

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, 3 March, 1987.

Time — 1:30 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER by Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER, Hon. M. Phillips: Presenting Petitions . . . Reading and Receiving Petitions . . . Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees . . .

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Energy and Mines.

HON. W. PARASIUK: Madam Speaker, I wish to table the report of the Manitoba Energy Authority for the year ending March 31, 1986. This publication was distributed to both caucuses in September of 1986, but I'm tabling it, as required, here.

MADAM SPEAKER: Notices of Motion . . .

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK introduced, by leave, Bill No. 2, An Act to Amend The Official Time Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le temps réglementaire.

HON. J. WASYLYCIA-LEIS introduced, by leave, Bill No. 3, The Manitoba Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act; Loi sur le Conseil consultatif manitobain de la situation de la femme. (Recommended by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor)

I have, under Rule 85 of the House Rules, a short statement to make.

MOTION presented.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister.

HON. J. WASYLYCIA-LEIS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The intent of this act is to entrench the existence of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women into the structures of government. It will establish the permanence of the council and will address the commitment of this government to the importance of the role played by the council. Together with other initiatives, this act reaffirms our commitment to the principle of equality of treatment and opportunity for women and men.

Madam Speaker, the Manitoba Advisory Council on the Status of Women was first established in 1980 and was re-established by Order-in-Council on December 1, 1982.

The Council's mandate is to advise the Government of Manitoba, through the Minister responsible for the Status of Women, on matters referred by the province to the Advisory Council and on matters which council

deems appropriate to draw it to the attention of the Government of Manitoba. The proposed legislation recognizes the importance of this advice and protects the arm's length relationship with government.

We all look forward, Madam Speaker, to the day in this society when a quality of status and opportunity is afforded to both men and women in jobs, social benefits and decision-making. This legislation, Madam Speaker, will move us another step closer to this goal. Until that time, I am pleased to introduce this act so that the council's role and its history and the council's place in the decision-making of government is assured.

Thank you.

QUESTION put; MOTION carried.

HON. R. PENNER introduced, by leave, Bill No. 4, The Re-enacted Statutes of Manitoba, 1987 Act; Loi sur Les Lois réadoptées du Manitoba de 1987. (Recommended by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.)

HON. R. PENNER introduced, by leave, Bill No. 5, An Act to Repeal Certain Statutes Relating to Education and Other Matters; Loi abrogeant certaines lois concernant l'Éducation et d'autres questions.

HON. H. HARAPIAK introduced, by leave, Bill No. 6, The Emergency Measures Act. (Recommended by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor)

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hospitals - closure of beds

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question is for the Premier. The Throne Speech refers to the increasing costs of maintaining vital services and also the inappropriate use of expensive acute care hospitals. Last week we had news that the president of the Health Science Centre indicated that that institution was considering the closure of up to 115 acute care beds, entire wards, in that hospital in order to balance its budget.

My question to the Premier is: Does he and his government believe that the closure of large numbers of acute care beds in our hospitals is the best way to save money in health care?

MADAM SPEAKER: Will the honourable member please rephrase his question as to not seek an opinion?

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, my question to the Premier is: Does he and his government support the closure of large numbers of acute care beds in our hospitals as the best way to save money in health care?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, that certainly wasn't the impression that I believe was left in the particular article that the honourable member is referring to. What the president did indicate was that a different means would have to be found in order to trim costs, trim the deficit.

He indicated that it would be premature at this particular time to announce definitively what those approaches or methods would be. The Minister of Health will deal with this in more detail. He did emphasize, I think quite properly, the importance of shifting to more outpatient as opposed to inpatient care in order to ensure appropriate levels of service, and at the same time to improve the cost-efficient delivery of medical services.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, just so that the Premier and I both are operating with the same information, the information says that the Health Sciences Centre is considering closing at least 100 beds permanently to save up to 5 million annually. President Rod Thorfinson said entire wards would be closed. Closing 115 beds would likely save 4 to 5 million annually, he said.

My question is: Does this Premier and his government support the closure of large numbers of acute care beds in order to save money in our health care system?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, the Minister of Health will deal with that in much more detail. But clearly, Madam Speaker, questions that are put in a very simplistic way such as that which the Leader of the Opposition has posed his question, questions which relate to premature circumstances which fail to recognize there are other alternatives that are available that the hospital, the Health Sciences Centre, I think very properly and very responsibly is examining as alternatives, is indeed the route that we would anticipate all proper hospital authorities to proceed.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, last year Brandon General Hospital closed permanently 29 beds. Now we are being told that the Health Sciences Centre is considering permanently closing 115 beds. We have people on long waiting lists for elective surgery; we have people who are in the corridors on stretchers in some of our hospitals in Winnipeg.

Is this the answer that this government has toward our problem of health care costs, ever increasing, to close large blocks of beds in acute care hospitals and deny services to the people of this province?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Madam Speaker, I think I made it quite clear that we must spend wisely if we're going to retain the good service that we've had so far.

Compare it to your friends in the south and you'll see what I mean. I'm talking about a universal program. There is no doubt that methods are looked at, that work has been done to try to provide the same service, improve the service in many instances, but not necessarily at the highest cost.

There is not one province in Canada that has not closed beds. Certain hospitals that were not filled have been closed completely. First of all, let me say I was absent when that statement was made, but I saw a correction from the president who said that he was misquoted and explained that was what -(Interjection)- No, I'm not blaming anybody; I'm telling you what the president said because you purposely took the first report and you didn't quote the second one.

Now there is no doubt, the explanation that the gentleman made, there is no doubt that there is a movement to deinstitutionalize as much as possible. Much of this work will be done, many of these services can be done outside the hospital, and that will be done.

You've talked about Brandon. We have reduced the waiting list. We have closed beds and reduced the waiting list. There is certain work that is done. They are not admitting in the hospital, the work is being done, and there are a number of services of improvement in home care and so on, and that will be continued. There is no way that we are cutting down on the services, but we are looking . . .

My honourable friend knows and he agrees with me. He agrees with me in many instances and he knows that this has been done and it is all over Canada, not only here; and if you want to cooperate, as the cooperation you promised last year, fine. If not . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

A MEMBER: You better start telling the truth.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: I'll tell the truth.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please. Order please.

Hospitals - user fees

MR. G. FILMON: Given that just a month or so ago the Premier indicated that he had serious disagreements with his Minister of Health over his proposals on user fees and rationing, would the Premier tell the public whether or not he supports this closure of beds in all of our major hospitals in order to control our health care costs?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, regrettably, the Leader of the Opposition appears not to have checked properly his research.

There was never any disagreement between myself and the Minister of Health. Neither the Minister nor myself agree with the imposition of user fees, per diem fees, etc. Insofar as the Health Sciences Centre, if the Leader of the Opposition listened to the answer from the Minister of Health, then he would be better off right now than he was at the time of asking his question, because he received the advice.

The president of the Health Sciences Centre is looking at various alternatives, Madam Speaker, insofar as the cost saving that must be undertaken, at the same time as ensuring the quality of health care is maintained. Madam Speaker, that means greater emphasis in

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respect to out-patient, community health, as against institutional care.

The Minister of Health has indicated that today; he has indicated it on many previous occasions, quite a contrast, Madam Speaker, to the Province of Alberta, where doctors warn that lives can be affected by a 3 percent cut under the Alberta Conservative Government this year because of cuts in the provincial Tory budget in the Province of Alberta. Let the Leader of the Opposition deal with that.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please. Could we please orderly ask questions and answer questions without shouting at each other across the floor.

