this week as I had last week, and the same as the week before. What an urban strategy. Two sports camps in every family. That is the proposal of the Minister of Urban Affairs.

You know what, it would not be bad if we would ever get a sports camp. Have we got any sports camps? Have we got any initiatives? We have more paper. You could make 25 sports camps out of the paper that has been put out from the tired, smug member that is responsible for Urban Affairs in this province.

An Honourable Member: Good things are coming.

Mr. Doer: Boy, I will tell you, good things are coming. It is a pre-election year. They will actually turn the lights on in the sports camp, but you had better hurry up and get there because the year after the lights will go off, but the lights will go off for more than just a sports camp. The lights are going to go off on

members opposite, because we are really going to bring an urban strategy back to this province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, children—words, words, words. You know the Romans used to say *facta non verba*—deeds, not words. The most cynical part of this government is to feign interest in kids. I remember two years ago you cut the nutritional support for babies under one year of age. I remember a couple of years before that you cut out the Student Social Allowances Program. I remember you cut and cut. Every time there is a bridge of opportunity for our children, the Tories are bombing those bridges of opportunity and taking away chances of our kids.

The same day as members opposite were self-satisfied with their Speech from the Throne the Social Planning Council put out an excellent document on child poverty. They demonstrated how many more kids are living in poverty since you have been in office. They have demonstrated some of the programs you should have been initiating. They talked about the need for prenatal programs. They talked about the need for affordable daycare. They talked about the need for prorated benefits for part-time workers. They talked about the needs of having an increase in the minimum wage to a livable wage. Of course, they talked about many items that could make a difference for families that are most vulnerable.

Did we see any one of those initiatives in the government's own Speech from the Throne proposals on last Thursday? Nothing. We saw nothing. The government wants to deal with hungry kids by setting up another interdepartmental committee.

When this government has a challenge, it sets up interdepartmental committees after interdepartmental committees after interdepartmental committees. You know the only people that talked about having a Healthy Child program, the only group of men and women that talked about the exact same things as the Social Planning Council did was the New Democratic Party that outlined in November of 1995 or 1994 a Healthy Child program. It outlined in the election campaign a number of initiatives to give kids a fair chance, to give kids a head start, to give them food, to give them nutrition, to give them public education, to give kids a chance.

All we see from members opposite is cynical words to get them by another election campaign. You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the public now can see through the rhetoric and the words opposite from members opposite. They will want, in the next period of time, to go into the next century with a group of men and women that care about kids, that care about their future, that will put an investment in their future and in their families.

I am absolutely confident that the Healthy Child program that we have established and the Healthy Child task force that we have initiated with Lawrie Cherniack and members of our caucus to go around the province to deal with kids. That will be the vision the people have in Manitoba going into the next election campaign. They no longer trust you. They no longer trust you to do as you say you are going to do. They know that this race-to-the-bottom, low-wage strategy is not good for our kids, not good for our family and therefore not good for the future of our province.

I want to give you a couple of examples. Last November at the Indian and Metis Friendship Centre I had the privilege of listening to kids. A thousand kids presented their views about the future. The members opposite should have been there. They talked about the need for recreation and the cutbacks that have taken place in recreation in their communities. They talked about safety and the need for safety. They talked about giving kids a chance. They talked about public education. They talked about having programs that made a difference to them, that gave them a chance, an opportunity in our society—many good recommendations from kids to us as adults. Did we as adults pick that up? Did we go forward with any of these recommendations? Do we see any of that boldness from children in the Speech from the Throne here on Thursday? We just see xerox copies of the 1994 Speech from the Throne.

You know, to come back after broken promise after broken promise after broken promise and come back with another promise I think is absolutely despicable when it comes to kids. I think you should be as honest as some of your other Conservative brethren. I think you should be as honest as other people of the Conservative ideology who do not believe we should be doing something for kids and investing in communities.

I think to do what you are doing is the worst of both worlds. To say you are going to do something and build up hope and then have that hope dashed by lack of action and further cutbacks I think is disgraceful. It is a moral embarrassment to the people of this province, and it is a moral embarrassment to our future and our kids, and we will do something about it after the next election, that I guarantee you.

* (1600)

I was at the Main Street Project meeting this week on Friday night, and two old friends of mine were being—there was a group of people paying tribute to them, and the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickey) and the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) were there also. One of their names was Clay Lewis, and the other one was John Rogers who had worked for 20 years at the Main Street Project and worked at the Main Street Project group homes.

Those are people who are making a difference. Those are the people who feel the real pain of kids in our community. One of the speakers at that event left all of us I think with some words that are very important for us, that a hundred years from now—and this is I know a statement that has been made by somebody else at a previous time, and it was one of the speakers who quoted it. I do not know where the source is, but I want to repeat the quote today. A hundred years from now it will not matter what was in our bank account. A hundred years from now it will not matter what house I lived in. A hundred years from now it will not matter what car I drive. A hundred years from now it will only matter what we did for our kids, for our children. What kind of a world we would have if each and every one of us vowed and was determined just to make a difference in the life of one child.

That was the message that was sent back to all of us in that social event celebrating two I think heroes of our community, two old friends of mine that I have a lot of respect for. Would that not be wonderful if that was the real Speech from the Throne message today. Would that not be wonderful if that was the real action plan we had from this government rather than just pre-election promises. Would it not be wonderful if all of us, in a nonpartisan way, looked at the challenge of

making, as a society, the difference in the lives of children, rather than just putting those words in the '94 Speech from the Throne and cut, cut, cut the programs and then again putting it in 1997.

I say to people opposite and I say to the people of this province, we are committed; members on this side are committed to making a difference for kids, not only kids in our own family but for children in our province wherever they will live. Some people here have spoken about the poverty of the communities and constituencies in very eloquent terms and I know will do so in the Speech from the Throne debate as we continue, remote communities, aboriginal communities, northern communities, inner-city communities. Would it not be wonderful if in this Speech from the Throne we were debating the action the government was planning rather than the cynicism of the words that they keep putting in.

I want to say to people who were at the Main Street Project event this weekend, we will not forget those words, and we will put into action a plan for kids that will make a difference for kids here in the province of Manitoba. That we promise you.

I have said before that this government governs in my view for the privileged few. Let us just look at where health care is going in this province. Where is it going? Does it not bother members opposite that Grafton, North Dakota, now is the site for people with money in Manitoba to have diagnostic tests? Does it not bother us in this Legislature to know that we are developing a two-tiered American health care system, one line-up for the people who have a big purse or a large wallet and another line-up for the rest of us who are average, hardworking members of our society?

An Honourable Member: Called a two-tiered system in Britain.

Mr. Doer: Well, we are going to deal with the two-tiered system in England, because we got rid of the Thatcher government, and we got a good government there in Britain. I am glad that the hero from Lakeside, one Margaret Thatcher and her policies have been repudiated in Europe, and we should see a new future for the U.K. and a new future for those people under a

good Tony Blair government, unlike the heartless nature of the Thatcher government that we saw in the past.

I am glad to see the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) still carries his animated feeling towards that wonderfully kind Margaret Thatcher. I am glad to see that even though 13 countries out of 16 have taken that old Tory Thatcher policy and thrown it into the dustbin of history, the member for Lakeside still holds onto those old, old, old concepts of fairness in our society. I am glad that Lady Thatcher still has such influence on the member for Lakeside, and that is the real Conservative Party—we say the real Conservative Party. Put the name on the sign next time, and let us have a good fight on the future of this province.

As I said, Grafton, North Dakota, is the symbol of health care here in Manitoba. The new Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik), who goes around repudiating the old member of Health's policies and the former minister's health policies, is running around with a package full of band-aids. You know, every time there is a little—somebody sneezes on health care, he takes a band-aid and tries to throw it on there, and then he takes poses for the Beausejour Beaver and says look at me; look at how great I am.

I want to say to members opposite that the public of Manitoba will not evaluate your health care record on the basis of today's PR band-aid. They will know that you have failed them in health care. They know that under the Tory policies of health care you will have Grafton, North Dakota, for the rich. They will know in the long run the only way that they can have a health care policy and a health care program that they can rely on is by having a New Democratic Party that is committed to health care every day of their lives and believes it in their bones. This is the same debate we had in home care.

I saw the member for Portage's (Mr. Faurschou) comments on home care. This is the same debate on home care. It is one policy of greed. Fourteen hundred workers would have to take a 40 percent wage cut so four friends of the Filmon government could become millionaires. Four of the Tuxedo Premier's friends become millionaires, so 1,400 people would have to lose their jobs and work for a private, profit company.

We have no difficulty standing up with the seniors, the disabled, the patients of Manitoba. We have no problem saying to Mrs. Duval who stood in front of these Legislative steps or Evan Burns who stood in front of these Legislative steps or Al Cerilli who stood in front of these Legislative steps and saying that a New Democratic Party will cancel home care of greed, cancel the profit, cancel the private contracts and bring back nonprofit, accessible, community-run, nonprofit home care here in the province of Manitoba.

