

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, 20 May, 1986.

Time — 8:00 p.m.

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

MADAM SPEAKER, Hon. M. Phillips: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Ellice and the amendment thereto by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Member for Ste. Rose has 40 minutes.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise tonight to speak for the first time to this Assembly.

First of all, congratulations to you on being elevated to the Chair. My congratulations also to my fellow MLA's on both sides of the House. We've been given an honour, a privilege and a responsibility and I hope we have the wisdom to distinguish between the three.

The seat of Ste. Rose was previously held by Mr. Pete Adam who sat with the members opposite for, I believe, 11 years. I would like to say to the fellow members of the Legislature that while Mr. Adam and I obviously disagreed politically, certainly anyone who spends as many years in public life as he did and served the interests of his constituents deserves credit and well wishes in his retirement, and I offer him that at this time.

However, I must add one sub-title to that. I probably owe the fact that I'm standing here tonight to Mr. Adam. He wrote a letter to the press just prior to the election saying that he had never said I would make a decent MLA and I thank him for that effort.

Mr. Jim Ferguson represented what is now the southern part of Ste. Rose constituency prior to redistribution. He served, I believe, in excess of 12 years in this Legislature. He served with great distinction and commitment and I only hope that I may fill the shoes and follow his direction and the commitment he provided for the people that he represented.

I wish Mr. Ferguson well in his retirement, but those who know him know full well that retirement is a word that he doesn't understand. Nevertheless, he has retired from politics and I do wish him well.

Madam Speaker, Ste. Rose Constituency is bordered on two sides by Lake Manitoba, on the east and on the north. On the west it is bordered by the Riding Mountains and the beautiful Lake Dauphin, depending on the depth of the water some days.

Of our local governments that are involved in the Constituency of Ste. Rose, there are seven municipalities and an enormous LGD that covers one-third of the constituency. This constituency, which encompasses some 6000 square miles, Madam Speaker, also has three larger towns with which I hope to hold discussions and continue to try and bring forward their concerns, those towns being Neepawa, McCreary and Ste. Rose.

Madam Speaker, I noticed in the last Sunday Sun that I apparently gave a speech on this same topic last Thursday, and perhaps I'm being offered a second

chance. The constituency of Ste. Rose is a constituency that is almost entirely a watershed and it has certainly come home to rest this spring. Considering the problems that have been rampant across the constituency, it is certainly a topic of conversation and of great interest to the people, the municipal officials in my constituency.

I think, Madam Speaker, that I would like to speak to the members opposite about reorganization of priorities, because it seems to me when we see the example of what has happened this spring, how we were unable to control some of the flash floods that occurred, how we were unable to protect some of the valuable farmland that went under, I hope that we could reorganize priorities and that money could be put into additional works within the watersheds. I would speak specifically on the watersheds in my constituency, Madam Speaker. After all, how does one look a young farmer in the eye after he has put \$30-or-more an acre into his land last fall? When you're standing looking across his fields with him this spring and they're 2 to 3 feet under water, how can you honestly, without a twinge of regret, say to him, "Well, son, you've got nothing but goose pasture here."

This government has committed itself to repair, replacement and municipal infrastructure and that sounds good. Madam Speaker, I think if we can make that kind of a commitment and if the government can make a commitment to the upgrading and improvement of riverbanks, perhaps there is a little shuffling and reorganization of priorities there which would mean that the watersheds of this province would be part of those priorities.

I wanted to join this Legislature, Madam Speaker, to have the opportunity to address priorities, to have some influence on the policies and priorities of the government no matter which side of the Legislature I sit on. I believe the time is ripe, Madam Speaker, that we should take a different look at the way governments deal with rural Manitoba, the agricultural sector in particular.

The agricultural community in Manitoba provides the fuel for the engine that provides the motivation and the motive for our economy. The wedging of agriculture into a domestic market is not a good sign or a good goal. It will hurt the economy of this province if we ever allow ourselves to think in terms of only domestic market. We have to be very cognizant of the fact that in order to prosper and grow we must look also to our export markets, both to the south and offshore. As a hog producer I can attest to the fact that, when the American border became hostile to our exports, there was \$5 to \$7 taken out of my pocket immediately — per hog.

Madam Speaker, I would like to offer a helping hand to the Minister of Agriculture. I am sure that he is a very understanding gentleman and he understands the problems of agriculture. Certainly it bothers me that we should be so abusive. It bothers me that he is a man possibly in the wilderness across there, but we

will continue, Madam Speaker, to prod and push and pull until we can get the priorities of agriculture into the area that we believe they should be.

Farmers of this province deserve better than they have been getting, Madam Speaker. It seems to me that people get the kind of government they deserve, and I guess I've been beginning to question if I deserve what I've been getting, and this is why I chose to run for the Legislature. We cannot continue to offload all of the agricultural problems to the feds, to the Americans, and to the world market. There are some provincial responsibilities and there are areas that the Provincial Government can move.

We outlined during the campaign our concern about school taxes. That is not simply a matter of dollars and cents, Madam Speaker, that is also a concern in terms of what is fair and what is right in relationship between ability to pay and ability of a particular asset to produce monies with which bills may be paid.

Madam Speaker, there were certain other very simple changes that could be made that would improve what I consider some serious discrepancies in agriculture in this province. First of all, what happened to the idea that if a person went into a feedlot and was able to make a buck, what happened to the idea that it was legitimate for him to do so? The feedlot operators of this province. It has to say something for the profits that are in feedlot if people are prepared to risk capital, risk it albeit possibly for a tax discount, for a write-off against taxes, but in such a way that it would be producing more goods, it would be providing a service, it would be increasing jobs in this province, even though those who might have invested in the feedlot would, in fact, have generated a loss that they would deduct from their income tax.

Madam Speaker, what about tripartite agreements? We've joined the Hog Tripartite Agreement and I commend the Minister that he has signed that agreement. I have to question, however, why it was signed at the time that it was. Was it signed for political reasons at that particular time? I question, Madam Speaker, why is that when we get up in the morning we have a weather forecast. We probably have a crop forecast. We have a crop forecast even of what's going to go on in Russia in terms of production, but we don't necessarily know what the Minister of Agriculture is going to do that day. Those who chose not to be part of the program because it was put forward as being actuarially sound are now seeing those who went into the program being subsidized. I fear that the same will happen to the cattle industry — not that it bothers me that those who are in the program may have some of their debts written off — but it has been put forward for so long as being actuarially sound, that those words have a very hollow ring in the ears of many of the farmers of this province.

There's a couple of nifty names for programs that have been running around in the agricultural community and in this Legislature — Farm Start and Farm Aid. We have farmers out in the country who would like to know what exactly is involved in these programs, and obviously we're going to have to wait for a little while longer. It's sincerely hoped on my part that Farm Aid does not become derisively known as Band Aid.

What are the details? Can Farm Start provide something more than a new blush to an old program?

When you stop and think about it, Madam Speaker, it sounds almost like the Young Farmer Rebate in reverse, only this way the person who is selling out gets the deduction. I'm receiving calls from young farmers across my constituency who have turned to MACC in desperation because they are concerned with their financial standing for the coming year but there seems to be a problem.

MACC is not keeping pace with the present occurrences in agriculture. While MACC has had some programs that have done a fair bit of good across the province, I am concerned that they are not reacting to the reality of the agricultural community this spring.

Madam Speaker, when people approach MACC and they are told that, even though they have 50 percent equity or higher, they have no cash flow and therefore are ineligible because of present grain prices; but the banks and the credit unions will accept their loans — they are prepared to back them. Now why is it the private institutions are prepared to take a risk that MACC will not?

Madam Speaker, I hope that the Minister will not delay. We have had two White Papers under the Minister's jurisdiction, two studies, and I am afraid that the time is almost past for action.

In terms of small business, Madam Speaker, in the Ste. Rose business community in this constituency, what we have are small businesses that are service-oriented, heavily dependent on agriculture. So what I say about agriculture, and what we all say and see in the future for agriculture, or hope we will see in the future for agriculture, certainly not only affects those who have a little dirt under their fingernails, it affects those who make their living selling goods and services to those people. It makes a difference eventually to the communities and the size of the communities, and to the educational and health care opportunities that will be within those communities because, as the population begins to drop, we know what happens.