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, my further question for the Premier is: We're talking about a cut of 10 percent of the acute care beds in our largest hospital in this province, 10 percent, and just as the Premier was speaking, his Minister of Health shouted across that he definitely supported . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please. Does the Honourable Leader of the Opposition have a question?

MR. G. FILMON: Yes, I do, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Would you please ask it?

MR. G. FILMON: Just as the Premier was speaking, his Minister of Health shouted that he definitely supported it.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. G. FILMON: My question to the Premier is: Does he agree with his Minister of Health that these beds ought to be closed?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is smiling because he knows that he's not telling the truth.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please. Could the Honourable Minister please withdraw that allegation?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Well, it might be that the honourable member doesn't realize he's not telling the truth, so I'll withdraw in this case.

The point is I don't know how you get around that, but he's made a statement that is completely false. What I did say is that, yes, yes, yes, we are looking to deinstitutionalize as much as possible and that is everywhere.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, order please.

The Honourable Opposition House Leader.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, on the point of order that you yourself raised from the Chair, you asked the Minister of Health to withdraw his comment. He did not withdraw that comment and he should unequivocally withdraw that comment.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: I was so rudely interrupted when I was trying to give the information. I'll withdraw if you'll withdraw the statement that you made because the statement that you made is completely wrong. You are making a statement . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Excuse me, through you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please. A dispute over the facts is one thing. An accusation that a member is not telling the truth to the House is another. Could the Honourable Minister please clearly withdraw his allegation that the honourable member was not telling the truth.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Well I seek your assistance, because I am not going to leave on the record the statement that he made has been factual. So if it is not the lie or not the truth, it certainly is not factual. If it's a change in words, I withdraw the words of "not the truth," but I say it is not factual. Is that all right?

If my honourable friend was factual, then he would realize everywhere in Canada or everywhere, even in the United States, there is an effort to deinstitutionalize especially acute care beds. There is no way - and if you're sincere in trying to keep this, the service, for the people, I think you will cooperate instead of bringing in those kind of questions, try to mislead, try to excite the public, because that is what exactly my honourable friend is trying to do.

We've talked about cutting. My budget at the Commission, Madam Speaker, is \$1.2 billion. If we just keep on the way we're going now, in about four years it will be \$2 billion. Maybe we should ask my honourable friend about deficits. Maybe we should just keep on in the hospitals of having \$5 million, \$10 million. I agree that we've got to cut down deficit; I agree that we've got to find -(Interjection)- I didn't say that. I said we will try.

Madam Speaker, can I speak to you then? You seem very reasonable.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please. May I remind honourable members that answers to questions are to be brief and not provoke debate.

Winnipeg tax reassessment - appeal of

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Charleswood.

MR. J. ERNST: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Last Friday, I raised the question of reassessment in the City of Winnipeg with the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Since my question last Friday, has the Minister now, Madam Speaker, had an opportunity to look at the appeal process for reassessment and particularly the very limited provisions for that appeal?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister for Municipal Affairs.

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As I indicated last Friday, there has not been any approach from the property owners in Winnipeg to my office to amend the legislation allowing for an extended appeal period. However, earlier this morning, my colleague, the Minister of Urban Affairs, and I met with the delegations from the city and that matter is currently under review.

MR. J. ERNST: Madam Speaker, then has the Minister had an opportunity to determine if the staggered mailing of assessment notices and the staggered appeal dates of those assessment notices is causing any discrimination among taxpayers in the City of Winnipeg?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: I am not aware that it is creating any form of discrimination. The matter is under review, and I would hope that we will have a position on that within the next couple of days.

MR. J. ERNST: Madam Speaker, a final question then to the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Subsequent to the Minister's indication that he had met with the City of Winnipeg today, will he then be bringing in legislation immediately to allow for an extended retroactive appeal period, allow citizens of Winnipeg to appeal their assessment after they have received their 1987 tax bill and after they know the impact of that reassessment on their homes?

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: Once the review has been completed, we will do whatever is possible to resolve any problems that may exist, and I would hope that we could count on the full cooperation of the Opposition to amend legislation, if need be, to resolve these problems.

Winnipeg Tax Reassessment - condominiums

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Norbert.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, a further question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs or the Minister of Urban Affairs.

In approving the differential mill rates to be set by the City of Winnipeg, arising out of reassessment, will the Minister classify condominiums in the same way as single family homes and not discriminate against condominium owners?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Urban Affairs.

HON. G. DOER: Yes, Madam Speaker.

There are four outstanding issues that we discussed with the city this morning at our meeting and that we have to take back to our colleagues.

One is the issue of the 21-day notice that my colleague mentioned; the second issue is the condo co-op issue in terms of being potentially within the Residential 2 category; the third issue is the whole area of the recreational property and the land value of the property of golf courses that are extremely high based on the numbers we've just seen; and the fourth issue is the commitment from the City of Winnipeg to provide us with draft proposals for phasing in legislation, which we pointed out to the city that we haven't yet received as of this morning.

We want to receive that from the city and look at all these outstanding areas in one package so that we're not just dealing with a letter that comes in a week at a time, and we will be meeting with our colleagues tomorrow and we have advised the city this morning. Hopefully, they'll come back to us on the one outstanding item that they have, and we should be providing answers both to the city and the public in the next few days as my colleague has indicated.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the Minister's answer on the various issues which members on this side are very much concerned with.

Will he clarify the position of the Federal Government? Will he be acceding to the request of the City of Winnipeg Council and their recommendations with respect to each one of these issues, or will the Provincial Government be making their own independent arbitration and final determination of these issues in setting the classifications and the assessment to be applied to all of these various categories?

HON. G. DOER: Madam Speaker, we had a number of meetings for the last nine months with the city. We have had a number of areas where we've agreed and there's been the odd area we disagreed.

For example, just sending a letter in on condominiums to the province, and not looking at the whole issue of potential flips from apartments or conversions of apartments to condominiums, not looking at the fact that the legislation itself may preclude having condominiums in a Residential 1 category because of the definitions of usage under The Municipal Assessment Act means that we have to be very careful in our dialogue back and forth to the city because, as you are probably aware, there are a number of people that want to look at the legislation and potentially appeal it. We will be working in concert with the city and raising some of the legal concerns we have legitimately with them and trying to resolve these issues in a joint solution.

The bottom line is, Madam Speaker, that the legislation that we passed last year, Bill 57, will potentially save homeowners up to \$26 million with the way in which a differential mill rate can be applied in the city. I even noticed in Liberal Quebec, Mr. Bourassa is being summoned by a number of councils, including Mayor Doré from Montreal, to look at the kind of Manitoba initiative to proceed with differential mill rates to save homeowners the kind of money we did last year.

MR. G. MERCIER: Given the remarks of the Minister, and given the fact, Madam Speaker, that survey after survey shows that City of Winnipeg homeowners and taxpayers are the highest taxed in the country, can the Minister of Urban Affairs indicate what relief will be providing to homeowners and property owners in the City of Winnipeg this year in order to alleviate this burden that City of Winnipeg homeowners are facing in being the highest taxed in the country?