We also say today that we will implement an AIDS strategy, and members here have articulated that in quite eloquent terms—we spoke about that again today—that we will look at health care and all the cuts to health care on the basis of real community need, and it will be a broader view than members opposite. Communities, especially in rural and northern Manitoba, need health care programs, that it is not only a social priority to have health care in a rural community, it is also an economic priority. You cannot have a community that has a strategy to keep their seniors in their own community if they feel that their health care facility is vulnerable.

When I heard the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) last year quoting community after community with 55 percent utilization rates, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that this government's again secret agenda after the next election campaign is to proceed to look at those facilities without looking at broad criteria. You have to look at economic and health care criteria for making decisions, and we in the New Democratic Party believe that health care is both an economic and a social priority for a community and for its citizens.

If you just take the case of the cutbacks in a place like Gimli hospital, Gimli needs more people to reside in its communities and in adjacent communities for retirement. It is a tourism location; it is a service location. To cut back on health care in Gimli and Arborg and other communities, along with all the cuts that have taken place in northern Manitoba, does not make any sense at all, and we plan on maintaining a health care system in the North, in our rural communities and in our urban centres by not cutting back on public health and health care spending but rather reinvesting in innovation and in our health care programs.

* (1610)

When we speak about the economy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have to speak about a couple of symbols of the economy. We intend on continuing to listen to the people who are members of our society in terms of what they feel about the economy. Now, members opposite talk about how great the economy is, and I know that members opposite, when they are talking to the stockbrokers and when they are talking to the CEOs of corporations, there is no question that stock markets are soaring, profits are roaring for a few people in our society, but we in the New Democratic Party look at our economy on the basis of what it means to our most vulnerable people.

We look at the economy on what it means to average, hardworking, fair-minded families, and, regrettably, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the economic performance of this government is sadly, sadly lacking. Members opposite should ask the question—[interjection] Well, you want to talk about low rates. The member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) wants to talk about low rates. Let us talk about the fact that real wages in Manitoba since the Filmon government has been elected have gone down \$81 per family per month—\$81 per month. Your low-wage strategy is working and Manitoba families are the ones bearing the absolute brunt of your policies of low wages.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the average family in Canada, real wages have gone up \$40 a month. We have a situation in Manitoba under the Filmon race-to-the-bottom strategy where there is a \$120 difference between provinces in Canada that have a high-skill strategy versus the province of Manitoba with their low-wage strategy. We will put policies in place that will provide safe workplaces, that will provide quality jobs, provide co-operative strategies, all-party committees dealing with our economy, summits with business, labour, and government, health and safety legislation that will remove the lack of enforcement here in the province of Manitoba, and we will work with Manitobans to get our economy going again but also to look at a high-skill strategy.

We also will take strong stands dealing with agriculture. Saskatchewan is spending some \$20 million a year on research and development. The

member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) has asked the government to start more research and development here in the province of Manitoba by providing some of the GRIP surplus back into research and development. Why is the biotech industry of Canada being located primarily in Saskatoon? Why are we not getting more of the biotech investments with research and development here in Manitoba? Why is the province of Saskatchewan moving further ahead of Manitoba in such an important agricultural area? What is happening with the Minister of Agriculture when he goes before his cabinet colleagues in terms of R & D in the agricultural sector?

I do not understand it. The member for Portage (Mr. Faurischou) talked about the food centre in Portage. That was started under Len Evans in the Schreyer government. It is a good program. We need more of that, more incubator programs, more research and development programs, more value-added programs in the province of Manitoba. We should even take a look at the Crocus Fund money and start, instead of trying to siphon it off to other private brokers, let us look at more regional economic development. In Quebec now they have 98 regional economic committees of the province taking a look at the labour-sponsored funds. They are reinvested in agriculture at value-added kinds of investment.

That is what we have to do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of taking labour and farmers—I know this is not the vision of the members opposite. It is perhaps the vision of Stanley Knowles and Tommy Douglas, but that is our vision. Take money from labour and reinvest it into value-added jobs and regional economic—[interjection] I know the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed), you know, he would find that foreign to his every belief, but we have to get into the future. I say to you, do not live in the past, live in the future, and let us take a look at getting labour money into northern and rural Manitoba, and let us look at more projects.

We say to members opposite, take a strong stand on the Wheat Board. We are against C-4. We do not sit on the proverbial fence like members opposite, saying, we believe in the Wheat Board, but we also believe in allowing people to sell their wheat down in the United States. We believe in orderly marketing. Yes, reforms

have to be made in terms of farmer control of the Wheat Board, but reforms should also be based on orderly marketing and single-desk selling. That is what we believe in. You pool your product to pool the best price.

Members opposite continue to try to play Alberta in the morning and I do not know what in the afternoon. We say, let us vote against C-4. Let us tell the federal Liberals they cannot erode the Canadian Wheat Board, and this Legislature is absolutely opposed to C-4, and we will vote against it in a resolution that the NDP has put forward in this session of the Legislature.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

We also say that we cannot control our own destiny and public investment in the future unless we have a strong position on the MAI. We believe in opposing that trade agreement. The member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) asked the government to take a position. The government said it was a confidential document. I guess they have not gone from the horse and buggy to the Internet. Nothing wrong with horse and buggies. I hope to take my kids on a sleigh ride this winter. But you know what? It was on the Internet. Some confidential document. The minister of technology cannot look at the Internet, and we had to table that document in the House.

Or more importantly, we should be opposed to it. It affects health care, public health care. It affects public Crown corporations. Or is the only reason members opposite are silent or that members opposite are complicit in this agreement because that is the real, hidden agenda on Hydro? They plan to do with Hydro what they did on Telephones—deny, deny, deny and then prepare to sell, sell, sell.

Madam Speaker, we also believe in terms of dealing with the economy that we must have an education strategy to deal with the future in a changing world. We cannot have an economic strategy without an education strategy. I know that is not the philosophy of Margaret Thatcher and, of course, that is why 13 countries in Europe now have gone to a more sensible, futuristic approach of looking at ordering our affairs in a global economy. They have said that education and training is the way to the future. They have rejected the

low-wage strategy of the Filmonites and the Thatcherites and the Reaganites and the others that practise that kind of low-wage strategy. Tomorrow you are competing with South Carolina, the next day you are competing with Mexico. The week after you are competing with Hong Kong, the week after that, Singapore.

We cannot win that game. We say, let us compete with the best trained, best skilled, most highly educated workforce anywhere in Canada, dare I say it, the world, and that is why we reject the cuts in public education that have been made by members opposite. We believe in a high-skill, high-trained society. We reject the cuts in apprenticeship. We reject the cuts in community colleges. We reject the cuts in public education. We reject any idea that we should not invest in our future.

The other day a young person was in front of these Legislative steps and said to us: Every time the government cuts funding, the school division cuts support to my school; every time the school division cuts support to my school, my school cuts another course for me to take; every time the school cuts another course, the people of this province have shut another door on my future. I think that Grade 11 student said it better than any one of us could have. Let us stop shutting the doors for the future of our children. We will open those doors back up for our kids, for our children, and we will reinvest in public education, apprenticeship programs, training programs, and we will have a policy of high-skill and reject the low-wage strategy of members opposite.

I also believe, Madam Speaker, that the biggest hypocrisy we see when it comes to members opposite is in dealing with aboriginal people. It must drive members on this side—the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin), the member for Churchill, the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes), the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar)—I cannot believe that they can take these kinds of cynical promises year after year after year. What have you done? You have cut Access. You have cut New Careers. You hid behind the federal government when we showed you the numbers.

* (1620)

Yes, the federal government had cut their support. Shame on them. Shame on them. But you have cut it

much more—100 percent cut in Access programs, every year feigning concern and commitment for First Nations people. Oh, we have to have an urban aboriginal strategy. Oh, the future demographics talk about First Nations. Oh, we have to invest in those people. We have all these phoney words from members opposite and we have cutback after cutback after cutback and, you know—[interjection]

I have the numbers. I have the numbers. That is why aboriginal people vote for the Tories, the three or four people, the aboriginal people who vote for the Tories. Madam Speaker, we know that First Nations people themselves know who is with them and who will be with them in the future, and it is not members opposite, believe me.

I want to continue for a moment—[interjection] I am glad to see the Thatcherites across the way are so exercised by my comments. If they were not, I would be disappointed. I wonder if you still have that picture on your wall of Margaret Thatcher.

An Honourable Member: I do.

Mr. Doer: Good for you. I am glad to see you do. I am glad to see you are holding on to those old ideas.

Madam Speaker, I talked about the fact that this government has said one thing and done the opposite in children, talked about public education and then cut it. Aboriginal people—they have cut friendship centres, Access programs, New Careers. Another area where they talk a good game and act the opposite is in the area of crime. We have put forward positive ideas to prevent crime. That is where we are at, but we do not believe it is one dimensional. We believe in putting out opportunities and hope for kids to keep out of youth crime. We believe in putting in opportunities in schools to keep kids out of crime.