During the election, the Premier chose to announce small business bonds in my constituency. He invited a group of people to a meeting, and he announced his program for small business, but at what price? We still are not sure, because many businesses can already borrow at something close to prime. Who is eligible? What criterion?

But interestingly enough, Madam Speaker, after the Premier made that announcement, he went on to deride the public institutions in the monetary field for their insensitivity. He then chose to sit down and visit with some of the invited guests, and found himself sitting amongst four bankers - unfortunately, I wasn't there, I wasn't invited - but I suspect that this is another example of the "how to educate a donkey" theory. The way that you educate a donkey, Madam Speaker, is you get a two-by-four about this long and you go up and you hit him between the eyes, and then you've got his attention.

That seems to be what happens with the government opposite when they deal with Ottawa. It happens when they deal with many of the people that we believe should be consulted, should be dealt with on a straightforward basis. Then we would not be dealing in a confrontation situation. We would, in fact, be dealing in a straightforward and pragmatic and practical fashion.

Will small business bonds be something more than what is available now? If it isn't, truly this government

will have abandoned their so-called commitment to small business. Or will they simply be an alternative lender? We don't necessarily need alternative lenders in the system at this time. What we need, Madam Speaker, in my opinion, is a change in government attitudes.

Madam Speaker, there is a new hog-processing plant being built at Neepawa, one which will be world-class. It will follow a new technology; it will provide many jobs that we sorely need. It was there, the initial start was because of a DRIE grant — I'm not sure if you call it DRIE or DREE anymore — DRIE. But I had the unsettling experience to hear that the head of the meat packers union was severely upset that we are going to have a meat packing plant in rural Manitoba. It's unfortunate that technology such as this is being ignored, Madam Speaker. While there may be 80 jobs out there that would replace a considerable number more in a less efficient plant, they will be long-term jobs. They will be jobs that will produce a product at an efficient cost so that we may compete in a highly competitive world situation. And I ask, Madam Speaker, where will the government sit with its first contract legislation when this plant gets into operation?

A MEMBER: Ask Mackling, he's talking about bananas all the time.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: We're not exporting bananas, we're exporting pork, and in that pork is the wheat and the barley, the product of our prairies and that is the way we will grow, that is the way we will meet head-on the competition around the world.

Madam Speaker, I would like to talk about the highways in the Constituency of Ste. Rose for a moment. I have to say that highways are of a primary concern because in parts of the Ste. Rose constituency, while we hear a considerable amount of talk that the railways have been taken out of Manitoba, that the railways are the reason our highways are in bad shape, it reminds me of the farmer who went out into his field after it had been completely hailed out and he looked at his field and he said, "The CPR has done it to me again."

Parts of this constituency, Madam Speaker, never did have a railway. The taking out or putting in of the railway would not solve the problems that we have in parts of the Ste. Rose constituency. The concern is that what highways we may have, once you get off the main arteries, simply do not meet the standards of the amount of load that we need to carry these days. And I'm not talking about enormous trucks and transfers — we've got trucks that can't go down these roads empty, Madam Speaker.

It disrupts the flow of commerce; it disrupts the activity in the constituency, and eventually what it does, it makes sneaks and cheats out of otherwise honest people who have to wait until the inspectors have gone because there's no other way they can get their cattle to pasture. That is only one example, but it is an example that I think bears to be kept in mind when we talk about priorities, Madam Speaker.

Another concern that relates to highways, Madam Speaker, is the Yellowhead Route which is being billed as, and in fact is, an alternate to No. 1, a tourism route that we hope many, many people will use. This summer,

when we have a great westward flow of tourism, it was hoped that a lot of those tourists would swing north at Highway 16, but there seems to be a problem. Somehow it relates to constituency boundaries, and I say to the Honourable Member for Minnedosa, what have you done wrong?

MR. D. BLAKE: It's coming this year, they think.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Well, the construction stops exactly at the edge of the Ste. Rose boundary, so we are stopped halfway between the two towns. The construction will not likely be up to acceptable standards by the time the traffic begins to flow at the end of June. There is a very real possibility that there will be a considerable loss of tourism revenue to the people who live along this highway and who are expecting something greater from the flow of traffic to Expo.

Madam Speaker, it used to be that when you went south from Ste. Rose into the Gladstone Constituency that you fell into a pothole — that has only recently been cured — but that seems to me to be an example of government that is using, not only many other means, but transportation facilities as a means to leverage on the voters of this province.

Madam Speaker, in rural Manitoba, education and health care are important subjects. Rural Manitobans have a right, I believe, to expect quality health care within a reasonable distance of where they live. In the Speech from the Throne, it seems to me that health care was touched with a very broad brush — nothing specific. Again, I am concerned that there were promises dropped here and there, and little groups patted on the head here and there, through the election, and that tells me there may be a very real danger that the Budget has been used up prior to being prioritized.

I would only touch on one item within my constituency, however, Madam Speaker. It's a problem that is not unique to Ste. Rose only, it is a problem that occurs widely throughout rural Manitoba, and that is obtaining and maintaining quality medical staff in our rural hospitals. It's a problem which I am sure the Honourable Minister is well aware of, and I would simply flag one issue that relates to that.

At Ste. Rose there is a large facility that is being underutilized because of the shortage of doctors at the present time. I would wonder, with the efforts of the department, in cooperation with the universities, if this could be expanded to become a teaching facility and that we might then be able to attract more doctors to rural Manitoba, that we might then be able to show more doctors what rural Manitoba is like. Certainly, the problem is not with them being able to earn a living in rural Manitoba; it is to get them into the rural parts of the province so that they may, in fact, appreciate the delights of living in rural Manitoba as the rest of us do. Certainly, the hospital of which I speak has an adequate population base from which to draw.

Madam Speaker, I was involved as a trustee for seven years before I became involved in provincial politics, and it's one of the major reasons that I am in the Legislature tonight. As I said earlier, I hope to influence the directions and the policies of Governments of the Day, but I have a few questions and concerns.

First of all, I would like to congratulate the Minister of Education on some of the statements that he has already brought forward, but there are, however, questions that need answering and I hope that he will take them into consideration. I also, of course, wish to offer him my support if he will consider the direction about which I am talking.

Can the parents of the province be assured that the curriculum development and implementation will be more in line with the community standards and will be able to be judged by the people in the community in time that they can make up their minds, in a reasonable and practical manner, about some of the controversial curricula that has been proposed?

Madam Speaker, again I would point out a personal situation on the Beautiful Plains School Board, and the administration, I felt, was quite a progressive administration. So we were prepared to look at the Family Life section of the health curriculum, and we were told that, if we didn't in-service some teachers, we could not obtain the information. That creates mistrust; it creates misunderstanding. It may very well be the one thing that will kill the opportunity to implement that type of curricula in this province.

I congratulate the Minister on a statement he made in the House here a few days ago, when he announced that the high school curriculum review would proceed. It's long overdue, however. I would like to point out that trustees, parents, and the Association of School Superintendents have long asked that this be undertaken and, even though we are now undertaking this review, it stands to reason that we will still be behind in terms of where we should have been if we, in fact, implement new curriculum after the review has been finished.

I want to know, can we expect a spirit of cooperation from the department — a buzz word, cooperation, discussion, interaction. These were the kinds of words that have been flying around the Department of Education, the Department of Agriculture too, I suppose. What bothers me, however, is that we saw things such as the letter going out to the "Hutterian Brethren" during the election period. It went out in such a way as to impugn shoddy and immoral actions on the part of the school divisions of this province that had Hutterian schools within their boundaries.

Madam Speaker, it was an insult to the trustees of this province; it was an insult to the Hutterian Brethren. There can be only one reason for it going out when it did, because already a lot of the guidelines were in place and certainly the structure for discussion was there between the trustees and the brethren in the colonies. But it went out impugning motives during the middle of the campaign and the result was, as I said a minute ago, it was an insult to the people that it went to when they stopped and thought about it. It was done solely for partisan political purposes, as far as I'm concerned, and I hope that the department will never indulge in that sort of change in midstream again. As I said earlier, I offer my support to the Minister because I hope that these things will not occur again.