HON. G. DOER: Madam Speaker, with the 0 percent funding that's going on in Saskatchewan to the municipalities and cities, and with the decrease in the property tax credits in the Province of Saskatchewan, any comparison will show you that we're in a much better situation.

Madam Speaker, the bill that was passed last year, Bill 57, does provide the ability for City Council to level a higher taxation with differential mill rates on the commercial sectors. We think that's a very progressive way to go in terms of the homeowners of Winnipeg. The present chair of the Finance Committee of the City of Winnipeg, in reviewing the facts and figures of the City of Winnipeg, is starting to show that the amount of money the commercial sector pays in Winnipeg compared to other provinces is quite a bit less. We think that that's a very important issue for the city to look at in the future in terms of the burden on homeowners, what we all agree is very substantial. So we know that Bill 57 will help the homeowners, if the City of Winnipeg passes a differential mill rate, will potentially save the homeowners across the City of Winnipeg \$26 million.

Jobs Fund - affirmative action for women

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for the Jobs Fund.

For a long time, this government that I emphasize has talked about the necessity of women gaining a greater measure of fairness within the workplace, and yet when they've had the chance to put their money where their mouth is, as in the case of the Jobs Fund Program, they don't do it.

My question is: Why wasn't an Affirmative Action Program and an active recruitment campaign for women implemented within the context of the Jobs Fund in order to avoid the abysmal situation we now have when it comes to the hiring and paying of women under the Jobs Fund categories?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology.

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

When the Jobs Fund was brought into being, there was a crisis in Manitoba in terms of unemployment. There was a crisis across this country. We responded very, very quickly. We responded with a fund which would provide for assistance to do major public works

in this province. We didn't do everything perfectly and there are some things that we are - (Interjection)- Only the Member for Pembina is perfect, a perfect "what" I wouldn't want to say.

But, Madam Speaker, as a result of what we have achieved, women in Manitoba have a lower rate of unemployment than men today. That wasn't true a few years ago. In many of the projects where we had, it is true, men working such as for north of Portage, once those places are finished, there will be at least as many women working as a result in permanent, good jobs as men. Many of the institutions we built, one example was a nursing station, I believe there were nine men on that particular job. Nine men; zero women. Once it is completed, though, there will be long-term employment for women and hopefully for men as well. So one has to look not only at the short term but also at the long term, and in the long term, I think that Jobs Fund is doing an extremely good job.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Yes, a supplementary question.

If the goal of this government, Madam Speaker, is fairness for women within the context of all of their programs, why did they not try to enforce proper administrative procedures providing for fairness and equity for women in this program?

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Madam Speaker, every year we brought in new methods of achieving greater fairness and equality and targeting more of those jobs for women, and every year we became more successful.

I challenge the Member for River Heights to show me any Liberal government in this country that has done as good a job when it comes to things like development agreements where we've had specific provisions in a number of our recent agreements for affirmative action, when it comes to pay equity, and many other achievements of this government for women, an issue which, by the way, the Conservatives shouldn't scoff at so much.

I should say that recently the OECD did a report on the four western provinces, and one of the points they make is that we are underutilizing the abilities of women in Western Canada in our economy. I think we all have to do a better job of making sure everyone has a fair chance for economic advancement.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please. May I remind honourable Ministers to keep answers brief.

The Honourable Member for River Heights with a final supplementary.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

In that I cannot get a commitment to further action on the part of the Jobs Fund from the Minister, can I ask a question to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women? Will the Minister please press her colleague so that we can have contract compliance provisions under the Jobs Fund strategy for the future?

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Madam Speaker, I just want to make it very, very clear that the premise of the

Member for River Heights is incorrect. That is that we are every year doing more. We're learning from our past efforts, and I'm sure next year we'll be doing a better job than we did last year. The Minister in charge of the Status of Women, I can assure you, has been pushing and prodding ever since she was elected. She's been a very, very effective and efficient pusher.

Bridge - north of Selkirk

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Minnedosa.

MR. D. BLAKE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is for the Premier.

It relates to the bridge located just north of his constituency in Selkirk, which is referred to as the unnecessary bridge and the wrong location that goes nowhere. I wonder if the Premier might inform the House what the estimated total cost of this project is.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Madam Speaker, I see the Member for Minnedosa is getting ready with his one-two punch and the Member for Ste. Rose is going to follow with the next question, and maybe the Member for Pembina will follow up as well.

The fact is - old habits die hard - we've gone over this whole issue in this House, Madam Speaker. The cost of the bridge, as I've indicated in this House during the last Session, was in the neighbourhood of \$19 million.

MR. D. BLAKE: I have a question to the Premier, Madam Speaker.

In view of the strong opposition to the proposed access route to this bridge, I wonder if the Premier could advise when he might be prepared to meet with his constituents concerning that matter.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, the honourable member's got the wrong constituency. The bridge is not in my constituency, in case the Member for Minnedosa is under some sort of illusion.

MR. D. BLAKE: Madam Speaker, I think the Premier misunderstood me. It was the proposed access route connecting to the new bridge that I was referring to that runs right through his constituency, Route 30. There are three proposed routes through his constituency and there's considerable opposition to it. Some of your constituents have been attempting to meet with you and I wonder if you might inform the House: Will you be prepared to meet with them and when?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, I always look forward to meeting with my constituents, just as I'm sure the Member for Minnedosa does, if the question is in order.

MR. D. BLAKE: Madam Speaker, with a final supplementary: In view of the strong opposition that

the Premier doesn't seem to be aware of, some 390 people have notarized a petition - if I could have the services of a Page to deliver one to the Minister of Highways and one to the Premier - I'm sure he'll find it interesting reading. If they would deliver those to the Premier, it may bring him up-to-date on the opposition to the access route.

Selkirk Corridor Study - Route 230 expansion

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Highways.

Now that the cost of the bridge is probably raised to about \$28 million, I wonder if the Minister will undertake to tell this House what the rationale is for the expansion of Route No. 230.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Highways.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Madam Speaker, I don't know where the Member for Ste. Rose dreams up his estimates. The fact is that I have given the total cost, including the connecting roads for the bridge. I indicated that to the House last year, and it was on budget for the Estimates that were given to the House during Estimates, as indicated now. It is in the neighbourhood of \$19 million.

I also indicated at that time why the cost had escalated from the initial estimates, and that was because the \$10.3 million of the original estimate was only for a bridge that was half as long and much lower.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

HON. J. PLOHMAN: The fact is, Madam Speaker, that - after the members have completed their laughter - the bridge was not designed initially of the same length, because it did not have to have the same clearance that was later required as a result of The Navigable Waters Act Board's requirements.

The fact is that initially the bridge was about 400 metres, designed with a 38-foot clearance. The clearance now is some 60 metres and therefore the distance, the length of the bridge itself, had to be extended. That's the difference in the cost of the project overall. I did make that very clear to the members of the House last year. This is not new information.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Madam Speaker, the Minister has now stated that the bridge is twice as long and several metres higher. Will he advise the House then if the corridor plans for expansion of 230 also include a crossing further south on the river where it would have been cheaper to build the bridge in the first place?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Madam Speaker, let the record show that the petition that the members have brought forward here deals with a potential corridor between Selkirk and Winnipeg to supplement the current Highway No. 9 for some 20 years down the road. It

has nothing directly to do with the bridge north of Selkirk. This is a charade, Madam Speaker.