We also think that the public should have more say on the criminal justice system. Last year when this Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) was questioned on the Bauder case, he blamed the judge, not the trial judge but the Court of Appeal decision. He blamed people, but he took no responsibility. Why is Manitoba one of the only provinces in Canada that after the 1991 federal government changed the ability of courts to have

victims' impact statements? Why has this government through three ministers of Justice been way behind other provinces?

Members opposite, you always hear them bashing the federal government. Well, you know, the federal government made some changes to allow for victims' impact statements. Where is the responsibility from three ministers of Justice to have mandatory victims' impact statements in court? Of course, this is the same government that has shifted the blame for auto thefts onto the victim.

Point of Order

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): On a point of order, the question was asked why. I can say that I do not want to make victims of victims in the court again, and we have to be very careful about victim impact statements.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Justice did not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Doer: You know, that was probably the most pathetic answer I have heard from a Minister of Justice, with the greatest respect to my colleague across the way. You know, eight provinces in Canada have—

Mr. Toews: Why do you not read the O'Connor case and see what the courts did?

Mr. Doer: Oh, here we have the Philadelphia lawyer again. Nothing against lawyers. I have nothing against lawyers.

Point of Order

Mr. Toews: Madam Speaker, I do not mind being criticized for being a lawyer, but where he refers in a derogatory way to where I was born—there are many people in my constituency from Paraguay who were born in Philadelphia. I happen to have been born in Philadelphia, Paraguay, and I think that that kind of derogatory comment about Paraguayans in my constituency and myself is despicable if he thinks that

he can talk about people from another country that way, where I was born as well.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Justice did not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Doer: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker, and I have to say that I was not aware that the member opposite was born in Philadelphia, Paraguay. I was referring to the W.C. Fields' Philadelphia, and I do not think that was Paraguay. I apologize to the member opposite, but there is a generic term, and I think it speaks to the—obviously, we believe in a justice system that not only has the priority of people in the legal system directly sworn to perform their duties but also has a balance with the public.

What we are speaking to is the need of the public to have a system where they feel as victims that their rights are also protected, and that is why when the minister last year excused himself for releasing a dangerous offender and gave us a technical argument, we were critical, and we will be critical today. It is his job to represent the public interest, and it is his job and our job to represent the public interest, and that is why I am proud dealing with Winnipeg, Manitoba, or Neepawa, Manitoba, or The Pas, Manitoba, we will bring in a victims' assistance program and show the failure the Minister of Justice and two previous ministers of Justice for failure to do so, and we will bring that bill in in a private member's bill in this session.

Madam Speaker, I said that this government says one thing and does another, and the best example of that, of course, was the Manitoba Telephone System, the Manitoba Telephone System where members opposite said one thing in the election and denied in this House for months. The Film on government denied for months that they had hired brokers. In fact, the Minister of Telephones in October of 1996, or 1995 rather, said the only person that is concerned about privatization is the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). Well, we have it confirmed now that brokers were hired in May of 1995.

Now, I believe the Minister of Telephones was telling us the truth in committee. I believe the Premier (Mr.

Filmon) withheld the information of hiring the brokers from the cabinet, from the caucus, from the minister, and only dealt them in when we raised the question in the House in 1995, that three people knew what was really going on, the Premier, the chair of the telephone system, and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson).

The rest of you were left in the dark, if you will. You were not informed. The people of Manitoba were left in the dark. As a farmer in Birtle, Manitoba, said to me, if somebody takes something that I own and sells it without my permission, they have in essence stolen that phone system or that Crown corporation from me. Madam Speaker, we believe that the Tories did not tell the truth before the election. We believe the Tories did not even tell the truth after the election, and every argument they have made about why they had to break their word is falling like a house of cards in terms of their statements and their allegations and their assertions in terms of the future of the Manitoba Telephone System.

Let us say to you opposite and let us say to other members of this Chamber that no Manitoban should believe the Conservatives when they say that they do not plan on selling Manitoba Hydro. No person in this province should believe the baffle-gab and the kind of lines from members opposite. We believe that they have the same ideological agenda on Hydro as they had on Telephones. We would not trust you with our cookie jar, and we will not trust you with Manitoba Hydro. We will go to the people of this province saying, who do you trust? The Tories, who misled you in the last election, or the NDP, that told you and warned you and will keep Manitoba Hydro as an economic asset for all our people.

* (1630)

Can you believe the gall of members opposite to take credit about Limestone and the tremendous successes we made on hydroelectric power sales? The only reason Manitoba Hydro has the lowest hydroelectric rates in North America is because members on this side had the vision, had the absolute dedication to build Limestone and have it paid for by the Americans. That is the kind of economic vision we had. The Tories opposite, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) opposite, were

kicking and screaming about the Limestone project and absolutely opposed it. We believe that the Tories will sell the hydro system, and we make no bones—
[interjection]

You know, members opposite can yell and scream and feign concern about Manitoba Hydro, but nobody in the public trusts you anymore with their Crown corporations. Nobody should trust you, nobody does trust you, and nobody will trust you. That is why we are going to have a change of government in the next election campaign.

Madam Speaker, as I have said before, we believe in a society that takes the view that the only way we can compete in the world is to have a high-skill strategy, not a low-wage strategy. We believe in a society that has to have a government that is not arrogant and smug and tired but a group of men and women that are living the real world dealing with the real issues that Manitobans face, people from all walks of life that reside on this side of the House, unlike the privileged few that this group is representing in their government policies.

We believe that we have to have a public education strategy. We believe that Crown corporations should be used for the public interest, not just for the private shareholder interest as we have seen with members opposite. We believe our communities are stronger with public education, with safe workplaces, with safe communities in terms of public safety, with recreation programs that give kids a chance. We believe a province should be run not like a corporation where we downsize our weakest but like a family where we give each other a helping hand. That is the kind of vision that we will take into the future. We will stand together with average, hardworking, fair-minded Manitobans, and we will work for more than just the privileged few, as we see from members opposite.

I am disappointed with the Speech from the Throne because it is bereft of ideas, it is bereft of boldness, it is bereft of any vision whatsoever.

Therefore, I move, seconded by the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), that the motion be amended by adding to it after the word "session" the following words:

THAT this House regrets that this government has failed to meet the goals of Manitobans by

- (a) failing to provide adequate and timely compensation to Manitobans who were driven from their homes by the Red River flood while holding the flood victims themselves responsible for the losses that they suffered; and
- (b) failing to respect the rights of Manitobans victimized by crime, in particular making it mandatory (as in most other provinces) that crime victims be given opportunities to present victim impact statements to the court; and
- (c) forcing Manitobans to bear the cost of privatizing the telephone system through escalating local phone rates intended to boost the profits of private shareholders; and
- (d) failing to respond to Manitobans' frustrations over the lengthy waiting list for medical procedures and surgeries; and
- (e) failing to implement the key recommendations of the Pedlar Commission, many of which were repeated in the recent report of the Lavoie inquiry; and
- (f) failing to implement the key recommendations of even its own report on the health of Manitoba children; and
- (g) failing to prepare Manitoba youth for the 21st Century by committing to stable funding for the public school system; and
- (h) failing to support the Canadian Wheat Board as a single-desk seller despite the overwhelming support for the Wheat Board's role among Manitoba producers and its strategic position in the Manitoba economy; and
- (i) failing to implement the recommendations of the AJI while cutting funding for friendship centres and to the Access and BUNTEP programs;

and has thereby lost the trust and confidence of the people of Manitoba and this House.

Motion presented.

Madam Speaker: The amendment is in order.

* * *

Madam Speaker: Before recognizing the honourable Minister of Justice, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the table so that I may introduce to you the Assembly's new Clerk Assistant, Kathryn Durkin. Kathryn attended the University of Saskatchewan, where she received a Bachelor of Arts Honours in 1990, majoring in political studies, and an LL.B. in 1994. Prior to accepting a position as Clerk Assistant, Ms. Durkin was employed with the City of Winnipeg, where she practised assessment law.

On behalf of all honourable members, Kathryn, I welcome you and look forward to working with you.

* * *

Mr. Toews: Madam Speaker, it is my honour to respond to the Speech from the Throne. I am very pleased with the initiative announced by our government and that we are continuing to implement those initiatives which we have previously announced.

Having spent numerous days, in October, meeting many of my constituents at the doorstep again, I know that the direction of our government is supported by those constituents, especially the balanced budget, and the general fiscal responsibility of our government is applauded. Furthermore the expansion of our social programs including home care and greater accessibility to health care by reducing waiting times for access to medical services is very much appreciated by my constituents and I believe Manitobans across this great province.

I wish to talk a little bit about my own department, the Department of Justice, in relation to the Speech from the Throne. As you are aware, Madam Speaker, I became Minister of Justice in January of this year. I am committed to staying on the track of the initiatives either announced or commenced by the former minister, the member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey).

* (1640)

Our government has emphasized working together with the police and community organizations. Firstly, in respect of the police, it was recently announced again that we have continued the funding for the City of Winnipeg police in the amount of \$2 million, and this \$2 million forms the basis of the pay for policing communities, the hiring of community constables. There are additional programs that we are partnering with the City of Winnipeg, and I would like to refer to one which was also referenced in the Speech from the Throne, and that is the curfew registry.