Another point, Madam Speaker, is that there is a lot of feeling out in the public, in regard to the educational programs of this province, that education and social tinkering is being mixed together. The educational standards of this province will be compromised if that

type of thinking prevails. We have a good education system if it is properly managed and kept up-to-date.

Madam Speaker, I would like to talk for a moment about the eastern part of the Ste. Rose constituency. It's an area that is dominated by ranching, which is the most obvious choice for the people in that area considering the soil type and the availability of pasture. But ranching and fishing are tied very tightly together, because many of the ranchers say that they couldn't afford to continue ranching if, in fact, there was not a good winter fishery.

In talking about the fishery and in talking about the people who live along the shores of that Lake Manitoba, the part that's bounded within my constituency, I would say, Madam Speaker, that I hope that the government would see and would assess the great potential that there is in that part of the province. There is a potential for commercial and sport fishing to be improved. There's a great potential for tourism to be improved.

Tourism is almost non-existent on that part of the shoreline of Lake Manitoba but I can give you an example, going around the lake to Lake Dauphin, where tourism and the construction of cottages and putting in cottage construction for recreational activities very nearly broke the developer, because it went on for two years. One full year, all that was needed was the signature of the member who was the Minister responsible. Unfortunately, that member was also the Member for Ste. Rose.

Madam Speaker, the tourism industry would lend itself to employment in that part of the province and that part of the constituency. There are three Indian reservations up that shoreline, and I've had some fairly lengthy discussions with the leaders of those communities. I believe we've developed a mutual respect and a mutual goal between us. They are looking for jobs, Madam Speaker. There is unemployment in that part of the Ste. Rose constituency that would make Attila the Hun blush.

Madam Speaker, jobs are the answer to people who live in the areas that are not highly productive in terms of agriculture or fishing. Those jobs are hard to find, I grant that. But if we could build on the resources that are there, i.e., the tourism; if we could build on the fishing — it was flagged earlier by the member next to me for Portage la Prairie that there may be some problem with the Fairford Dam. If, in fact, it can be shown that is the reason the fish are not coming to that southern part of Lake Manitoba, then truly it's an issue that should be given careful consideration because we want those people to have jobs. They don't want welfare. They want an active fishery; they want an active industry concerning tourism if it could possibly be developed. The best way to attract a tourist is to show him where he can catch a fish, Madam Speaker.

I came to this Legislature wanting to influence the policies and the priorities of the government. I hope that I have helped clarify the needs of my constituency. I pledge myself to work in a constructive manner for the good of this province and, Madam Speaker, I am prepared to make as good a government as I possibly can out of the Government of the Day.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Madam Speaker, it's a real pleasure to join the many that have spoken so far in debating this Speech from the Throne.

A MEMBER: That's the best part of your speech.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: It gets a little better as I go along.

I would like to join the many that have congratulated you, Madam Speaker, for having been chosen to guide us in our deliberations. I certainly would like to congratulate the Deputy Speaker also, my leader for going back in government with this government, all the members of this House that were elected, of course, my new colleagues in Cabinet, the Mover and Seconder of the Speech from the Throne.

What I find most interesting, especially in this first Session and in the first debate, is the new members. I have enjoyed it. I've tried to listen to most of the speeches. I've missed some, but I have listened to many of the speeches from both sides of the House, and I was impressed, not necessarily by what was said but the way it was said and the apparent sincerity of all the members that spoke.

I guess the one that impressed me the most, but he's hardly a new member — he's a new member, but he's had experience — I would think it is my colleague from Concordia. I have also enjoyed the speech — I thought it was going like gangbusters for the first speech — of the Member for Brandon West and the charming Member for River East. — (Interjection) — it doesn't hurt to pay a few compliments. In fact, I think there is too much partisanship in this House. Maybe I'm naive if I think that at times certain things should be above partisan politics for the good of Manitoba — (Interjection) — That's right.

My honourable friend reminds me, I'm sure, that I have changed parties. I want to say to them that I have never been considered that good a party person, a party man. I feel that the parties are there to serve the public and it doesn't concern me that much. You don't vote blindly for a member of a party because it is your party. I don't think that any parties should tell you how you should follow your beliefs and your principles. If you are asked to leave those at the door of the caucus room before you go in, I think that's wrong. I know this is a joke to some of the members and this is fine, but I think there is too much. I have heard so many people say that the last speaker, the Member for Brandon West, River East, the one from Portage this afternoon, they all finished, the same thing, I dedicated myself to my constituency and the people of my province.

MR. J. DOWNEY: You guys don't — you dedicate yourselves to yourselves.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Well, the biggest joker in the House is at it again. As long as you deduct his time from my time, let him go ahead, Madam Speaker. That is what they'd like to do. When someone is trying to speak, although we allowed the courtesy of listening to what is said on the other side — but a little bit of heckling is good. I don't mind that at all.

I was in the process of saying that there is too much partisanship and I believe that. I think that if anybody

can tell me — and I make an exception of the Member for River Heights, but all the other members — if they say they agree with everything that their partners and their people in their party agree with, I say show me one of those and show me either a liar or a fool because that is impossible.

I never hesitated to say — I think they've known how I feel about the French issue. I think what has gone through those last few years has been a disgrace. I think we have wasted money for no reasons at all.

I think also on the question of aid to private schools, my stand is very well known on that. I can't pretend that I'm too happy with what is going on in this province. I believe in parental rights in education and I believe in equality of opportunity for all the students of this province.

Having said that, there has been quite a bit said on the question of Health and I'd like to discuss the question of Health in the time that is remaining. The Member for Morris lectured us the other day. He said you're talking about less money for — (Interjection) — you said that from your seat when somebody else was speaking, that we were wrong in stating that there was a cutback in Health.

MR. C. MANNES: No, I said that standing.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Well, maybe on your knees, I don't know. I didn't watch where you were, but you said it anyway. That's the main thing.

Politicians are often accused of complaining, criticizing and blaming another level of government, and that is true. That is something that is done quite often. What I think should be done is to see if they are right in doing so. I want to tell you tonight why we feel like we do. Because if commitments mean anything, I think that all commitments from the Federal Government have been broken.

I'd like to quote from some of these different newspapers. The Ottawa Citizen on August 24, 1983: " 'In New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, a Conservative Government would restore the original 50-50 split in Medicare costs between the Federal and Provincial Governments if elected to office,' said Tory Leader Brian Mulroney. 'In some cases, the federal share would likely be even higher,' said Mulroney.

"In the Crocodile Room of the Peter Pan Motel in New Glasgow, Mulroney expanded his theme of Medicare as a sacred trust, arguing that hospital user fees charged in some provinces would become academic if fairness was restored to the financial formula that governs health care funding. National health care is not a political issue." He believes there shouldn't be any partisan politics. "He said, 'You're entitled to the same kind of quality services irrespective of place of residence.' That may mean in certain cases a higher percentage than 50 percent. 'The pumped up federal contribution is a priority item with us to be financed by a revived economy and the revision of scrapping of Liberal programs,' he said."

A little later in the Ottawa Citizen, Brian Mulroney stressed the Progressive side of his Conservatives. Here, Friday, ". . . go in to negotiate with the provinces to bring preventative and home health care under Medicare. He said a Conservative Government would

support preventative health care, develop new approaches to community and home-based care, especially for the chronically ill, and expand medical research particularly in the types of illness affecting the elderly."

The Gazette of Montreal: "Yesterday, Mulroney laid the blame for the current crisis in health care financing on the Liberals whom he said forced extra billing and user fees on the provinces by reducing federal Medicare contributions to 40 percent from the 50 percent."

MR. C. MANNESS: Howard Pawley says he'll knock the price of gas down.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Well that has a lot to do with Health. In the Globe and Mail, in August 1983: " 'The problems with Medicare,' Mr. Mulroney said, 'are all because the Federal Government reneged on commitments it made to the provinces and cut back very dramatically on the dollars it sent to the provinces who are charged with administration.'"

" 'The Conservative Government would be generous to the provinces and doctors on the prickly issue of Medicare,' Tory Leader Brian Mulroney said. 'Federal cutbacks on Medicare have left the provinces holding the bag,' he said, 'it's the result of the Federal Government spending. Provinces such as New Brunswick are scrounging around for money to prevent the erosion of health care programs.'"