The members opposite are misrepresenting the issue to this House, Madam Speaker. The fact is the matter of the access routes, the connecting routes, to the north of Selkirk bridge were decided some time ago. The design was decided some time ago and there is no gigantic opposition to that particular project, Madam Speaker.

What the member is referring to is a Selkirk Corridor Study that the province has been involved with over the last number of years to look at how the route between Selkirk and Winnipeg can be improved over the next number of years to carry the kinds of traffic volumes that are projected.

So what we have done is undertaken a number of public open houses to get input from people along the way. There are restrictions along Highway No. 9. It cannot be a divided four-lane facility and, therefore, at some time in the future - the projections are some 20 years, after the year 2000 or 2010 - there will need to be an expansion of Route 230. That is what the member is talking about, not the north of Selkirk bridge, Madam Speaker.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

Seeing as how the corridor on No. 230, the expansion of 230, is not to be considered in conjunction with the bridge that goes nowhere presently and is for plans far and away in the future, then will the Premier undertake to meet with his constituents and assure them that this corridor expansion is not simply to supplement a politically foolish decision to build the bridge north of Selkirk in the first place?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, let me assure the honourable member that I've served my constituents for the past some 18 years. I believe the honourable member has served his constituents for the last year - attempted to serve might be a more accurate phrase. Madam Speaker, I can assure the honourable member that I will continue to serve my constituents, and maybe it partially contributes, along with assistance from honourable members across the way, for the record vote that I've been able to enjoy during the last two elections in the Constituency of Selkirk.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: A supplemental question, Madam Speaker, to the Premier.

Does he then advise the House that the option of sending the traffic to the bridge that goes nowhere over to Highway No. 8 is not being considered?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Madam Speaker, we have given full justification for the location of that bridge on numerous occasions in this House. It has little or nothing to do with the Selkirk Corridor Study at this particular time.

The traffic volumes, without any changes to the Selkirk corridor, without any expansions, will be

significant. They will be at least as high as any bridge crossing of the Red River south of Winnipeg. The costs of that bridge are fully justified to carry heavily, fully loaded traffic north of Selkirk from north, south, east and west. That is the purpose of the bridge, and the location was carefully explained in this House and justified in this House.

The fact is that over the next 20- or 30-year period, there is going to be a need for additional capacity between Selkirk and Winnipeg. That long-term planning is what we are engaged with in the Selkirk Corridor Study to determine the best way to meet that need. We are prepared to consult and meet with groups and individuals, the planning boards, the municipalities and all those affected, to determine the best potential route for any expansions in the future for good planning and so the municipalities know how to develop their areas of the municipality for housing and subdivisions and other needs at that time. This is all going to be done in the next number of months in terms of providing the best planning for that corridor, Madam Speaker.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: A supplemental question to either the Premier or the second punch, Mr. Plohman, which -(Interjection)- Minister of Highways, Madam Speaker, I apologize.

MADAM SPEAKER: Right, thank you.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: His suggestion that he will consult, will he then advise the House that he will now release the I.D. Engineering firm consulting report on the 230 corridor?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Madam Speaker, the consulting report is the basis for the public information sessions that have been held and will continue to be held until the issues have been resolved and a decision has been made. The consultants have undertaken these hearings at the direction of the department. They are explaining the options and the issues involved. After that, they will make a recommendation to the department. At that time, their report will be final and, at that point in time, Madam Speaker, the reports can be considered for public release.

The fact is that the details of those studies are being made public in those meetings, and so there is no secret about the plans and the recommendations that they are considering at the present time. The fact is we may or may not accept those recommendations based on the needs of the people and the information that we get at that time.

I have indicated that the report details are available to the public already during those sessions and that, once the final report is given to the department, then we can have the actual documents considered for release.

MADAM SPEAKER: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Charleswood.

MR. J. ERNST: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Member for River East, THAT the ordinary business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, that being the legislated restriction on the taxpayers of Winnipeg to appeal their property assessments.

MOTION presented.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please. Our Rule 27.(2) states that the honourable member has five minutes to state his case for urgency of debate on this matter.

MR. J. ERNST: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As indicated in the question period in my questions to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the City of Winnipeg is undergoing a reassessment. There is mass confusion, there is misunderstanding and there is a great fear, Madam Speaker, amongst the taxpayers of the City of Winnipeg as to what this reassessment means for the taxes on their home.

They're faced with a whole new issue, Madam Speaker, because of the change in value and the fact that for the last 20-or-so years, reassessment has not taken place. For many of them, Madam Speaker, it is the first time they've ever experienced a reassessment on their property, but they're faced with 1975 levels of value which few understand. They're faced with classifications of property, which is new, as a result of a bill through this House last year. They're faced with differential mill rates again, which may or may not occur, Madam Speaker, and they don't understand that.

The city has held public information meetings throughout each community as assessment notices have been mailed out. Homeowners have gone to those meetings and the one question that comes forward at every single meeting, the one question that comes forward that has been unable to be answered by the people attending those meetings, what will my taxes be. That's their concern. They want to know, Madam Speaker, how it's going to affect their property, how they are going to be financially affected by this reassessment.

The problem is, Madam Speaker, that the assessors who attend those meetings say, I'm sorry, I can't answer the question of taxes. All we can talk about is assessment, something that they don't understand, something I'm wondering whether the assessors even understand.

Madam Speaker, the appeal limitation is set by statute in The Municipal Act, 20 days from the date of mailing by the municipality. Delays through the post office, Madam Speaker, over this past little while have caused over 300 appeals to be received late and therefore cannot be heard by the board of revision. On Thursday of this week, 65 percent of Winnipeg homeowners will have lost their opportunity to appeal their assessment - 65 percent. Many of them are still not very enlightened in terms of what the impact is going to be on their property. All of the appeal limits, all of them will have expired on March 19, 1987, in a couple of weeks time, well before any mill rates are struck or tax bills issued to those taxpayers.

For a great many homeowners, the realization, the impact of assessment will come when they receive their tax bill in May, and at that time, it may trigger a desire to appeal. Confusion, misunderstanding and an underlying fear of the unknown may cause some of those homeowners to take precipitous action, Madam Speaker, perhaps sell their property prematurely, and the fear that they are going to be taxed out of their homes as a result of this reassessment. That, Madam Speaker, is the cause for urgency. We don't want to see that happen.

The Board of Revision, Madam Speaker, will also sit, by statute, hearing appeals between now and the time that tax bills appear in the streets of Winnipeg. They may take certain actions. They may cause certain precedents to occur, Madam Speaker, that may change the effect on homeowners at a later date should new information come to light.

Madam Speaker, the government must introduce a bill extending retroactively a time for the taxpayers, the homeowners of Winnipeg, to allow them to appeal their assessment after the tax bills have been issued in May, after they have had an opportunity to understand the impact that that assessment is going to have on their property.

Madam Speaker, the members on this side will assent to a speedy passage of such a bill. We will not hold up the process. We want to ensure that the citizens of Winnipeg have as much protection as possible.

Madam Speaker, if Sunday closing was an emergency issue, if Sunday closing could be brought before the House, certainly the fears of 150,000 Winnipeg taxpayers could be brought before the House.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader has five minutes to state his position.