Last year the Winnipeg Police Service made an innovative proposal to make curfews when imposed as conditions of bail more effective. There was widespread abuse of curfew bail provisions, and police were having difficulties enforcing them because when they attended at residences where the accused were supposed to be, they had no authority to enter onto the premises to confirm that the accused was actually there. The Winnipeg Police Service proposed that Crown attorneys seek a new term in the curfew bail provisions that would require an accused to appear at the door when the police attended at the door. This worked extremely well and was received very favourably by the public.

The Winnipeg Police Service, in order to assist in this curfew registry plan, developed its own database and sought to maintain it. They sought the support of the Department of Justice to get the database up and running.

The enforcement of this bail provision I believe adds a measure a respect for court orders that come out, allows the police to effectively do their job and creates a measure of credibility for the police in the community by giving them another tool with which to work. So the government of Manitoba was pleased to support in a financial way the Winnipeg City police's authority and efficiency in proceeding in this direction. We have both the Crown attorney's office working in close co-operation then with the police, and secondly the government of Manitoba financially supporting the police in this particular initiative.

We talked not only about funding for police but also for community partnerships. I think it is very important to understand that in fighting crime, it has to be more

than government and more than police agencies involved. The police in this province, both city police, municipal police forces, RCMP and others, including First Nations communities, have taken to heart the lessons learned in other jurisdictions of North America and most notably in the United States in respect of the use of police officers as community officials, not just people who drop into the community to arrest people, to enforce formal court orders but, in fact, to become a part of that community.

We know that the courts and indeed the formal court system can only do so much. Clearly the top-down theory of crime control has not been successful in preventing recidivism in making our communities safer places. So the community-based concept is something that this government supports very strongly, that in partnership with community organizations throughout our province we work together to keep the incidents of crime at a low level.

Some of the current projects that this government is supporting include the Urban Sports Camp, and I know the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) made various derogatory comments about the Urban Sports Camp. Well, if you speak to people in those communities where there is an Urban Sports Camp, they are very supportive of that Urban Sports Camp. On certain nights, upwards of 100 or more children and youth attend an Urban Sports Camp to participate in the programming. This government is committed to implementing additional Urban Sports Camp throughout Winnipeg to deal with the specific problems that we have among our urban youth.

One of the difficulties that occurs, of course, in some of the areas of our cities is trying to find people to partner with. We have been successful in finding people who many times on a volunteer basis are working together with the community to develop the Urban Sports Camp. For example, I think the efforts of the Winnipeg Rotary as a corporate partner is very much appreciated by the government and the community members in terms of the positive impact these Urban Sports Camps have and will continue to have in our city.

Again, in terms of government, the government has found that the best way in which to make effective use

of dollars from the taxpayer is to partner with various community organizations. These include organizations such as Manitoba Crime Stoppers, include Citizens for Crime Awareness, include the Winnipeg Police Service in its antiprostitution program. There are a number of committees out there who with a small amount of assistance, often a very small amount of assistance, can keep their programs and projects running.

One example again is the Weetamah Corps of the Salvation Army. This project is operating from the Logan Avenue location of the Salvation Army and continues to serve the local residents with a variety of programs aimed at youth recreation. This was funded through a Justice initiative in the amount of \$90,000.

We have also noted that it is not just the city of Winnipeg that requires assistance in terms of funding but also our rural communities. In Portage la Prairie we have a community policing co-ordinator. This project has been commenced with the hiring of the co-ordinator and a community office being established. The purpose of this project is to serve as a one-stop co-ordination for all prevention and justice-related programs, thereby releasing policy resources from the organizational and co-ordination duties. This position is intersectoral and not bound by the usual one dimensions of law enforcement. So we are pleased to support that type of program.

My colleague the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer) has been very involved through the Winnipeg Development Agreement in maintaining and continuing and developing new partnerships in respect of programs such as the Winnipeg Police Service counteraction, the Winnipeg Police Service ALIVE Program, the Downtown Watch patrol, the Fort Richmond Boys and Girls Club, the Winnipeg Children's Festival project, and others.

I had the distinct pleasure to be involved in an awards ceremony in Portage la Prairie where a number of my colleagues from the Legislature, including opposition members, attended to pay a special tribute to the volunteers who do so much to work together with the community and with the police to prevent and reduce the incidence of crime in our community.

* (1650)

So I am pleased with the way our government is responding to these challenges to building partnerships within our communities to ensure that law enforcement is not something simply administered by an outside agency but indeed becomes a community activity in which all members have a say in the safety and the security of their community.

I would indicate some words of caution in respect of the community policing program. I think many times people expect these types of police initiatives and other community-based initiatives to bear fruit immediately. In a recent article in the Winnipeg Sun, the writer, Bob Holliday, who is, in fact, very involved in one of the urban sports camps, talks about the issue of the cop's beat on the streets. He entitles the article, Patrols Take Back the Community. He outlines a number of improvements in our inner city where this very successful program is beginning to have a very substantive impact. But in the same edition of the Winnipeg Sun of November 30, 1997, just recently, just yesterday or the day before, what the experts in the American experience will say is that the results will take time. Even though we see initial improvements, initial achievements, there are substantive improvements and achievements that will occur as the programs begin to take effect, as the policing becomes more and more accepted in these communities.

So I am very pleased that we have taken those initial steps, that co-operation with the police, that co-operation with the corporate sector, the co-operation with community nonprofit groups to ensure that we have a solid basis for achieving this type of security that has been very, very successful in many large American cities.

As indicated, there are not just initiatives in the city of Winnipeg, but indeed there are community policing initiatives in places like Portage la Prairie, places like Brandon, Flin Flon, The Pas and Selkirk.

I might indicate, Madam Speaker, that despite some of the very positive changes that are taking place in our policing community and in our community itself in responding in a proactive way to these challenges, we are also looking at the formal legal system in order to ensure that it adopts or adapts to some of these changes, that it changes in response to the many concerns and

studies that have been done in respect of the justice system. Many of these recommendations are seen in such reports as the Aboriginal Justice Initiative and indeed the recent study by Justice Schulman in respect of the Lavoie inquiry.

One of the ways in which we are dealing with the changes that need to be made are programs such as the diversion program for urban aboriginal people in conflict with the law. This program is known as A-L-S-O-W, and this is a Winnipeg-based diversion project which will target aboriginal people in conflict with the law. One of the things that we have seen, despite some of the good work of the John Howard Society and the Elizabeth Fry Society, which this government has been supportive of in terms of providing resources to them, we have also noted the concern that those organizations have not necessarily been successful in diverting aboriginal people from the justice system. So it was felt necessary that we specifically address that concern to ensure that the aboriginal people in our community also receive the benefits of a system and the supports of a system that in the past have not always been available to them.

Protocols under this ALSOW program will be established between ALSOW and key justice agencies to divert aboriginal offenders from the regular court system. Offenders will appear before community panels which will impose dispositions. The program is modelled after the successful aboriginal legal service of the Toronto diversion project. The agreement is an agreement between Canada, Manitoba and the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg to implement the ALSOW initiatives. The program will function as a three-year pilot project between December 1, 1997, and November 30 of the year 2000. Manitoba and Canada are each funding \$200,000 annually for three years, for a total of \$1.2 million in funding.

This represents a major addition to Manitoba's criminal justice system. The program will provide a comprehensive diversion program for aboriginal people in conflict with the law in Winnipeg. Indeed the program, we believe, will serve as a national leader in the move to improve justice services to aboriginal people. The partnership, especially with the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, will ensure the maximum potential for the success of this initiative. This project

also responds to recommendations arising from inquiries and commissions into aboriginal justice issues. Manitoba's support for this program is a continuation of the government's commitment to provide practical and achievable improvements to the delivery of justice services in the province.

I want to also very briefly mention the continued success of our youth justice committees. These youth justice committees are continuing to expand. There are more youth justice committees that are coming on stream, and these committees divert many people out of our regular justice system. Indeed, the success of these programs are demonstrated not only by the low recidivism rate of people who go through these programs but indeed the fact that a community has the ability to confront offenders amongst them and take an active part in deliberating what the appropriate disposition should be. These youth justice committees are also supported by the Manitoba government both in terms of training documentation, professional support from our Corrections department, and in terms of, if I could say, the direct funding to each of them. In many cases, the direct funding is quite modest, and yet the way these are based as community-based organizations, often it is just a small amount of funding that is required to make these groups effective.

I note that many of the members of our Legislature, including members of the opposition, are involved in the youth justice committees. I believe the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) is involved in a youth justice committee. The member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) is involved in a youth justice committee. The member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) is involved in a youth justice committee. These members should be commended for their involvement. I may have passed over some other members who are also part of those youth justice committees, but they know who they are and certainly their efforts in co-ordinating the activities of these communities is commendable, and we would like to see more of that kind of participation to ensure the success of these youth justice committees. Indeed, colleagues of mine from across Canada are coming to Manitoba to take a look at our youth justice program and specifically the youth justice committees, and we will have an opportunity to discuss some of these initiatives.