"Mulroney said, 'The Conservative prescription for Medicare is an infusion of federal funds for the provinces. The root cause of the problem with Medicare is that the Liberals have reneged on funding commitments to the province. The solution to Medicare problems would be to re-establish funding in a positive and generous way.' " I could go on and on.

Now, what I wanted to demonstrate tonight is that there were commitments that weren't kept. If you think this is an easy task, I say that health care is the challenge of this generation. We've had the best care in the world in this country, and Manitoba was right at the top, not in everything, but generally speaking, in most of the areas it has the best care.

Now what the Federal Government, from the Minister of Finance, if you remember the statement he made in the House, there'll be a reduction of \$238 million from what Manitoba was getting just a few years ago when you were in office. In 1990-91, in that same year, we'll be \$313 million short of 50-50 financing. A few years ago when they changed, in 1966-67 was the last year of the shared formula; 1970-78 was the block funding and it was said in the first few years it was much more generous than what we had been getting under the 50, but it was going down. So the four years that you people were in office, you took advantage of that and you got quite a bit more. They changed exactly the year that you left and now this is going down.

Now, in 1976-77, the hospital and the medical together was a total of \$323.3 million. The Federal Government paid 171.4 of that; the Manitoba Government, 151, for 53 percent.

The next year, the first year of the block funding, the share of the Federal Government went to 56.5 percent; in 1978-79, the Federal Government went to 63.5; and finally 1979-80, which was the last year I had when I prepared it during that time, was 66.5.

You actually saw a government, a Provincial Government, who actually reduced by \$20 million what it put into that from one year to the other, \$20 million, that put in \$152.7 million in 1977-78, and then they went to \$132 million for those two areas, and in 1979-80, they added \$300,000 more. They were still \$19.7 million less than they had two years previous to that. Now, from the 50-50 percent approximately in 1979-80, we're about 43 percent, and by 1990 it will be 36 percent. So if you think it's not a challenge, you've got another bet coming.

Now, what money is being spent from that? In 1978-79 and this is just the Commission — mind you, that's where the cost is — \$445.2 million; in 1979-80, \$492; 1980-81, \$572; 1981-82 was for 15 months, so that was \$699; 1982-83, \$819; 1983-84, \$909; 1984-85, \$974 million or close to it, more than a billion dollars in Health.

If we go on the way we are going now, just with the money the way we are increasing now, in 10 years, instead of a billion dollars, it will be \$3,400,000,000.00. Now do you mean to tell me that we can keep on or go on the way we're going now, with less money from the Federal Government, more expectancy from the people in the field? The people who have pledged that they are going to do something for their province, they have got to remember that and what is good for Manitoba is also good for Brandon and River East and so on, so you can't go on like this.

In this House you've got a choice — and this is what I was talking about in an appeal, to be above this partisan politics — is to try to work together. I'm not naive enough to think that there wouldn't be any criticism, that wouldn't be any good. But I think we have to refrain from this thing about — well today Ste. Rose Hospital, the teaching hospital? Do you know how much it costs for a bed for a teaching hospital? Do you have any idea at all? I guess not. Well, maybe you should start finding out the cost before you make these wild statements.

The average of Canada in a teaching hospital is \$412 a day. Ontario is the second highest at \$445.54 a day. You know what Manitoba is spending, \$489 a day and that's the criticism that you have now. So when you talk about all this easy construction and so on, you're not realistic. You are going to lose the whole ball game and that's the danger.

There are some provinces who are saying now, we can't go with this, we've got to go back to the old way because where are you going to get the money? I say to you, and I say to every member in this House, we have to have another look at what is going on in the Health field. There are too many sacred cows that we have to look at before we decide where we want to go. We can't stay still; that's going down. We can't keep on, obviously, in the way we are spending now. What's going to happen without any more revenue? If we cut, well, you know what's going to happen then.

We have no premiums in this province; no premiums. We have no extra billing. I don't know of any people who want that. No deterrents. I'm talking about the hospital now and the medical; no utilization rate. We're asked every day — increase in coverage — there is this expectancy there that we'd better reverse. If you really want to work for your province, you start working together to tell the people you can't keep on spending the way you are.

We are told to do more in mental health. The Federal Government never covered a penny in mental health but now they are telling us what to do.

The Chamber of Commerce, that's great, the Member for Portage — this is great — the Chamber of Commerce are very important but the Department of Health is not trying to provide jobs for the Chamber of Commerce. We are looking to provide care for our people.

You will have your schools but at the schools the people will be better qualified. Eventually we will need more, not less. Eventually, I said, we will need more psychiatric nurses because you will have some in geriatric hospitals, psycho-geriatric hospitals, you will have some in the community.

A while back, the first year that I was the Minister of Health in the Schreyer years, the Deputy Minister, that I inherited, had decided — and I'm not blaming him, it was the way to go — we were going to get the people out of those institutions and we were going to go out in the community and we were going full-speed, turning them out the door and everything. But what happened? First of all, the community wasn't ready. You know, there is always good intention — go and hide the old man or the senior citizen somewhere outside the city; hide the mentally ill and all the misfits in society, they weren't part of society; that had to be changed and the people have to understand that.

Secondly, we had to have facilities to house these people and probably more important than anything else, we had to have the staff, the qualified staff, and it is a different staff.

Do you know what they did? These people walked around the streets; they had no facilities. They ended up crowding the acute psychiatric care in these hospitals mostly in Winnipeg, like the Health Sciences Centre, St. Boniface, Misericordia, Victoria and so on. This is what happened.

You will have your school. It is not a question of the Chamber of Commerce. Some of these municipalities now are saying that we should give them a grant instead of taxes and the people of Manitoba are building hospitals for them. They are saying if you want to close a hospital, they shouldn't have these five- or six-bed hospitals, it's not practical. What are they saying now, that you have to keep this thing? In this school the people will be specialized; they will have a base, a formation of the base for all psychiatric nurses. It is something new; it is something different and there will be more of that, but it's not closing that school and getting the proper education and the proper training that would do that. It is bad for Portage. If I was the member, I would fight for that also but don't point at me or my colleagues here and say that we are not providing the care. That would not be providing the care.

You're talking about problems; you're talking about doctors. Somebody said Ste. Rose. You know what we did for Ste. Rose to get doctors? We went all over the place. It is not the responsibility of the Provincial Government, you know these big governments that you don't like. What else do you want us to do? Do you remember "from the cradle to the grave"? That's what you are advocating, all of you. Not when you are talking about your next-door neighbour; not when you're talking about my constituency, but when you are talking about

yours. That's exactly what you're saying. Listen to you. Read Hansard and see what you're saying. That's exactly what you're saying.

Do you know that in Brandon there is 25 percent more doctors than they had a few years ago and the hospitals were fine enough? And in the city, there's even more than that, and you want to develop more doctors? You want to develop more doctors? You have too many doctors, that's why you have these walk-in clinics and so on. That's going to cause problems and that's going to cost a fortune and that is going to bankrupt this province if we don't keep up those kind of things. — (Interjection) —

A MEMBER: Limestone first.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: What?

A MEMBER: Limestone first.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: I thought I was talking about Health. What the hell has that got to do with Health?

You talk about CAT scans. A few years ago, did anybody know what a CAT scan was? You know how much it was to set the first new one up? It cost us \$4.5 million. It cost the people of Manitoba \$4.5 million. What the hell is \$4.5 million, eh? Now we want five. We want one everywhere. This is the cost and the people are spoiled in this province. We have more beds than any other province per population — (Interjection) —

A MEMBER: Well, why are we so spoiled?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: . . . and you're crying. Why what?

MR. C. MANNES: Let's talk about that. Why are we so spoiled?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Why are we so spoiled? I'll tell you why. — (Interjection) — Because of the politicians, all of us. I'm not excluding myself because when Medicare and hospitalization was brought in, the Federal Government said we'll pay 50-50 but only that, not a personal care home of acute care beds. You only paid 50 cents so you're billed acute beds, no personal care beds, no Home Care, none of these services.