HON. J. COWAN: Madam Speaker, it's strange that the Member for Charleswood now has such a sense of urgency about this matter. Perhaps in his previous incarnation as a city councillor, if he had dealt with the matter in the way in which it should have been dealt with, there wouldn't be that fear. There wouldn't be that uncertainty and there wouldn't be the problem which he suggests is so urgent today. It's a problem of his own making and it sounds somewhat hollow for him to stand in his place today and suggest that it's so urgent that we have to put aside the ordinary business of the House to discuss that matter after his failure to act when he had not only the opportunity, but the responsibility to act and he failed in that regard.

It's also somewhat strange that the members opposite suggest that this matter is so urgent now and that it is a matter of new-found importance to them, when it was our government and it was our Ministers, who I think encouraged by our MLA's who represent city seats, who first brought this matter to the attention of the City Council last week. As I understand it - (Interjection)- Well, the City Council never brought this matter to the attention of the government, it was this government, based on representations by these members on this side who brought this matter to the attention of City Council and asked for resolution of the matter.

As we have been informed earlier, this matter is under active discussion and it is under active discussion

because of the initiative of this side of the House and the initiative these Ministers and MLA's who represent city seats on this side, so let there be no doubt about that.

Whether or not the matter is urgent enough to set aside the ordinary business of the House, Madam Speaker, I would suggest to you that the Throne Speech Debate is presently before us, that the Throne Speech in fact does mention and I quote: "That my government will continue to support the orderly introduction of new real property assessment in the City of Winnipeg." If members opposite think that this is such an important issue, perhaps we would have heard more about it from their leader yesterday, but certainly we can hear much about it if members want to stand in their place and make those representations under the provisions allowed for them through the far-ranging provisions allowed for debate under the Throne Speech. So, in fact, there is no reason to set aside the ordinary business because the ordinary business of the House allows for them to present their new-found concerns, their new-found realization that there finally is a problem.

I would suggest, in closing, Madam Speaker, that we would be prepared and we would accept their support of changes, knowing full well that when they had the opportunity in previous incarnations to make those changes, they failed to do so. But not wishing to hold that against them, we would be perfectly prepared to hear them out, as we have been, in discussions with our own MLA's and discussions with the City Council on this matter to date and we would gladly welcome their support, when time comes, to make changes if they felt those changes are required in this House.

SPEAKER'S RULING

MADAM SPEAKER: There are two conditions to be satisfied for this matter to proceed. The first condition has been met in that I received the proper notice from the honourable member of his motion.

The second condition is that debate on the matter is urgent and that there is no other reasonable opportunity to raise the matter.

The debate on the Motion for an Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, which allows discussion of far-ranging matters, is on the Order Paper. There is, therefore, immediate and ample opportunity to debate this matter. I rule that the motion is out of order.

The Honourable Opposition House Leader.

MR. G. MERCIER: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

With all due respect, I must challenge your ruling.

MADAM SPEAKER: The ruling of the Chair has been challenged. All those in favour of sustaining the ruling of the Chair, please say aye; opposed?

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

MADAM SPEAKER: Call in the members.

The question before the House is shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained.

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

YEAS

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

NAYS

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

MR. CLERK, W. Remnant: Yeas 29; Nays 24.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

NON-POLITICAL STATEMENT

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Madam Speaker, I'd like leave of the House to make a non-political, non-partisan statement, please.

MADAM SPEAKER: Does the Honourable Minister have leave? (Agreed)

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Madam Speaker, I'm sure that you, as well as all the members of this House, will wish to rejoice with me over the huge success at the Canada Winter Games held in Cape Breton these last few weeks.

It seems that every game has something special and this was no exception. It was thought by many that the opening ceremony was probably the best, and I can tell you it was quite an emotional time for many of us.

It was obvious also the value of these games, when we saw the legacy that will be left for sports facilities in Cape Breton. Also, the promotion of national unity, friendship and good sportsmanship, which was obvious, and probably more important, it is the human resource that it developed as the many, many volunteers who will become the leaders and stay leaders, who have become and will remain leaders for many years in Cape Breton.

There was also the pride shown for the people in their town. We must remember that this is an area probably the most affected with unemployment in Canada. But the feeling of having done something, of doing something was really something to see, and to see how proud these people were.

I would like to thank, first of all, here closer to Manitoba, Bill Crook, assisted by Rick Lambert of the Directorate and then the volunteers who spent many hours preparing for that and working with our people.

There are no losers in something like this. It might be if you that if you wanted to see the Manitoba boxers box, you had to be there early and you couldn't blink too often because they didn't last very long. But what they did is that they trained for all this time, and they participated, and they are very proud of it.

Madam Speaker, if you see a smiling lady in your gallery, you will notice that it is Mrs. Leonie Emond who runs our dining room. I suspect that the smile is because she is so proud of her granddaughter, thirteen-year old rhythmic gymnast, Lisa Merritt, who broke her record for the games and came back with five gold medals. We wish, of course, to offer congratulations and rejoice with the grandmother and the granddaughter for the achievement.

Now in rhythmic gymnastics, you could say that we did very well because another young another young girl, Susan Cushman, took four of the five silver medals, and she took the bronze in the other one.

We did better in the medals than ever before, the number of medals; we finished fourth. When I think of all the time that these people have trained, that you will bear with me if I mention those that at least won the gold medals.

We had one in Men's Vault in Gymnastics, Bob Bonnefoy; Weightlifting in the 110 kilograms, Bajon Pauvonic; Speed Skating, the women's 1500 metre, Krista Lamboo. I mentioned Lisa Merritt and her five medals. The Wrestling of course, our world champion, Alf Wurr, who did very well and won the gold in the 90 kilograms. The curling was something else to see because we won both. The women, of course, were the rink of Karen Purdy, Jennifer Lamont, Janine Sigurdson and Jill Ursel, who narrowly lost out in the Canadian championship, lost in the last end, and won the championship at the games during the last end.

You couldn't say too much about our men's team, John Boswick, Skip, Jamie Moore, Robert Finlay and David Babiuk, who also on the same afternoon, a split second after the ladies, won the gold for the men. That was indeed a very good day, that Saturday, because the members of our women's team won the gold medal at the volleyball game, the Women's Volleyball.

So again, I am sure that all of us are very proud of the achievements of all our people, not just those that came back with medals but all of them, and we congratulate them.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

MADAM SPEAKER: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, and the proposed amendment thereto by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie.

MR. E. CONNERY: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I guess yesterday some of the members said I almost goofed it up, but I guess there was some compassion on the other side and I'm speaking here today, thank you.

Madam Speaker, at the beginning of the Session I do want to wish everyone well. I hope that all of the members have a healthy Session and productive Session and I hope that the debate is meaningful.

Madam Speaker, I hope that you also have a good Session and I'm sure we'll have lots to debate back and forth, not between you and I, but I hope that you

have an enjoyable season; maybe a little better one than last year but the second time around is usually easier.

Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Pages who have been selected for this Session, and there is one Page in particular who is from the City of Portage la Prairie, Mary Zettler. I don't see Mary Zettler here at the moment, but she is a very talented girl and we're very proud to have her from the City of Portage la Prairie.

There is only one comment I would make, Madam Speaker, is that the colour of the uniforms, for the ladies that is, took a dramatic turn for the worst in my estimation. I kind of liked the -(Interjection)- oh, yeah, the bluer tinges are much more appropriate in the confines of this room.

Madam Speaker, last year, being new to the Legislature, it took a lot of work to learn the ropes and the ways and I guess I've still got a few to learn. But I did give it my best to learn the background and to learn how this House runs and to try to make a contribution to the Session and to try to represent the people of Portage in Manitoba to the best of my ability.