Despite the progress that we have made in respect of partnering with the police, including Winnipeg City Police, the RCMP and other municipal and First Nations communities, we continue to be frustrated with some of the problems that we meet in dealing with the federal government. As members of this Legislature, we are aware that it is the federal government that is responsible for criminal legislation in this country. We want to work together with the federal government to encourage them to pass laws which make a difference in our communities, not simply laws that are designed for show. We also need them to change the laws which already exist and which serious flaws have already been determined.

* (1700)

One such law is, of course, our Young Offenders Act. We know that the federal government had a parliamentary committee going across Canada on the Young Offenders Act holding hearings on potential amendments to the act.

The Minister of Justice, the federal Minister of Justice, Anne McLellan, has indicated that she will be making amendments to the Young Offenders Act. In August of 1997 she hinted in a speech to the Canadian Bar Association that she was looking at tougher sentences, more adult prosecutions of those youth who are incorrigible and cannot be dealt with under the youth system and the possibility of naming offenders under the Young Offenders Act.

In a submission to parliamentary committees the former provincial Justice Minister, the member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey), emphasized certain themes which I am supportive of as well. They included ideas to enhance parental responsibility under the Young Offenders Act to open up the minimum wage—minimum age. Take the “w” off of that. I do not want to see the minimum wage lowered; it is the minimum age—in appropriate circumstances in order to allow the court to reach down in those appropriate circumstances and bring children under 12 into the criminal justice system. I am prepared to allow judges to have that kind of discretion. What bothers me about the present system is that it is an abuse where everyone, including our youth, realize that no one under the age of 12 can be held responsible for their criminal actions, and that

certainly does not bode well for a new generation if their first contact with the law enforcement authorities is that they cannot be held responsible.

We also believe that the victim surcharge should apply to the Young Offenders Act. They, too, have a responsibility to victims in their community. We believe that there should be a provision to make incarceration mandatory where a weapon, and not simply a firearm, is used in the commission of an offence as is now provided for adults under Section 85 of the Criminal Code.

So we want to continue to encourage our federal Justice minister to make those appropriate reforms. I know that members of this House support that type of activity and change, and we will support the federal Minister of Justice if she, in fact, brings in those type of recommendations.

However, Manitoba has a particular problem which it also shares with the Province of Saskatchewan. The Province of Saskatchewan was recently identified in a study as having the worst justice system in Canada. Now whether that is true or not, I do not know. The Province of Saskatchewan, I know, has implemented many reforms in the area of community programming much like the Province of Manitoba has, and many of the problems that we have are similar. One of the problems that we have is an overrepresentation of violent youth even though, in terms of the entire percentage of our youth population, that is a very small percentage.

We must recognize that there are certain youth who cannot be treated in the community, that they must be treated in facilities. At present those facilities are run by the provincial government. The federal government at one time shared equally in the responsibility of paying for those facilities. Over the last number of years, that sharing has been reduced to 35 percent, and just recently the federal Minister of Justice has indicated that there will be another 3.8 percent cut in that type of programming for youth. The very troubling issue, as significant as a 3.8 percent is in general terms, the other thing that the federal minister has said is that she intends to reprofile the monies and put them into programming for the community rather than these institutions.

As much as we support programming for our communities, we also have to recognize that if there are dangerous youth, they must be treated in our provincial facilities that we run on behalf of the federal government under the Young Offenders Act, and that they have a responsibility—that is, the federal government—to maintain adequate amounts of funding. We would encourage the federal government not to renege on its constitutional responsibilities for funding these programs.

The government of Manitoba will continue to implement legislation in the area of provincial responsibility where the federal government is unwilling to proceed. We have done this in the past in the area of drunk driving. Again we have announced new initiatives in respect of 0.05 as a result of the representations at the Teens Against Drinking and Driving Conference in Winnipeg in October 25, 1996. It was that conference that made certain recommendations to this government. Again we brought forth legislation to address their concerns, and we are working very closely together with organizations such as MADD—that is, Mothers Against Drunk Driving—to ensure that Manitoba remains a leader in this particular area.

We have also initiated prostitution-related initiatives, and this again is a very difficult area given the federal government's area of responsibility. We have commenced a johns' school, and from the initial reports dealing with the johns who have been arrested for soliciting for the purposes of prostitution, we find very favourable reports and encouraging results coming out of that school. We are also moving in this session to deal with further penalties of those who would continue in this type of activity of soliciting in our public places, to provide for legislation, which includes the seizure of motor vehicles to further inhibit that kind of unauthorized and inappropriate and indeed illegal activity.

In respect of victim legislation, we had a study commenced by the Prairie Research Associates, which had broad recommendations, and we are pleased to see that the recommendations in that report will form the basis of legislation in Manitoba. We are also pleased, in reading the press releases of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), that they support those

recommendations in that study. So I can see that the movement of both parties represented in this House, and I trust the Independents as well, will support legislation that deals with issues such as community-based delivery of victim services, indeed also a victims' bill of rights. Also included in that will be issues such as victim impact statements, which are already extensively in use.

* (1710)

One of the concerns, though, that I hear coming from the opposition is the use of mandatory victim impact statements. In my opinion, this is a very dangerous thing to do. One of the things that we have seen coming out of our Supreme Court is the fact that victim-based legislation has been repeatedly struck down by our Supreme Court of Canada, and I do not quite understand why that is happening. It seems that in our society there is an emphasis on the rights of criminals, and those rights are emphasized at the exclusion of the rights of victims and members of the general public. It disturbs me that this continues. The federal government has brought in many initiatives in respect of protecting people such as the victims of rape only to see the Supreme Court of Canada strike that legislation down. Indeed, we have seen the problem in the O'Connor case, where a victim has her private life rooted through by defence lawyers.

It concerns me that many of the decisions, while they may be well meaning in terms of protecting civil liberties, what, in fact, they are doing is damaging and hurting our victims and the general public. We have to work together to find solutions to help the Supreme Court understand that there are victims there who are being revictimized by the courts, and the idea of the opposition that we have mandatory victim impact statements is simply not a credible way of approaching it because making these mandatory statements will, in fact, ensure that victims are victimized in every court process they come to. We have to be careful about what kind of victims to ensure that when we make these victim impact statements, that they, in fact, are protected, and that is what we are committed to doing, rather than taking a blind ideological approach to this issue. Simply because victim impact statements sound like a good idea does not necessarily mean, given the court rulings in the past, that they are a good idea in

every case, and we have to take a very sensitive approach to these victims to ensure that the court process does not revictimize them. Again, we need to work together with the federal government to ensure that this does not occur.

But we are committed to working in a meaningful and a sensitive way with victims, whether it is through community-based organizations, whether it is through the police and whether it is through our Crown attorneys. In this context, I am especially pleased about the recommendations made in the Lavoie report, and the implementation committee which is presently in the process of not just working as an isolated government committee, but Dr. Jane Ursel, the chair of this committee, is setting up various working groups and advisory committees throughout the province in order to assist her in implementing these recommendations. The government of Manitoba believes that she will do a very, very good job for the victims of domestic violence.

We have committed on an annual basis \$1.7 million of new money to ensure that these programs are implemented. These resources are substantive, but they are necessary in order to ensure that Manitoba does not in any way lose the leadership role that it has placed in many initiatives in this respect. In hearing Dr. Ursel speak in respect of this, I am very, very encouraged, not only that our zero tolerance policy is working, but that many of the programs that were recommended by Dorothy Pedlar back in 1991 are at a stage now where she can bring forward many of the recommendations.

The members indicate that they have a lack of faith in Dr. Ursel. I do not have the same lack of faith that they may indicate that they have. I am very—

Point of Order

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Madam Speaker, on a point of order. I am sure that the Speaker will rule on the legitimacy of my point of order. The point of order is that, in no uncertain terms, no one on this side of the House cast any aspersions on Professor Jane Ursel or her work. What we were saying was that the Pedlar report, which had an implementation committee, still has not been implemented six years later. For the Minister of Justice to assume and to put on the record

that I or any member of my caucus was casting aspersions on Professor Ursel just shows how far down the road this government has gone.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Education and Training, on the same point of order?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): We have sat here now for several years listening to a flagrant abuse of points of order, flagrant abuse. Members opposite claim to know parliamentary procedure and consistently and repeatedly deliberately rise on phoney points of order. They are not legitimate. They know when they rise they are not legitimate. It is an abuse of the rules of the House. It is wasting people's time. It is attempting to get remarks on the floor under the pretense of a point of order. They know it. It is dishonourable, and I ask that you rule the member to order and ask that they no longer bring forward points of order or maybe enroll them in a special parliamentary session where they could take everyone from their government House leader to their Leader and teach them what a point of order really is. This is again a false point of order deliberately put.

Madam Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Wellington, the honourable member for Wellington did not have a point of order.

The honourable Minister of Justice, to complete his remarks.