Then you've had a lot of fun saying that I knew that we were going to increase Pharmacare. That was a crime against the old people. I knew what it cost. I told you and I've told those that were here before in this House the last few years. I've made speeches, most of you were there to the Union of Municipalities and I told them what it would be. I told him exactly what I'm telling you now, that we had to work together to try to stop that and we did for four years. We're ready and I would invite you to work with us and if you don't want to work with us, we'll have to do it alone. Not alone — with the medical profession, with the nurses, with the administrators, but we'll have to do it or we're losing the whole ball game. There won't be any Medicare here. We'll go back to where we were before.

What did we do for Pharmacare? I knew that I was going to bring it. I had no idea when it was approved.

We set up the Budget after the election, my dear friend, in two weeks. I knew that we would have it. I'd tell you. We're going to do a hell of a lot more than that or we're going to lose it. You might as well be advised now. We're going to do it or we're going to lose it. Pharmacare, what did we do in Pharmacare? — (Interjection) — Everybody should be nervous. The people out there should be nervous. Everybody should be nervous. — (Interjection) — They're nervous. They know. They've had to deal with the Budget. Do you think it was easy to do some of the things they did? They're nervous. All of us are nervous because we can go from a best to no program at all.

All those that criticized Pharmacare, was there one amongst you that took the phone and phoned Ottawa and said, this generic legislation you want to bring in, it's going to cost \$10 million-12 million for Manitoba — don't do it, Manitoba's just going to be the loser? Did any of you phone out there? All the other — the Conservative Government in Saskatchewan, and everybody else, are fighting on that, every single Provincial Government across this country. It's going to cost us \$10-12 million more for what if that legislation got through?

Now, look at the awful thing that we did. There had never been an increase for people over 65, and we said there's going to be eventually in two years, because we started late, \$25 deductible increase. Now, \$25 that wasn't deducted before, they would get 80 percent of that. They'd pay 20 percent so, therefore, they'd pay \$5 out of that 25, so it's \$20 increase. A carton of cigarettes for a year. To say we're increasing that! What about all the things that we are giving to keep the cost of living, the inflation and so on? This program costs \$4.8 million when we started. It is now over \$28 million. You don't want the people over 65 because they're nearly there. People that are over 65 should not pay anything? You should get a free ride? We're doing all kinds of things. We're spending — (Interjection) — because no decision had been made during the election, but every speech, ask anybody and ask the Conservative candidate what I said at any senior citizen home and so on. Find out what I said. — (Interjection) — Exactly the same thing that I'm telling you now. There's got to be more of that. It's \$20 per person.

Now remember that in the hospital they get all their drugs for nothing. In personal care homes they get all their drugs for nothing. Didn't I say last year — talking to the Member for Pembina — that there would be an increase and we would start charging a per diem rate in mental institutions? That was before the election. There's going to be more. I'm telling the people now there's going to be more or we're going to lose the whole ball game.

I think that my friend the charming Member for River East was saying we need more personal — you did that to your husband, is he around here somewhere? Madam Speaker, will you make sure that the Hansard shows that she sent me a kiss? I'm not squawking.

What did we tell the chiropractors during the election? What did you tell them? We will treat you like first-class citizens. That'll come back. We'll be talking about that again. That is one of the problems that you have. Ask him, ask him how we treated them. Ask him — not two guys — ask the membership. They'll tell you. No. Those people that were making all that noise, one's

my cousin and they are both in my constituency, so do you think I was hiding? — (Interjection) — That's right. But his mother came in and said the guy was sick, I voted for you, my husband voted for you — well! Maybe I stretch it a bit I don't know about the old man. — (Interjection) —

Concordia Hospital. My friend again. Maybe I'll get another kiss. At Concordia Hospital you don't need any acute beds and we have given them beds, and we're fixing the emergency, and they will have a viable hospital. We said before we start building anything else, we'll go to Concordia, Victoria, and these places where they have the facilities to provide for more people and this is what we'll do. — (Interjection) — Yes, Grace. — (Interjection) — Sig's my buddy. You told me yourself. I'm glad you reminded me. I was going to forget and God I wouldn't let you get away with the statement you made. No, no, stay here. It's very friendly. You said that you built more personal care homes. You said it fast but you said it. Why do you want to talk about, the day they started the construction or when it was first approved; first approval or the day they started? I've given you a choice . . .

The construction start, July '73 and November '77, the Schreyer Government, 1,208 new personal care beds; November '77 to October '81, 364; October '81 to March '87, 665 — (Interjection) — now let me be fair; that's only part of it. There is also replacement beds, and replacement beds because you've licensed the private sector, and I want to be fair. Construction costs for replacement beds, \$242 in 1973-77; \$462 in '77-81; and \$633 in '81-87. Now the new beds and the replacement beds total in '73-77, \$1,450; the '77-81, \$826; and this last term, \$1,298. Now what you've been doing, you've been talking about the opening date — (Interjection) — what?

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Are you taking the credit for the 40 beds in Grunthal?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Oh God, I hope I am; I wouldn't want to forget those 20 beds. Now the opening date is something different. We had 96 in '73-77, and you had 608, but you were opening the beds that we had built. Oh yes, you've only a count of 364.

MR. C. MANNES: Just like Anstett with his election material in Springfield.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: He didn't have that; he would have won with this. He would have won with this. How much time have I got?

MR. H. ENNS: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. I was trying to follow the Minister's figures. I would ask the Honourable Minister to indicate to me, is he suggesting that I was untruthful in the comments that I made to the House during my speech to the . . . ?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: I would never never suggest that to my honourable friend, but I say he was wrong as usual though, but it wasn't untruthful.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister has eight minutes remaining.

Tuesday, 20 May, 1986

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Pardon?

MADAM SPEAKER: Eight minutes remaining.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: What can I say in eight minutes? Do you know what the problem is? Let me tell you some of the problems that we are faced with. There is the question of manpower — what do you call it if you don't want to be hit in the head by some people? — (Interjection) — what?

Staff years — doctors — that's what I'm talking about. The way we are going now they aren't going to cut down at the university; and we are getting a lot of people from other countries that we are developing and educating, and I think that's great, but it is brain drained because they don't go back; they stay here. That is one of the factors.

Another thing, if they went back they wouldn't be in a very good position to practise because what has to be done also is to look at the way these are taught in the university, to be able to work like they did before or go back to some of these developing countries and here to go in the north or the remote areas, that's true. It used to be at one time you didn't have the doctors' wives. They blamed the doctors or their wives, they said the social life wasn't that great. There is very little of that, and they are legit.

The thing is that you send a young doctor back; he's concerned because he is trained now to work with all this equipment; you don't move that you don't have a test on something. Then with all these specialists and all the hospitals, I don't know what the answer is but it's not easy, I can tell you. We brought people from Ireland for Ste. Rose; they borrowed somebody from St. Boniface Hospital that went back, and we've done everything possible in that area. So it is not easy, it is a problem and that problem is common to every province in every country in the world.

Anyway, we have way too many doctors in the Winnipeg area and there is not enough in the rural areas and in the remote areas and that is something we are working on. We have an ex-Minister of Health who is devoting a lot of time for that. He is doing very well and I am talking about Dr. George Johnson.

Now you have the moral issues also and that's going to be tough. Well, the moral issues also. — (Interjection) — Well, all right, there's the abortion; that's one. There is no problem, everything's the same; we don't need Morgentaler. The situation is, now they are talking about heart transplants in Manitoba. What do you do? Where do you stop? I haven't got the answers and that's what I meant when I said, I can give you a list of concerns, that I haven't got the answers for. Maybe you can help me. Maybe you can help Manitoba and the people of Canada and so on.

The point is that what do you do? I said that and somebody turned it around and said that I am against older people because I asked the question, do we cover that at any age? Do we have a transplant with somebody 96 years old? Is that covered? Do we play God; what do we do? I don't know. But those questions have to be answered; these are some of the concerns that we have.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Conrad has the answers.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: We've said at one time that

MR. J. DOWNEY: He might be the Minister of Health instead of you shortly.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Well, we've had fun tonight and I appreciate it, I enjoy it, I enjoyed this little bit of heckling. In fact, I don't think I was that interesting, there wasn't as much as usual.