But meeting people back in Portage I was asked two questions consistently: Do you like the job; do you like being an MLA? And secondly: Are there any surprises? Well, yes, Madam Speaker, I've enjoyed representing the constituency of Portage la Prairie in this Legislature; and, yes, I was surprised. I didn't think that I would be. I thought I knew enough about politics but, Madam Speaker, I was surprised and very disappointed in the way the government conducted business and in the way things were put forward and the hiding and the secret things that go on. I thought it was a real disgrace that a government should work in this way, so, yes, I was surprised.

Madam Speaker, as far as the Throne Speech, it was just a regurgitation of the Throne Speech of last year. There was really very little new, and I think it was best noted by our leader that it was noted for what it didn't say.

Madam Speaker, some of the things that the Speech from the Throne did not mention - and I think the basic one we have to start with in politics and we had better start very soon - is honesty. I think the leader of our party expressed it very well yesterday and made some very good points as to where honesty needs to start - and I think honesty in all parties, in all governments, at all levels.

Also integrity, Madam Speaker, was not mentioned in the Throne Speech. I think that is very important. We've seen tax scams going on, what was called legalized theft. I think those are the kind of things that the integrity has to come before the people who are going to represent the people of Manitoba.

Imagination. Well, I've seen imagination over the last year. Basically, it was called various forms of fedsbashing. But that's their way. They haven't developed an imagination to develop policies which are going to get the true economy of this province going. They haven't had the imagination to know how to make cuts and they just don't have the imagination to grow, Madam Speaker.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker, C. Santos, in the Chair.)

Compassion is another one which I think, as legislators, we need to have. We saw the compassion

that the Premier of the government had last year, when he showed that he made donations of \$185 to the charitable activities around his community; while the leader of this side was something like in the area of \$2,300.00. So we see where compassion lies amongst the Socialists and the Conservatives.

Lastly, I think is the ability to manage, and that is, if we don't have the ability to manage, this province is going to be in terrible shape and we have seen the shape that this province is in; the horrendous deficits, the mismanagement of Crown corporations, and they try to develop new structures, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I don't think it's going to work.

The Member for Kildonan says, "Trust us." Yesterday, when he was speaking, he was telling me that we should be giving him ideas but the member will remember last year when I was trying to give some advice, he told me to shut up. So I don't know, you can't have it both ways.

The Minister of Agriculture said last Friday that the members on this side of the House had just found out about the farm crisis. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have known for years in this House that there is a farm crisis out there. I made mention of it three times in my Throne Speech last year and maybe the Minister of Agriculture would like to review that and just see that, yes, we have addressed the farm issue and we know that there are serious problems out there, but the conditions are gradually worsening. We told you it was bad last year. I mentioned the gloom and doom that the farmers in Portage constituency were having. Now we go back to that same community, we see more farms for sale, farmers trying to rent out their land because they can't make it go and, yes, we do see bankruptcies.

The Member for Virden last year, I thought, did an excellent job as the Ag Critic in bringing these concerns to the Minister. This year right at the beginning, he wanted to have the Ag Committee meet so that the farmers of the community could come forth and tell the Minister of the concerns and the problems they have and what they perceive to be some of the solutions to these farm problems. But the Minister says, oh, I've been travelling around the farm community; I've been through all the province and I'm listening to the farmers. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we don't get to hear what these farmers are saying to the Minister, neither does the public and the news media get to know what they are saying to him. So I think it's at some point in time that this committee should have been called.

I was reading a comment from the Member for Lac du Bonnet that said last year, March 8, it was awfully late when we got into it, but this year there was lots of time. Mr. Deputy Speaker, a farmer saying that at this time of the year, we have lots of time. If he hasn't made his plans for this year last fall, he's not much of a farmer and he's saying that we have lots of time. That's the first disgrace that that Member for Lac du Bonnet brought up. But it won't matter, Mr. Deputy Speaker, no matter what we say to the Minister of Agriculture and he said for us to tell him. Well, he's heard what we've had to say. It's good material, but he won't listen to the farmers. He hasn't. We had the bill for a hearing. What did he do? He listened to all of the presentations that were made, even Mr. Halabura who might have been considered and somebody said

it's his brother-in-law. He refutes it. I don't know if he's had a fight with his brother-in-law, but everybody who came, including the credit unions, said it was a bad bill. It's proving to be a bad bill. It's adding hardship to the farm community and it is restricting the credit to a good large number of people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a Minister who is supposed to be representing the farmers of this province and I was reading a letter to the editor which he put in. He said: "The editorial alleges that the act will adversely affect all farmers who are seeking operating capital. In my view, this argument is nonsensical. Manitoba's legislation applies only to farm land and farm land is not used to secure operating loans." Well, if that's the common sense of this Minister who knows that in some cases farm land is not used as collateral to get an operating loan, then it's about time that this Minister goes out and listens to the farmers and find out how many are. A lot of times farm land is used in operating capital and I think it's a disgrace that this Minister would even make that sort of a reference in a letter to the editor.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne and I quote: "My government has continually emphasized the urgency of putting equity and fairness back into the tax system." Mr. Deputy Speaker, we look at the school tax on farm land. Is that equity? When we look at what urban people pay on school tax and we look at what farmers have to pay for school tax and that's a tax before profit is made, but they have to go, and in many cases go to the bank and use their farmland to borrow to pay the education tax, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but that Minister over there isn't going to listen. He never has; he never will. Let it be known that Ontario rebates the school tax to the farmers. Alberta and Saskatchewan have no government GSE per se, only if there's a local tax. Manitoba farmers are at a disadvantage because of the position of this government.

FarmStart program, it is in there. Finally we have something that is of minor help to farmers. But he also mentions in the Speech from the Throne the input cost, or maybe he mentioned it himself, I'm not sure where it was, but we need to have the Federal Government have a review into the input costs of farmers because this was one of the major sectors of costs for the farm community.

Last year the Member for Virden put in a resolution asking for the province to go into a review of the input costs. Once having that we could have then gone to the Federal Government and said, yes, here are some of the problems, these are the situations that we find in Western Canada, Manitoba specifically, now will you work with us to alleviate the cost of inputs to the farm community? Did they go along with it? No.

There were other ones that were put forth, Resolution 6, education tax on farm land, MACC young farmer rebates, increasing it from fifty to 100,000. No, the Minister wouldn't go along with that.

Purple fuel rebate. You had a beautiful idea during the election, how you were going to simplify the farm rebates for farmers on the purple gas. Have we got a rebate system now any better? But we had some ideas, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but the Minister refused to listen. He always will.

What about the feedlot program? Farmers have been calling continuously for a feedlot program, and yes,

there are many feedlots closed up. What about the one in Carman? I don't know the situation in Miami, but umpteen feedlots, large and small, have closed. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know the prices in agriculture, we know the sectors that they are in and we know what should be done about it. The problem is we can't get the Minister of Agriculture to listen.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the feedlot situation and not having a thriving feedlot program in Manitoba, I think led to the closing of Canada Packers. They could read it on the wall that there wasn't going to be a big supply of feeder cattle in Manitoba so with an obsolete building and all of the other problems, they decided to close it. But go back a few years when Swift's closed. Who did that party blame when this party was in government? They said it was the provincial party that was to blame for the closing of Swift's. Now Canada Packers closes and who do they blame? The Federal Government. Now what hypocrisy, what half-truths. It is unbelievable that you would even think of a situation like that.