* * *

Mr. Toews: Madam Speaker, just simply to quickly conclude our report, what Dr. Ursel did, in fact, state, and I was simply quoting her, that she would be continuing the work of Dorothy Pedlar. But what she also said is Manitoba is not only a leader in Canada, my recent participation at an international conference has made it clear that Manitoba Corrections is a leader in the world. These are the words of Dr. Ursel. This is a person that I have faith in that she will implement these recommendations, that she will do an excellent job working together with community members from across this province to ensure better programming for the vulnerable of our province and, indeed, to make our province a better place to live generally. Thank you.

Ms. Barrett: Madam Speaker, I have some prepared remarks to share with the House today on the Speech from the Throne, but I would like to begin by commenting just briefly on the final words of the Minister of Justice dealing with the Lavoie commission and the appointment of Dr. Jane Ursel as chair of the implementation committee, and again to reiterate that I have nor does anyone have anything but the utmost confidence and respect for Dr. Ursel.

The problem that we have here is that Ms. Ursel, Dr. Ursel, may make recommendations as to implementations—[interjection] Oh, Dr. Ursel is actually going to implement. That is a bit unusual I would think. However, it is still the ultimate authority rests with the government, and I think the government is making a large assumption here that the implementation of recommendations of the Lavoie commission and the unimplemented recommendations of the Pedlar report of 1991 will take far more than one \$1.7 million. I hope the government is prepared to put its money where its mouth is in this regard where it has not been able or willing to do in the past nine years in many of these important issues.

* (1720)

Madam Speaker, getting back to the throne speech itself, we are quite used to a great deal of interesting, if not applicable, rhetoric in speeches from the throne. Do you remember the barn raisings and quilting bees of earlier speeches? Well, I must admit, I was a bit disappointed there was not any of that colourful rhetoric in this year's Speech from the Throne. In previous years there has at least been a vision of sorts, some meat in the Speech from the Throne, although it has led in most years past to nightmares, if you will, for the many people in Manitoba, unrealized dreams, because the promises made in earlier speeches from the throne have been honoured more in the breach than any observance.

As I was reading the speech again, I was reminded and perhaps it is due to the time of the year or the festive season coming upon us, but there did appear to me to be a lot of similarities between the government and the speech and a very famous tale, Charles Dickens' Christmas Carol. I will be having that as a thread throughout my remarks. In that context, I would like to

say first of all that this throne speech is a poor thin gruel for the Cratchett families in the province of Manitoba to put into their bellies.

The Premier, a.k.a. Scrooge, dances away his nights with visions of a past that never existed except in his neoconservative dreams. Along with his cabinet cronies, he flies away at public expense to watch the Royal Winnipeg Ballet in London, and as a parenthetical comment I was just wondering if the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) has tickets to the Royal Winnipeg Ballet when they play here in dull old Winnipeg or only when he can fly off to London at public expense. But I digress.

While the government is playing far too many Bob Cratchetts and Tiny Tims, wonder where their next meal will be coming from. The folks at Winnipeg Harvest and the Christmas Cheer Board are counting on or worrying about a banner year of requests while the Premier, a.k.a. Scrooge, plans his annual "working vacation" in Davos, Switzerland.

Let us compare the Premier's 1890s vision with a 1990s reality for many Manitobans. This throne speech has several examples of selective reality, and I quote, our Manitoba economy is strong. More Manitobans are working than in any previous year. We are working to ensure that families will always be better off working than on welfare. Income support paid on behalf of children will continue when a family moves from income assistance to the workforce, end quote. That is Scrooge's reality.

What is the reality for many Manitobans? Few statistics here. The proportion of families suffering long-term unemployment, which is a member of the family unemployed for more than 27 weeks in a year, i.e., six months, went from 5.5 percent in 1989 to 8.5 percent in 1995 and those are called the Tory good years. Twelve thousand families and 23,000 kids are affected by these long-term unemployment statistics—over a 50 percent increase. The number of households using food banks jumped from 702 in 1991 to 5,024 in 1995. In 1991, we were in the midst of a small recession. In 1995, we are supposed to be in a booming economy and look at the statistics of fivefold increase, more than a fivefold increase in people using food

banks. Do these families feel that the economy is steamrolling ahead as the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) is so wont to say? As the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) stated this afternoon in his remarks, perhaps the most telling statistics or one of the most telling statistics of all is that the average take-home pay for a Manitoba family is now \$81 a month less than it was in 1988. Those are the Tory good years.

The throne speech also praises, and I quote, "the diversity and balance in our economy and the vast potential of our human and natural resources." The Premier, a.k.a. Scrooge, may recognize and praise the diversity of Manitobans, but his actions certainly do not live up to his words. His government since 1988 has cut millions from the public school system affecting most of our children, although students in schools like Ravenscourt have \$2 million at a pop to put in another Zamboni, and I understand they have put in another hockey rink. We have community centres closing throughout the province, public community centres that cannot afford to operate their programs, while Ravenscourt gets another hockey rink.

This government has cut tens of millions of dollars from the health care budget, hurting families, children, seniors, and the disabled, who cannot afford to pay for private services in North Dakota or Minnesota. This government has cut daycare subsidies and income supports, again hurting children and the poor.

This government has not implemented the vast majority of the Pedlar report recommendations that first came into this House in 1991. It is only beginning to look at implementing, we hope, the report, the recommendations of the Lavoie commission. One wonders how many women would be alive today or would be living in nonviolent households today if the Pedlar report had been implemented in a timely fashion. That is the work of this government.

There is a theme here, is there not? It is that the Premier's stated vision of the future, and I quote, which is a shared and growing economic prosperity, providing and protecting essential services of health, education, and family supports for Manitobans, end quote, is not really for all Manitobans at all, but only for those who share his neoconservative vision of Christmas past.

Who are these people with a vision of Dickens' 1890s that the Premier speaks for? Statistically they are the 19 percent of respondents of a recent Ekos poll who care only about deficit reduction, small government, market forces, and globalization. For these people, the Premier's vision, like the young Scrooge and his dreams of Christmas past, works well. It has allowed, in almost 10 years, for the establishment of an economic framework that will let these elites get on with their lives and the business of accumulating more and more of this world's goods with as little perceived negative interference as possible. Read, no government interference in what we want to do with our resources, and the rest of the community be damned.

However, there is that pesky 81 percent that does believe in a government which reflects their concerns for community, for caring for others, and for the reality of the family of man. The Premier's vision has no room for these people, as more and more of them are discovering. The vast majority of Manitobans, including not just those like Bob Cratchett's family, but also those like the two gentlemen who came to Scrooge on Christmas Eve asking for a donation to charity, and Scrooge's own nephew, whose wishes for a happy Christmas both were answered with a bah, humbug.

Most Manitobans believe that the government has a role to play in ensuring that all Manitobans have real quality education, health care, personal family and security, and the ability to get and keep a good job, but the Premier, a.k.a. Scrooge, does not want to deal with these people, their concerns and dreams. He does not want to deal with the harsh realities that make the Tories' Manitoba far closer to Dickens' England than we would like, realities such as the fact that more poor children live in two-parent families than in single-parent families. There are 37,000 children living in poor families with two parents versus 24,000 living in single-parent families.

There goes the myth that it is poor single mothers usually that are poor. Children are living more and more in families with two parents, and they are living more and more, poor children, in families where both parents are working.

Oh, this is the high-wage, high-job economy we are looking at here, but the Tories' Manitoba is not providing for those children or their families.

Between 1989 and 1995, again those “wonderful” Filmon years, the CD and disc available just by calling a 1-800 number, the number of poor kids in two-parent families jumped by 4,000. Increasingly, kids and their families are poor, even though their parents are often working. That is not a vision of a Manitoba that 81 percent of the people in this province want. It is a vision, however, that Scrooge is implementing.

Why do 81 percent of us worry about these things? Eighty-one percent of us are not poor. Why do we care? Why do we not believe the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and his Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) when they say things are great? Because we know they are not.

* (1730)

More and more of us are seeing the results of last century's thinking on this century's kids and families. We know as a social planning committee said in its release on child poverty recently that, and I quote, the social environment in which children develop is a key determinant of their quality of life, potential to learn, health, well-being and competence. Children from poor families have less satisfactory outcomes in all of these areas, end quote. This government is doing nothing to alleviate these problems; they are actually exacerbating them.

What is the Premier, a.k.a. Scrooge, doing about these problems that are recognized by virtually all Manitobans? The throne speech and his comments after it are quite revealing of the Dickensian quality of his thoughts and values, and I quote, we have been consistent, people know what they can expect from us, end quote. Well, that is certainly the case. The same cutbacks and meanspirited government we have seen for almost 10 years. There is sure consistency there. Quote, we will attempt as much as we can within our resources to meet the needs that are there. It is not as if there is a massive amount of money, end quote.

I just wonder what the Premier thinks is a massive amount of money? Whether it is \$577 million or \$377 million seems to me to be a pretty massive amount of money, and it seems that way to most Manitobans as well.

Finally, quote, we must remember that a surplus of \$20 million or \$28 million or even \$100 million in comparison to an accumulated debt of \$8 billion, it is like you have a couple of dollars left at the end of the year to spend after using your whole salary. That is the kind of comparison Manitobans should make, end quote. Wrong, wrong, wrong. The kind of comparison that Manitobans should and are making is that there is an enormous amount of money in the rainy day fund.