But I want to leave you with this sincere thought that I think this is serious, and I think we should try to do everything we can. If you want to work for Brandon and if you want to work for your constituency — no platitudes, no more acute beds or a teaching hospital in Ste. Rose or that kind of thing — I think we've got to work to spend wisely to do the best we can, and we'll make mistakes, but we've got to change. The public is accepting that, the public is waiting for that.

The medical profession has never co-operated as much as they are now and you've all had a copy of the medical review. If any of you haven't received a copy of the medical review, let me know and I'll make sure that you get a copy because these last years we sat in organizing this planning and prioritization in these different committees that now is the time to act.

There will be some very tough decisions, and I say that we need your help because we are all working for the same thing. It's easy to create this expectancy and say you should do this, you should do that. We've got to stop that. We'll be lucky to keep what we have now, fellas, and that's true.

A MEMBER: It's easy to blame the feds too.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Well, didn't you understand what I said today? Are we right in blaming the feds? It's not that you're blaming them automatically. I recognize that governments are always blaming the next government.

A MEMBER: It's the taxpayers.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Pardon?

A MEMBER: We're all the same.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: That's not the point. That's why we have a Federal Government. We have a Federal Government so we can equalize things a bit in this country. If not, there's no point. You saw where you were at 66 during your reign, 66.5 percent, and now we are 40-something. My friend from Pembina said we'll say you've got too many staff. So what? Let's say you're right, save a couple millions, where do you go from there? Let's say that you were right to that amount, and a lot of people have said that. Fine, that is not to say that we should not, in every department and everything, be careful, and I think we have been. Certainly it's not perfect; I don't know of any government that's perfect.

But in this area, I think that you should be on our side. Certainly you should be telling the government not to bring legislation that will add \$10 million to \$12 million to our drug costs. Who is going to pay for that?

You don't want the people over 65 to pay, and the people on welfare don't pay, the people in hospitals don't pay. Who is going to pay? You are loading quite a bit on the middle income group and I don't think that we can stand that. — (Interjection) — I beg your pardon?

A MEMBER: It's a great speech.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Charleswood.

MR. J. ERNST: Madam Speaker, thank you. When you're finished with the Clerk, I'll . . .

Madam Speaker, I wish to extend my best wishes for your fairness and impartiality and judicious charge of the House. If I had known you as well perhaps as the Member for Lakeside, I might also want to reach out, but we'll have to leave that for another time. But I do wish you well in the exercise of your duties.

I want to express my congratulations to all of my fellow caucus members on their election or re-election, as the case may be. They're a fine body of women and men on this side of the House, and I'm very pleased to be associated with them.

Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate all of the new members in this House. May we carry on the fine traditions that this House has represented, and perhaps we can forget some of the not so fine traditions that have been displayed over the past few days.

I'd like to congratulate my leader for a very fine, pointed reply to the Speech from the Throne. I thought he quite clearly pointed out the inadequacies and the lack of government programming that were proposed in the Speech from the Throne. We hope to change that over a period of time.

I would like to congratulate the new Ministers in the House: the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation; the Minister of Natural Resources; the Minister of Urban Affairs and, for the first time, the Minister in charge of Native Affairs. I offer them my congratulations.

I want to express my thanks to the people of Charleswood, firstly, for having elected me to this House. I promise to serve them well and, hopefully, for a long period of time.

I would like to thank the former Member for Charleswood, now retired, the Honourable Sterling Lyon. Mr. Lyon served the people of Manitoba, both as Premier and as Attorney-General, and spent a considerable portion of his lifetime working on behalf of Manitobans and, in particular, the people of Charleswood, Madam Speaker. This province was fortunate to have had his representation and his judgment, and this House is a better place for his having been here.

I want to thank my campaign workers, Madam Speaker, for their tireless efforts on my behalf, particularly following the accident that occurred some four days before the election. It seemed to spur on their dedication even more.

I want to offer my congratulations as well to the Members for Ellice and Kildonan for their answer to

the Speech of the Lieutenant-Governor. The Member for Ellice making a speech, of course, in a political forum is not something new to me. I've had the experience before. I wasn't very fond of it then either. However, this time he only used 50 anti-Conservative clichés, instead of his normal five or ten.

I want to comment briefly on my medical condition that many of you have noticed over the last period of time. Firstly, I want to thank the Minister of Finance. He was the only member on that side of the House who sent me a get well card, and I appreciated that very much, that he overcame that impartiality, that . . .

A MEMBER: What did it say?

MR. J. ERNST: It said: "Get well soon, and see you in the Opposition benches." Unfortunately, you were correct, for that time only.

Secondly, I want to thank my fellow caucus members for their help and assistance over the past few days. Walking on crutches is not an easy thing. You can't carry anything liquid in nature, particularly. So I have them running here and there for coffee for me or whatever, and I appreciate that very much. The only problem is I'm a little afraid, with the number of IOU's that I have out there, I'm going to be spending the rest of the Session, perhaps the rest of the year, in chasing around on their behalf.

I must say that I do have now a whole new appreciation of the meaning of "accessibility" when it's in terms of the physically handicapped. It's an interesting note that, when I come into this building at night — I happen to have a parking stall at the back of the building — to get into this building, I have to go up a set of stairs, down a long hallway, up another set of stairs — no elevator, no physically handicapped access to that portion of the building. It's all at the front.

Tonight, we had a major demonstration out at the front. It was impossible for me to get into the building through that method. Perhaps the Minister of Government Services might well take note of that and, in the future, look at some changes to the building.

I want to again advise the First Minister that I hold him entirely responsible for my accident. All of the pain, the suffering, the agony, the frustration that I've gone through are all his fault; he's solely responsible. The call of a winter election has not only created major problems for our senior citizens, the physically handicapped and those in remote areas. It caused at least five accidents I know of during the campaign, five accidents as a result of the campaigning, not including my own.

The Minister of Health, as a matter of fact, should be taking the Premier to task for causing these increases in health care costs. He talked about it just a few minutes ago, for several hours — several minutes, I should say.

A MEMBER: It just sounded like several hours.

MR. J. ERNST: Just sounded like several hours — yes, exactly.

But he did go on and on at great length about the costs of health care, how they're rising, how we can't

afford them, how we're going to have to change and do things. Well he went on and on with those things. Let me tell you this.

I experienced the problems that we talked about during the election first-hand, as a consumer. I was in the ambulance; I was in the hospital corridors lined with stretchers, people waiting for beds. Notwithstanding what the Minister said, the fact of the matter is those people are there. The problem is there. I was there to witness it first-hand, not by choice.

I'm pleased, Madam Speaker, to be present as an elected representative in this House from the constituency of Charleswood. Charleswood is located in the southwest quadrant of the City of Winnipeg. The community of Charleswood, as distinct from the constituency, is almost analogous, but not quite.

It was formed in 1912, when it split off from the R.M. of Assiniboia. Charleswood was a rural community for a very very long time. The population at the outbreak of World War II was only 750 men, women and children. In 1946, with the return of our soldiers from overseas, from Europe and Asia, the Veterans' Administration opened large-lot residential development, making one-acre service lots available on VLA grants. Urban development started in Charleswood in the late 1960's near the Perimeter Highway with the Westdale subdivision. Today, it is predominantly a residential community with some 30,000 residents, with our most famous citizen being the Leader of the Opposition.

With the creation of Unicity in 1972 by the Schreyer Government, the constituency and the community of Charleswood was dealt a lethal blow. At that time, Charleswood was a community policed by a rural RCMP detachment, a volunteer fire department and very limited municipal services. Charleswood was different than the other communities of greater Winnipeg, very different, in that it did not have the level of service in other communities but still had a rural style village. But the NDP under Ed Schreyer didn't understand that, and forced Charleswood into Unicity — Unicity, that wonderful urban experiment designed by NDP academics who didn't know the first thing about local government.

Well Unicity proved all the academics wrong and the local government politicians correct. Taxes skyrocketed with the rapidly rising costs of the new government, forced by wages and services rising to the highest common denominator. With property taxes causing major economic problems, homeowners were forced to subdivide their larger holdings, creating more residential development in the process.