What about Spring Hill? They say the Spring Hill plant at Neepawa was part of the problem. The feds put \$800,000 into Spring Hill. Well, the provincial party put in somewhere in the area of a million-and-a-half or more. So they have double the amount invested. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not going to criticize them for that one. I think that was a good one. Along with the Federal Government and the Provincial Government we've got a viable plant at Neepawa and so we're not going to lose our slaughter potential.

What about crop insurance? It is in the Throne Speech again, the Premier making reference to crop insurance. Well, let's understand that the premiums are paid 50-50, the farmer and the Federal Government. All the Provincial Government does is administrate it. Four-and-a-half million last year out of something like \$45 million in premiums. Those bad feds putting in half the premiums into this province and you are only putting in four-and-a-half million. Another sham that you try to perpetrate on the people of Manitoba.

You've got something in there on the surface rights. Mr. Deputy Speaker, how long has the Member for Arthur been talking about surface rights and the problems related to the farmers? Just yesterday or today another article on the problems related to surface rights. No, the Minister will not act. It is in the Throne Speech, but we have seen so much in the Throne Speech before that we can't depend on this Minister ever doing anything about it.

What about sugar beets? Last year he waited until the eleventh hour, then finally they went along with an agreement. This year the farmers were delayed from seeding because they didn't have a program in place last year. The Minister says when? He doesn't even know that the farmers were waiting for the announcement so that they could go into seeding.

Now we are waiting for another program for sugar beets again, aren't we? The Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada are prepared to sign an agreement. The Government of Manitoba refuses to sign an agreement. What would it cost the Province of Manitoba this year, three hundred and fifty, three hundred and sixty thousand dollars, give or take? Sure they are concerned about somewhere down the road it building up, but sugar prices are improving, but no, this Minister is going to drag his feet. Put those farmers

who should be planning now in spite of the fact the Member from Lac du Bonnet doesn't think there is an emergency, the urgency is now. The Minister should act.

And what are the results of all this financial crisis? Family breakdown, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is one of the big problems in the farm community - and we have just, in the last week, experienced a tragedy here in this House - suicide rates have escalated to an alarming rate. The Minister, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a fat cat farmer living on a turkey ranch under a marketing board protection where he is going to get his income, he is not worried about the vagaries of the world market price. He is sitting there; he is not suffering, so he does not care. I think it is time - because when it all comes through, you'd better have a crow marketing board because you are going to eat a lot of crow before you are through.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have to go back - and I'm glad that the Member for Lac du Bonnet is here because I wouldn't have liked to have said derogatory things in his absence, but Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Member for Lac du Bonnet, and I think it was 1983, you can correct me if I am wrong, was made, a member of the farm community, the Manitoba Farmer of the Year through the Red River Ex. A man who was selected by his peers, a man who was supposed to be representative of the farm community and of the village communities that he represents in his activities and not just a constituency but he is supposed to be representing the people of Manitoba, because you are chosen for the province of Manitoba. What did he do? He voted against the emergency debate because the farmers are in trouble and he refused to support that issue. -(Interjection)- Mr. Deputy Speaker, he really told us exactly what we have been saying about how serious the farm crisis really is.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to read a couple of excerpts from Hansard which I think are appropriate at this time to understand either the misdirection or the misguidedness of the Member for Lac du Bonnet or maybe he is cow-tied to supporting party lines. He says, I think it is up to the House in total to convince our city cousins that there is a crisis in agriculture and that something has to be done. What is he saying? He is saying the Minister of Agriculture and himself are unable to influence the urban members of his party to recognize that there is a farm crisis and spend a little bit of money in the farm situation.

And then he goes on, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and he says, "Can you imagine a constituency the size of Lac du Bonnet without a single implement dealer in the constituency?" You do not have to imagine it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a reality. That member is admitting to the problems in the farm community and then turns his back on the very farmers he is supposed to be representing. I can see the Member for the Interlake with his turkey quota and the built-in profit structure not worrying about the farmers, but I don't know why the Member for Lac du Bonnet isn't concerned because I don't think that he's got one of those fat cat quotas.

But after all that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want you to remember what he said. He said, "I say to this government and to the Premier, thank you from a grateful rural Manitoban." Now isn't that absolutely ducky! He is now thanking the Premier for the situation that the farm community is in.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: A point of order being raised.

MR. C. BAKER: A point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The gentleman is quoting me out of context; I wish he would have the courtesy to read the whole resolution. Read all of it; read the whole paragraph.

MR. E. CONNERY: The whole paragraph? It's only two lines. "I say to this government and to the Premier, thank you from a grateful rural Manitoban." And I say rural Manitoba is not grateful. The farm communities, the villages, the towns are not grateful to this Premier and to this government.

MR. C. BAKER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I hope the gentleman has the courtesy to read the total paragraph he said is just two lines. If he read the preceding two paragraphs, he'd know what I'm grateful about.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It might be a point of clarification, but a dispute as to what is being said is not a point of order.

MR. E. CONNERY: It really has tarnished the honour of being a Farmer of The Year; and for all those other Farmers of The Year that have taken place over the last several years, I think it's a shoddy disgrace that this would take place.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in last year's Throne Speech, highways were somewhat mentioned in my Throne Speech Debate, and I talked about the poor conditions of the highways in Portage la Prairie and in a lot of other constituencies, and the dangers that there were inherent to school buses, etc., going down some of the roads. Because the provincial trunk highways are in such poor shape, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a lot of other farmers have taken municipal roads, thus transferring a lot of the cost of highways to the municipalities because the only good road is a municipal road. The provincial road is not, in many cases, suitable to drive on.

Last year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they cut \$12 million out of the Capital budget. What are they going to do for highways this year? What's the encore? Raise it \$15 million or \$20 million? Mr. Deputy Speaker, the roads are in terrible shape but we are told, and it's acknowledged, that the Capital budget is a politicized sector of the Highways Department. If you go through the Dauphin Constituency and if you go through the Interlake, you will see the politicizing of road building.

But the one thing we are assured of, that there is no politicizing in the maintenance sector. There doesn't need to be. Everybody's treated equally. There is no maintenance done on the roads very much, and the condition of the roads, the hazard of the roads shows it very quickly.

We went up to Hecla Island and you see the beautiful road being put into Hecla Island at - it has to be at some millions of dollars of cost. I wonder about the priorities of this government when the Minister of Natural Resources was in Portage Municipality and viewed Highway 240, had a chance to view the Overhill Drain, and I thank the Minister for that. He took the time. It was an honourable thing and he did his Ministerial responsibility by doing it. But once again,

what is going to be done for that road and for that Overhill Drain? Those people, for 25 years, have been asking for governments to do something. Even ours back then should have done something and didn't, but it's got to the point now where that road is desperate. Last year, the Minister knows that there were children who couldn't go to school; there were people who couldn't go to work. And we're spending money on a road into Hecla, which is a white elephant that the government is losing money on every year.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, something has to be done. Where is the honesty, the integrity and the fairness that the Premier of this province says has to be? Mr. Deputy Speaker, the concern for rural Manitoba, not just the farm community, has to be there, but we don't have a concern for rural Manitoba with this government. I sympathize with some of the members opposite, and I'm sure some of them have tried to have things for the rural area, but a party and a government that's dominated by urban people, I'm sure they don't listen.