There is also an enormous accumulated social deficit in the areas of health, education, welfare and safety that must be reduced if we ever have a truly equitable society. Manitobans know that the debt to GDP—gross domestic product—ratio has been virtually the same for the last 30 years through Tory governments and NDP governments. For 30 years, the debt to GDP ratio has been between 8 percent and 10 percent. It is the same today. Manitobans also know that a certain amount of debt is okay. As a matter of fact it is essential if we are going to do what we need to do whether it is as a family or a government.

The government is always trying to talk about how families must budget their money efficiently, and most Manitobans do if they have enough resources with which to do it. But Manitoba families know that certain kinds of debt are important and essential and okay. They are the debts that families put when they make mortgage payments, when they buy their houses. Most families cannot afford to buy a car outright with the exception of MTS stockbrokers. Most families have at least those two debts.

Many Manitoba families, especially with children of post-secondary age, also have burgeoning debts for helping their children through post-secondary education whether it is community colleges or the university system. These are debts that we incur today in order to have a better life for ourselves, our families and our children tomorrow. This is not a bad debt, and the Premier, a.k.a. Scrooge, is wrong when he thinks that Manitobans do not see through his meanspirited behaviour when it comes to that rainy day fund. It is Scrooge's Christmas past versus his Christmas future. Manitobans are looking to the future. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) is stuck in the past.

On another but related topic—certainly as it has to do with the character of the Premier—true character is seen in people's actions and reactions to challenges that face us, people's reactions, groups' reactions, government's reactions. We have seen, over the past nine years, how this Premier (Mr. Filmon) and his government have faced the challenges of government. We have seen increased poverty, increased waiting lists for health care requirements, increased fees for everything from colostomy bags to park fees, reductions to education, reductions to health care, reductions to social services.

The Premier's reaction has been not only to cut dessert, but also the main course, and to say in effect, let them eat cake, while he travels to London, Davos, and Whistler, especially in the winter. I understand the skiing is very good there. At the same time the Premier is cutting and slashing he is touting the ability of Manitobans to work together.

His government is “consulting” on everything, while they already know what they are going to do. I just give two examples of the “consulting” that this government has undertaken. One is the budget process. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) is saying that he is consulting with Manitobans—well, very broadly defined consulting. My understanding about the process that these meetings undergo is that they are very structured from beginning to end. In many cases the invitation list is given into the hands of the Chamber of Commerce. How many antipoverty organizations are going to be invited by the Chamber of Commerce to a consultation hearing, and how is the Minister of Finance consulting and sharing the fruits of his consultation when he is not prepared, like most other governments in this country, to make public the results of his publicly funded poll?

An Honourable Member: Did he say that? Are you sure?

Ms. Barrett: He did today. The Minister of Finance said he was not prepared to make that public.

Another issue that I would like to put the government on record in their consulting is that I hope that the government of the province of Manitoba does a better job of consulting its citizens than the city of Winnipeg did when it implemented the Cuff report and when the

city of Winnipeg, with virtually no public hearings at all, no public input at all, asked the province for virtually everything that the Cuff report recommended. I hope that the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer) and the rest of the cabinet and government, before they bring in any amendments to The City of Winnipeg Act dealing with the Cuff report, hold public hearings so that the people of Winnipeg and Manitoba have a chance to share their concerns, and they are deep and many, over the implications that this will have for democracy for the people of Winnipeg, putting the government on notice that consultation has to take place prior to that legislation coming before the House.

The Premier (Mr. Filmon) in this saying he is consulting and not really consulting is truly a Janusian figure, the epitome of two-faced actions and words. Nowhere has this cavalier, smug, arrogant, two-faced and out-of-touch attitude been more self-evident than in the Premier's statement about the flood of the century and the people most affected by the natural and man-made events of May 1997. In his throne speech, he talks about, and I quote, together meeting the challenge, proving once more that the true spirit of Manitobans comes to the fore in times of adversity, end of quote. This is true of the vast numbers of Manitobans who worked tirelessly both during and since the flood to help alleviate the ravages of the Red River. The Premier further states, and I quote: “These have been extraordinarily difficult times, but together we are working through them.” Again, this statement rings true for most Manitobans.

The Premier further states: “The visual images of the flood-ravaged Red River Valley stand as a testament to our human spirit.” How do these images, for everyone to see in the throne speech, written up, stack up to the verbal image of the Premier stating both during the crisis and several times since then, the latest being just last week, that residents in the Red River Valley should accept responsibility for, quote, consciously building on a flood plain.

I think, and most Manitobans would agree with me, that this is another indication of a Premier and a government out of touch with the vast majority of fair-minded Manitobans who feel that all residents of the Red River Valley who were affected by the flood

deserve sympathy and support, both financial and humanitarian, not castigation for their "choice."

I would like to know what choice current residents, farmers of the Red River Valley, had when they inherited their land from their parents and their grandparents and in some cases their great-grandparents? What choice did we have in Winnipeg living even lower than the people in the Red River Valley prior to the floodway coming in, the floodway that was put in by one of the best premiers in the last 30 years in this province, Duff Roblin?

* (1740)

An Honourable Member: The teachers and public servants paid for it, though.

Ms. Barrett: As my colleague the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) states, teachers and public servants and health care workers and casino workers and farmers all helped pay for the floodway, and it has paid for itself time and time again. We expect, Manitobans expect the same support for the people in the Red River Valley in 1997 that we provided for Winnipeggers in 1966 with Duff's Ditch. We expect it, but we know we are not getting it from this premier.

What is the Premier's point anyway about this continually laying blame at the feet of people who live in the Red River Valley? The only point I can see is that it is showing his true colours as a narrow-minded, vindictive little man who is rightly seen as playing the 1990s' version of Scrooge. Another Dickens vignette comes to mind in this embarrassing, hurtful performance by the Premier during and after the flood. The scene in *Oliver Twist* where Oliver holds up his bowl to the head of the workhouse, and he says plaintively, asks plaintively: Please, sir, can I have some more oatmeal? Guess which character is played by the flood victims and which character is played by the Premier.

Finally, when the stockbrokers who have made a killing out of the sale of our MTS have bought all their expensive cars, we will still be left with tens of thousands of Manitobans, especially children, who have nothing. A healthy society is one where everyone has a chance for a good-paying job, access to good

education and health care and perhaps, most importantly, hope for the future. Only a decreasingly small number of Manitobans now have this future. This is the Christmas future of the Tories under the leadership of the member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon): increase in MTS rates, freezing of child daycare spaces, decrease in social assistance rates, and a requirement that people on social assistance do job searches without the recognition that \$3 more for basic telephone rates when you have a decrease in your social allowance will not help you do that. No bus fare pay; no daycare pay, but the requirement is there to do that. It is a workhouse of the 1990s for many of these families.

Fortunately, just as in Dickens' Christmas Carol, there is another Christmas future. It is a future that will come not from this government or this premier but from a government devoutly looked for by more and more Manitobans, an NDP government. Soon that Christmas wish will come true and Tiny Tim can truly say, God bless us everyone.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Madam Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to be able to rise again in the House, and it has been a while since we have been able to stand and debate the issues before us, to bring forward the kind of legislation that Manitobans want and need, to bring forward and extend the work that we have done in this province over the past 10 years to bring economic stability to this province and the people of Manitoba, and, indeed, to put in place an economic strategy that, in fact, sees not only a balanced budget but enough savings in government operation to allow us and afford us to put in place a surplus and start paying down the debt that our former colleagues in this House under the previous administration had accumulated over their length of operation in the province.

So it gives me a great deal of pleasure, Madam Speaker, to again rise in the House and voice my support of the Speech from the Throne and many of the initiatives identified in the throne speech.

Before I do that, I would certainly like to extend my welcome to those that are new in this Legislature, namely our member for Portage la Prairie. I extend to him a hearty welcome. I know he is going to do a great job for the people of the Portage area as well as all the

people in Manitoba. I know that Mr. Faurichou will be a great asset to not only our government caucus, but indeed this Legislature. He will bring his expertise in agriculture and education and many other areas of business development into being in this Legislature.

I would also like to welcome the new pages. It is indeed an honour and a pleasure to have one of my constituents serve as a page here today, and I would certainly like to welcome her, but indeed also the other pages, I would like to wish them well in their endeavours. This is an exciting place and at times an absolutely boring place to be and work in. However, I think it allows for a tremendous opportunity to learn about the legislative procedures, and that I think you will take away from here and you will cherish forever.

I also want to welcome the new addition to the Clerk's staff, welcome her to this Chamber. We certainly look forward to working with all of you in this session.

When I listened to a couple of the presentations today from opposition benches and I listened to the Premier's remarks, it indeed clearly spells out the different philosophy that we hold in this province, the different philosophies different political parties bring into this Chamber. It is no wonder that in 1988, the people of Manitoba chose to elect a group of people that would espouse and bring forward in this House policy that Manitobans truly wanted.