With that increase in homes, more families moving into the community, came an increase in traffic with hundreds upon hundreds of new cars and trucks never contemplated by the designers of the roads, which were certainly unable to accommodate this vehicular traffic. Similarly, with the increase in paved and covered land areas, the ditch drainage could no longer accommodate the run-off, causing localized flooding from time to time.

The Throne Speech delivered by the Lieutenant-Governor was the first I have witnessed in person, and I felt proud to be a part of this Assembly and participate in the opening of the House. However, after having heard the contents of the Throne Speech, that pride began to be replaced by a growing concern over the major programs missing and the government's misplaced priorities.

The most glaring omission from the government's legislative program is all but the token reference to the City of Winnipeg. The Member for River Heights, in her debate, briefly referred to this same problem, ignoring the largest single population base in the province which generates 75 percent of provincial revenues. Here is a government that purports to be urban-oriented, holding 18 of the 30 seats in the City of Winnipeg, yet all they have is a token comment about some changes in The City of Winnipeg Act — terrible.

The major problem facing Winnipeg today is not one of major impact on the provincial treasury, Madam Speaker. It won't cost a great deal of money. In fact it won't cost the treasury anything, but it will require some action by the Cabinet. It will require them to make a decision; it will require them to show some initiative and leadership to make a hard decision to truly stand up for Manitoba, to truly stand up for the people of Winnipeg.

This government has waffled, delayed and lagged on the question of assessment reform, while the former Minister of Municipal Affairs didn't carry out his duties and responsibilities in solving this problem and now we see he's — once rejected by the people in the election — been hired back by the government in one of the most blatant political patronage appointments ever seen in this province.

While all this has been going on — or to be more correct not going on — the new Minister of Heritage and Recreation, together with several colleagues, sued the City of Winnipeg, demanding the court order immediate reassessment. I am pleased to see today that at least one member of the Executive Council is in favour of reassessment, wants to see it happen immediately after five years of delay after delay after delay. I hope that the Minister will put the pressure on her Cabinet colleagues to get on with the assessment question, to put it into place, put into place those buffers that are already passed by this House, but for the last three years refused Royal Assent at the insistence of the former Minister of Municipal Affairs and his then Cabinet colleagues.

There was no mention, Madam Speaker, in the Throne Speech of any transportation initiatives for the City of Winnipeg, another of the major problems facing the majority of our citizens. Traffic strangulation is on the increase and in the last 10 years we've got a 56 percent increase in traffic on the streets of the City of Winnipeg. There's more traffic now during the daytime than there was during rush hour just 10 years ago. There's been no mention of that and we have a great number of traffic improvement programs that are required. They cost a lot of money, I agree, but we seldom ever consider the question of the operating costs associated with those transportation projects.

The consultants for the replacement of the Salter Street Bridge indicated, Madam Speaker, the savings by leaving the bridge open and constructing the new bridge adjacent to it saved the motorists — now not the government necessarily — but the motorists, the taxpayer out there, \$6 million. Madam Speaker, that's a great deal of money and something that ought to be addressed when considering the cost of these projects.

Madam Speaker, I'm advised that my time will be over at 9:30, so I will have to adjust my notes accordingly.

There have been any number of criticisms, shortcomings, and lack of initiatives from this government as listed by many of my colleagues, so I'll not begin to repeat them again. They also had their Friday-morning lecture from the Attorney-General, pointing out to we who are new members in the Opposition bench, what we may or may not do and how we must behave and, of course, dare not be critical of their performance as a government.

The Attorney-General and I have known each other for a number of years and, Madam Speaker, I was surprised at the vehemence of his statement. — (Interjection) — Well that will remain to be seen. It will depend, Madam Speaker, whether or not they bring forward good legislation and effective programs to deal with the Province of Manitoba as we see them. Then we'll see whether we argue or not. Then we see whether we'll be critical of your government, but bring in those programs and we'll deal with them.

I hope they do bring in good programs, Madam Speaker, for the sake of the taxpayer because they are the ones who are going to be called upon to foot the bill. In my opinion, the success rate of this government is not very high, however I view my job as an Opposition member to see that government priorities are put into focus. Sometimes it requires a quiet suggestion; other times a firm word; and from time to time the two-by-four approach as pointed out by the Member for Ste. Rose. What the taxpayer wants to see, Madam Speaker, is action, results, and the best bang for his buck.

It's the job of the government to carry out that action and the job of Opposition to see that they do it effectively. In the final analysis, Madam Speaker, the taxpayer will be the judge.

Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: In accordance with Rule 35(3), the question before the House is the amendment moved by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition to the proposed motion for the Honourable Member for Ellice. Do you wish the motion read? (Agreed)

The proposed motion of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and amendment thereto as follows:

THAT the motion be amended by adding to it the following words:

But this House regrets:

- (1) That this government has pursued a policy of secrecy on matters of vital interest to the public such as the withholding of the Third Quarter Financial Statement, the details on the hydro sales agreement with American utilities it announced during the election campaign, and its failure to proclaim The Freedom of Information Act;
- (2) That this government has lost its credibility by the investments of its Cabinet Ministers in SRTC tax scams;
- (3) That this government has failed to take any real action to deal with the serious problems which exist in the agricultural sector of our province;
- (4) That this government places as a priority the expansion of its Cabinet, and the hiring of a defeated Cabinet Minister in a make-work position, over health care for our elderly and services to people;

(5) That this government has failed to address the question of deterioration in our health care system, in the quality of education of our youth, in services to meet the needs of the elderly and disadvantaged, employment opportunities for youth; and

(6) That this government has thereby lost the trust and confidence of the people of Manitoba.

QUESTION put on the amendment, MOTION defeated.

MR. G. MERCIER: Yeas and Nays, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Call in the members.

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

YEAS

Birt, Blake, Brown, Connery, Cummings, Derkach, Downey, Driedger, Ducharme, Enns, Ernst, Filmon, Findlay, Hammond, Johnston, Kovnats, Manness, McCrae, Mercier, Mitchelson, Nordman, Oleson, Orchard, Pankratz, Rocan, Roch.

NAYS

Ashton, Baker, Bucklaschuk, Cowan, Desjardins, Doer, Dolin, Evans, Harapiak (The Pas), Harapiak (Swan River), Harper, Hemphill, Kostyra, Lecuyer, Mackling, Maloway, Parasiuk, Pawley, Penner, Plohman, Santos, Schroeder, Scott, Smith (Ellice), Smith (Osborne), Storie, Uruski, Walding, Wasylycia-Leis.

MR. CLERK, W. Remnant: Yeas, 26; Nays, 29.

MADAM SPEAKER: The nays have it, and the amendment is accordingly lost.

The question before the House is the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Ellice.

The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. L. HARAPIAK: Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to join in the debate on the Speech from the Throne.

I would like to start by extending my congratulations to you. I do that not only because it is a tradition for speakers to do so, but I do that as an expression of my confidence in your ability to deal with the matters which will come before the House. Indeed, the confidence that I had has been reinforced by your handling of matters which have come before this Assembly in recent days.

I would like to extend my congratulations, as well, to all members of this Assembly, particularly to those who are elected for the first time. I look to work with all members of the Assembly in serving the interests and the needs of the people of Manitoba.

I am pleased to be here representing the constituency of Swan River. It is a historical event for the constituency of Swan River to be represented by a New Democrat provincially. It is, as some of the members have said, at long last. It was a long effort. It was on my third attempt to seek election to this Assembly that I was

finally successful. I recognize that the margin of victory was not a large one; it was 65 votes. As has been indicated, the mantle of "landslide," I understand, now is transferred from the Member for Thompson to myself.

I want to point out that it is my sincere hope that I can experience the same success as the Member for Thompson has. In the previous election, his margin of victory was similar to mine and I understand, in the election that we have just fought, the margin of victory was increased substantially. It is my hope that with the title of "landslide," I can enjoy the same success in future elections in Swan River.

I thought that perhaps I had the distinction of having the narrowest margin of victory, but I understand that perhaps has to go to the Member for Roblin-Russell.

I would like to point out that for the constituency of Swan River, though this is the first opportunity for the constituency to be represented by a New Democrat in the provincial Legislature, the constituency has been represented federally on more than one occasion, in the 1940's by Mr. Moore who represented Swan River as part of the Churchill constituency. More recently, being part of the Dauphin-Swan River constituency, it was again represented federally by the New Democrats.

The Swan River constituency, for those who might not be familiar with the area, is primarily an agricultural community but one in which the resources of forestry, in particular, play a very important part. The constituency stretches from the community of Mafeking in the north and a number of smaller communities in that region, and the southern boundary is the community of Pine River. On the east side, we are bounded by Lake Winnipegosis and, on the west side, the constituency is bordered by Saskatchewan.

The constituency is, as I indicated, diverse in its resources and it is diverse in its people. It is primarily an agricultural community in the central part of the constituency, with the main trading centre being Swan River. It is an area of very rich and fertile soil where the production of wheat and canola are the predominant crops. Livestock is also a very important part of the economic base for the region.

Forestry plays, as well, as important role in the area with the forests being harvested primarily from the regions of the Duck Mountains and the Porcupine Mountains.

Fishing is an important industry historically, the commercial activities being carried on primarily on Lake Winnipegosis, but also on some of the smaller lakes of Swan Lake, Pelican Lake and Red Deer Lake.

We are fortunate in the area, as well, in that we are well-blessed with park facilities, and tourism is a very important part of the economy of the region. People take great pride, particularly with the one main attraction for the region during the summer months being the Northwest Roundup, which is hosted in the community of Swan River.

I had indicated that we had a diversity of people in the area. Many of the people of the area are of Native ancestry but, as well, we have people whose ancestry is rooted in the British Isles and people also whose ancestry is rooted in western Europe and in eastern Europe. The people are hard-working people, proud people, people who are proud as Manitobans and proud as Canadians.

I take pride in pointing out that my own ancestry, similar to that pointed out by members opposite, the

Member for La Verendrye earlier today, is rooted in eastern Europe. I take pride in pointing to the fact that my grandparents on both sides immigrated to Canada from the Ukraine at about the turn of the century. They came to Canada to till the soil, and they took great pride in their work and their contribution to the community.

My own background is that of a farmer and an educator, and I feel that this provides me with a good basis from which to serve the concerns and the interests of the people of the Swan River constituency and indeed the people of Manitoba.

My background as a farmer provides me with a basis from which to appreciate the problems being faced by the agricultural community, problems that are recognized by members on both sides of the House. Farmers are faced with increasing costs of production and declining commodity prices, resulting very clearly in diminishing returns to the farmers and their families.

I think the question is not just one of economics, though there is a very difficult economic situation. We have to assess, as well, the impact of that situation on the human spirit. What is happening to those families? What is happening not only to the people who till the soils? What is happening to the fabric of our rural communities? That is a concern, not just for rural Manitoba, but it has to be a concern for all of Manitoba for indeed agriculture, as has been said by many, is one of the cornerstones of the economy of Manitoba, and the rural communities form the basis for the economic activity enjoyed by people in the urban centres.

I would like to relate to you briefly some of my experiences in agriculture, which I think are experiences which are applicable as well in the political arena. Having had the opportunity to work with the land, to nurture the crops and to enjoy the success and some of the disappointments associated with that activity, I think I have acquired certain qualities which I hope will serve me well in this Assembly. Those who are familiar with the experiences of agriculture, I think, will recognize that we, through agriculture, learn to be patient.

A MEMBER: A great virtue.

HON. L. HARAPIAK: Indeed it is. It is a virtue that we should all enjoy. It is a virtue which is, in a sense, taught by our agricultural experiences, recognizing that we have to wait for the right season. There is a season for each of the different activities, and we cannot change that. We have to wait for it, for the appropriate time.

As well, I think it has taught me humility because, despite the best-laid plans, there are some things which are beyond our control, and something as devastating as a hailstorm or an overnight frost can make the best manager look rather poor and, in fact, become poor. We have to learn to live with that situation. I think it is a quality which could serve us all well, but it is not certainly an experience that I would not want to wish onto someone in excess.

Those experiences, I think, have as well brought out the quality of resilience in people, as well a very desirable quality. Out of those experiences that people have in the agricultural community, they are often required to make a comeback of some sort, to wait

for next year, to look to the future. They have had to cope with very difficult situations and they are dealing with a very difficult situation at present, but that quality amongst the rural people is something that we should all admire and all hope to have to some degree.

I think that those qualities, the three qualities that I refer to, the qualities of patience, humility and resilience are undoubtedly qualities that we can utilize in this Assembly. I am not sure what the equivalent of a hailstorm would be in this Assembly or an overnight frost but I'm sure, in terms of political experience, there are parallels.

I would like to comment, because of my interest in agriculture, on the fact that I am proud to be associated with the record of the administration from 1981-86. The government, under the leadership of the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture, demonstrated clearly a concern for agriculture.

There were several comments made in the Assembly with respect to Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation, and I don't think anyone from this side has ever claimed that the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation could, by itself and of itself, address all of the financial needs of the Manitoba farmers. But if you look at the level of activity of that corporation over the years, it has demonstrated very very clearly an increasing level of activity in a period of time when other lending institutions were perhaps expressing some caution and withdrawing from that arena. The demands on that institution are increasing and, in fact, they are at a level such that some farmers are expressing frustration that their case is not being dealt with soon enough. The corporation is attempting to do all that it can, but it cannot take over the responsibility that should be shared rightly by other institutions.

The Interest Rate Relief Program in that same period of time was very well received by the agricultural community, as were the interest rate write downs and the interest rate buy downs offered by Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation.

The Beef Program which was, on its introduction, touted by some to be a program which would be subscribed to by only 10 percent of the beef producers in Manitoba has a subscription of some 75 percent of the producers and of the beef herd in Manitoba. As well, the Hog Program introduced by the same government provided very significant aid to hog producers.

I want to say that, in the course of my political experience particularly as it relates to agriculture, the Minister of Agriculture is recognized as a leading spokesman for the interests of the agricultural community in Manitoba. It is important not only to look at what has been achieved, but we must look as well at what might be achieved. To me, the Throne Speech is a clear commitment to agriculture and the rural community. I look forward to working with members on both sides of the House to address the difficult situation facing the agricultural community.

I want to make some comments more specifically related to the responsibility that I have been given with

respect to natural resources. I am certainly looking forward to the opportunities and challenges that exist within that portfolio. The province is rich in natural resources, and it is our responsibility to see that these resources are utilized for recreational purposes, as well as for some of the commercial opportunities that will present themselves.

It is a difficult and challenging task to balance the interests of the various users that exist in our communities. The most important consideration has to be that of ensuring that these resources are available for the enjoyment and the utilization of future generations.

My first contact with the staff of the Department of Natural Resources leaves me feeling confident that they are an effective and a dedicated group of employees.

I would like to thank the Member for Emerson for pointing out to me some of the issues that are of a concern to him as the critic for Natural Resources. I would only say in addition that his characterization of the department as being one which was raped and pillaged is an exaggeration in the extreme.

Of the issues that are facing the department, water issues are certainly paramount and, in my first few days in the Legislature, I had the opportunity to address some of those issues. I was in communication with the Member for Emerson, the Member for Ste. Rose and the Member for Portage la Prairie. I had the opportunity, as I indicated in the House, to visit some of the areas that were flooded in the McCreary-Ste. Rose area and as well in the Portage la Prairie area. Indeed, only tonight, I had to leave this Chamber to meet with a group of farmers from the Interlake area who were experiencing similar problems. So I recognize full well that there are many issues on the question of water to be dealt with, but it is my view that we cannot look at those issues only in terms of drainage. We have to look at a water management scheme and we have to recognize that in some of the areas perhaps that are prone to flooding we will have to look at different cultural practices.

I recognize that time is running on. I want to mention briefly that the area of forestry and reforestation will be critical issues as will be the issue made reference to by the Member for Emerson on the wildlife issues, specifically the one of game ranching. I will look to discussion with people on both sides of the House to address those issues.

Madam Speaker, just for my clarification, if there is time available tomorrow, I would like to continue with some of my comments.

MADAM SPEAKER: Right. The hour being 10:00 p.m. I am interrupting proceedings. According to the rules, when this motion is again before the House, the Honourable Minister has 19 minutes remaining.

The House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 2:00 p.m. tomorrow. (Wednesday)