It is indeed fortunate that Manitobans have indicated through consultations that we as a government initiated, that my Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) initiated, that my Premier has continually supported and brought forward as something that we should do, and that is consult, consult continually with people in Manitoba in all areas of Manitoba. Whether it is policy changes we make or whether it is financial directions we put forward, it is our view that Manitobans can give us good advice and, therefore, the consultative process during the establishment of another budget; therefore, the continuous consultations that we hold when we develop new areas of direction, new areas of legislation. We truly believe that Manitobans want to be involved in governing. We believe the process that we have established allows them to do that.

I note, Madam Speaker, that members opposite do not entirely agree with that process, because it was never their view that they needed to talk to anybody when they put forward legislation, when they discussed issues. They made very clear that when they put bills before committees that the time limits were constrained and that you had to be there when they said you had to be there. They never made the kind of allowances that we have made during discussions of bills and the process of developing an agenda for the future of this province.

* (1750)

I believe that the document that we all heard the Lieutenant Governor read—and he indicated when he read the Speech from the Throne that this would probably be the last time he appeared before this Chamber because it was nearing the end of his term. He put forward an agenda for the next generation of Manitobans. This document I believe is the foundation of taking us into the next millennium. It clearly spells out a pathway with which we can do this in an affordable manner. The people in the opposition benches have continuously railed against what we have done as a government. They today again push the issues and ask the questions as to why we were doing certain things in the Red River Valley to fight the flood.

Well, let me assure the honourable members opposite that had you been born and raised where I was born and raised, had you experienced the number of floods that I have had to go through in my lifetime, you would respect the fact that the province and this government not only supports financially but truly supports the initiatives of the huge number of volunteers that came forward and offered their services to help the people to face the disaster, the disaster which none of us had ever faced before, and that was the flood of the century.

Now, I find it very interesting, I find very interesting when the members opposite talk about the things that need to be done and criticize some of the changes that have been made or question why we have not made them before this, why we have not done things sooner, will recognize the fact that there is not a government in this country that had to make decisions based on what we had to make. It was an issue that had never confronted a government at all anywhere, Madam

Speaker. It was the flood of the century, so we made decisions. We made changes as we went along. We made changes to the programs. Some of the programs that were there, the flood protection program that was there was 30 years old. The agreement between the federal government and provincial government was 30 years old. It had always served well until you experience something that you had never experienced before.

So we made changes. Are the changes enough? We do not know. Are we going to have to make some more changes? Maybe, because we are continually still finding that there are things that we had not noticed before. It is very prevalent on my farm. We found out this fall the tremendous impact to our farm because, at the end of the day, after the flood was over there were no drainage ditches left, and when you live in a flat prairie like we live in in the Red River Valley—there is not another flatter piece of dirt on the earth than the valley—you have to have drainage ditches. The big sea wiped out the drainage ditches. We had none left so we had to make changes in the program to allow for it. Much of our soil was gone, not because of wind erosion or any other thing. The water had taken it away. So what do you do with that farmland? What do you do with a farmland that has no topsoil left on it?

An Honourable Member: Move your farm.

Mr. Penner: That is right. The honourable member for Burrows, his answer is, move the farm. Absolutely. That is the NDP's answer. The problem that we have had in this Legislature for years is, instead of recognizing that there might be some way to resolve this, there might be some way to remediate the soil losses, maybe rejuvenate them, they said, move the farm. Move it away. How do you move a quarter-section of land? Madam Speaker, how do you move a quarter-section of land? They would not know. They, of course, would not know.

So we had roughly, Madam Speaker, almost three-quarters of a million acres of land under water, which had never happened before. We had water move in ways that we had never seen before. We had water coming up the escarpment in waves, and I say to you that the general of the armed forces when he visited Manitoba in fact issued a statement saying we are going

to see a wall of water come down on us. Well, no wall of water ever ascended on the Red River Valley and no wall of water ever will because that is not the nature of the Red River Valley. There is no wall of water. It creeps up very slowly, one, two, three feet a day, but it comes up slowly. There is no tidal wave. So we have to deal with floods in a different manner than other areas in Canada. We have to deal with our floods in a different manner than Quebec does or Alberta does because we do not live on mountainsides. We have not got tidal waves. We have not got huge amounts of water descending on us within a few minutes. So changes had to be made in the program. So we made those changes.

According to Government Services we have dealt with 5,000 flood claims, and 4,100 of them have been awarded. I think that is an absolutely fabulous accounting of what has been done, and I think it is about time that members opposite recognize that the \$44 million or \$42 million that has been paid out to flood victims is nothing short of the province showing its responsibility towards the victims in the Red River Valley. The municipalities have been paid \$30 million up to now. There have been 1,800 floodproofing claims put forward till now; 1,575 of them have been inspected, Madam Speaker. However, only 173 of them have actually been brought to completion. The reason being that there simply is not enough manpower nor is there enough equipment in the Red River Valley to flood-proof all of the properties this year. There is not enough equipment. There is not enough physical labour to accomplish the huge task before us.

I know that members opposite sit there and chuckle and laugh at these initiatives that this government has done, but it has been done in co-operation with the municipalities. We have accomplished this in co-operation with the federal government and with the huge number of voluntary organizations and the huge amount of money that has been raised voluntarily by people from all across this country and indeed all across the nation and even beyond our country's boundaries. These people truly showed what co-operation was all about, and nobody laughed except the opposition members today. The opposition members today sit there and laugh at the amount of money raised and the huge amount of energy contributed to the task of fighting the flood.

Ladies and gentlemen, Madam Speaker, the initiative is not going to end this year. The requirements, the needs are not going to end this year. Many farmers will only feel the true result of the damage caused to their land next year or maybe the year after. Many people are starting to put their lives back together. Many families are starting to move back into their homes and are starting to get their lives back in order, but the trauma, the trauma that they experienced this year will

not soon go away. It is like setting sail in the Atlantic Ocean and crossing over into the North Atlantic.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) will have 25 minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Tuesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, December 1, 1997

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Matter of Privilege

McGifford	41
McCrae	44
Martindale	44
Kowalski	45
Sale	45
Dacquay	45
Lamoureux	46
Filmon	46
Mackintosh	48

Reading and Receiving Petitions

Winnipeg Education Centre	
Martindale	49
Friesen	50

Tabling of Reports

1996-1997 Annual Report, Department of Justice; 1996-97 Annual Report, Seizure and Impoundment Registry; Civil Legal Services, Special Operating Agency Annual Report for the year ending March 31, 1997; 25th Annual Report, Legal Aid Manitoba; Human Rights Commission 1996 Annual Report, Human Rights Commission Annual Report on the Administration of The Discriminatory Business Practices Act, year ending March 31, 1997; the 1994-95 Annual Report Victims Assistance Committee; 1995-96 Annual Report Victims Assistance Committee; 1996-1997 Criminal Injuries Compensation Board; 1996 Manitoba Law Reform Commission Report on Stalking; 1997 Manitoba Law Reform Commission Report on Section 270 of The Highway Traffic Act; Fatality Inquiries Report for the years 1995-96, 1993-94; '95 and '96 Annual Reports of the Officer of the Commissioner Law Enforcement Review Agency; 1996-1997 Annual Report of the Public Trustee	
Toews	50

Annual Report, Food Development Centre; Annual Report, Department of Rural Development	
Derkach	51

Annual Report, Ministry of Agriculture; Annual Report, Canada-Manitoba Crop Insurance Corporation; Annual Report, Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation	
Enns	51

1996-97 Annual Report, Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs; Annual Report, Automobile Insurance Appeal Commission; Annual Report, Special Operating Agency of Vital Statistics; 1996-97 Annual Report, Corporations Branch	
Radcliffe	51

Annual Report, Provincial Ombudsman with relation to Section 55; The Freedom of Information Act for the year ended December 31, 1996; Annual Report, Provincial Ombudsman for the year ended December 31, 1996	
Dacquay	51

Oral Questions

Budget	
Doer; Stefanson; Filmon	51

AIDS/HIV	
McGifford; Filmon; Derkach	52
Cerilli; Reimer	53

AIDS Hospice	
Cerilli; Filmon	53

Gambling	
Mihychuk; Stefanson	53

Video Lottery Terminals	
Mihychuk; Stefanson	54
Lamoureux; Stefanson	55

Minister Responsible for Lotteries Mihychuk; Stefanson	54	Penner	60
Gaming Control Commission Lamoureux; Stefanson	55	Philippine President Fidel Ramos Santos	61
Parents' Forum Friesen; McIntosh	56	Pembina Constituencies Dyck	61
Immigration Santos; Cummings; Filmon	57	AIDS Prevention Strategy Mihychuk	62
Budget Sale; Stefanson	58	Economic Growth McAlpine	62
Floodproofing Assistance Mackintosh; Cummings	59		
Hog Industry Wowchuk; McCrae	60		
Members' Statements			
Melvin and Elaine Penner			
		ORDERS OF THE DAY	
		Throne Speech Debate (Second Day of Debate)	
		Doer	63
		Toews	76
		Barrett	83
		Penner	87