The Premier of Manitoba condemns central Canada for its treatment of Western Canada and Eastern Canada, condemns central Canada for the treatment of the rest of Canada. Then he turns around and does the very same thing in Manitoba.

I would like to read just one little short line here from the Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which says this, and I think it's on Page 20 - Madam Speaker, nice to see you back.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair.)

The big thing right here on Page 20, it says, ". . . committed to a stronger Winnipeg." I'm not opposed to that, Madam Speaker. Winnipeg is an important part of this province, but I think the rural are justified in having the very same as Winnipeg is getting, and what are they doing for rural Manitoba?

This Premier has said to hell with rural Manitoba, but he has spent \$32 million - do you want me to withdraw that?

MADAM SPEAKER: Please.

MR. E. CONNERY: Sure, I withdraw "to hell" - the \$32 million in the Core Area Initiative, \$100 million in the renewed Core Area Initiative. There's North Portage Development, Madam Speaker. These are all for Winnipeg, great programs, but what is there for rural Manitoba? Nothing.

He also mentions the establishment of a riverbank authority in Winnipeg, and what about the other cities and towns? Is there any mention of an authority for Portage or for Brandon? I don't see any, but the Premier talks about equality, equity and fairness. I'll never forget the Overhill Drain and others.

There's another part on Page 9, Madam Speaker, that I'd like to refer to, and this is the Premier of this province. He says: "My government will also be bringing forward revisions to The Emergency Measures Act, which will allow for effective provincial and municipal preparedness and response activities related to emergencies such as floods . . . "and so forth." Madam Speaker, why don't you do something about it before the emergency is there, not after? Why put all of the people through all of the hoops when you

could have done something prior to the emergency in most cases and eliminated the emergency?

The Whitemud River is a great watershed. It's a great case for that, where nothing was done until finally the government was taken to court and they were forced to, through it.

Omand's Creek is another program mentioned in Page 22 of the speech. Omand's Creek should be a great idea, but priorities. What comes first, a beautiful park for the City of Winnipeg, or a road and a drain for rural Manitoba? -(Interjection)- excellent idea.

But you know, Madam Speaker, when this government decides they want to save money, they are very quick to close down RCMP detachments in rural Manitoba, three towns that were told they were going to lose their detachments. This is justice for Manitobans?

Madam Speaker, justice now has become one of the problems of our province and maybe of our country. People continuously tell me they're dissatisfied with the justice system of Manitoba. We get letters; we get calls. Madam Speaker, when you read the newspapers - and it's tragic - when you see the wife battering, the child molesters, you know we could do something for these people. We could divert some of the money from the Lotteries Fund into specific items, not the General Treasury, but into specific areas of really priority need. I think, in this area, there is a need.

When we look at the murders and the women who have been murdered in batterings, we see a murderer who confesses to murdering two women and, through plea bargaining, can be paroled in seven years, Madam Speaker. As a woman, I would think you would be infuriated that this incompetent government would not start to take some steps to correct the justice system in Manitoba.

We take a look at the police and the frustration that they have in dealing with criminals. We see the problems through the human rights that the police are having to face. We see where a person is stopped for speeding and they find illegal drugs or something else in the vehicle and, because of his human rights, they can't charge him.

You know, I can go back to Justice Sterling Lyon and how he fought entrenchment. He fought it for a good reason, because he did not want the courts making the decision on human rights. He wanted legislators to make those decisions on human rights, and that's where it should be, Madam Speaker. Also, what are the court costs related to all of the cases going to court because the judge has got to make a decision, and usually it ends up in the Supreme Court of Ottawa.

Madam Speaker, the Attorney-General complained when Justice Sterling Lyon was appointed. What did he complain about the last time I heard, that he wasn't consulted by Ottawa. Isn't that a shame? Did he consult the people of Pipestone, Reston, Winnipeg Beach when he was going to close the RCMP stations there? Did he go there and say, now, here we've got a problem? Will you work with us? No. He declared they were going to be closed. This great guy, who is all for justice and fairness, when is he going to proclaim the freedom of information bill? Just when is he going to do that? There's a challenge to you over there. When you have honesty and fairness and integrity, you will open up the books of the government. You'll proclaim the freedom of information bill so that everybody can see.

He was part of a government, this Attorney-General who pretends to be so pious and upright, the Third Quarter Financial Statement prior to the election, hid, kept back so the people wouldn't know what was going on. He changed the year-end for Manfor so we wouldn't know what the loss was, delayed the MFS Annual Report so we wouldn't have the flagging of MTX, and then the people of Manitoba would have known before the election what they're doing. Madam Speaker, a man with the track record of the Attorney-General should not criticize other people, especially those with the ethics, morals and integrity of Justice Sterling Lyon.

I have only one comment about the Member for Elmwood, the only thing that I thought had some merit in his seconding the Throne Speech was that he mentioned crime prevention. Madam Speaker, we tried to prevent crime in the last general election. We tried to defeat this government but, because of the things they did, the people were not informed as to what was going on. They weren't given a choice because of the misinformation that they presented to the public. Their devious withholdings of information allowed them to be re-elected. Madam Speaker, this NDP Government, under this Premier, is the biggest crime ever perpetrated on the people of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, the Decter Report was a condemnation of this incompetent Premier and equally incompetent Cabinet. I hate to admit, Madam Speaker, that it was a well-written report, and was also quite complimentary of Sterling Lyon and the efficiency of his government.

But he had several things that I would just like to mention very quickly that he suggested for government, things that we think maybe we can support. "A shortened and simplified Estimates process, focused on major issues and shifted gradually to a five-year basis from the current one-year basis, as recommended by the Auditor," recommends an improvement in productivity. This is work ethic. Maybe some of the members need to be working a little harder and should also spray a few more mosquitoes - it would help too in the summertime.

"The senior Cabinet Committee is ideally the Treasury Board, which it isn't now." This is not happening, and he recommends that Treasury Board become the ideal committee. "Governments should be without secrets and dark corners of hidden agendas and information."

MR. D. ORCHARD: Who said that?

MR. E. CONNERY: Decter. Freedom of information, once again, secrets - this is the man that they commissioned and paid is now saying these things.

"It is important to keep government's size limited to a core of essentials with a solid resistance to the constant pressures for growth." There you are. We've been saying, cut back on some of the things.

"The ability to make long-term plans is hampered because of the lack of clarity in the framework of overall priorities." Business knowledge and ability is reflected in that statement, Madam Speaker, and this is what we've been saying for some time, the tragedy of that government who cannot manage but have a devious way of hiding the facts from the people of Manitoba.

Decter also recommends, Madam Speaker, the lack of planning, the lack of accountability. Well we've seen

that in the Crown corporations, there is no accounting. Now we see in the Workers Compensation - what was the terminology the fellow used? "Creative accounting" now is the new term. He refused to go along with creative accounting. "Poor program evaluation and review" - they don't review the programs. They don't know what's going on, and he repeats again, "program cuts."

But one of the amazing parts of that Decter Report - I see the odd one looking, I don't think they read it - recommends "privatizing program delivery" in the Decter Report. He says: ". . . reduce Jobs Fund spending." Reduce Jobs Fund spending, take note. Your own man says reduce the spending, and he says: "Phase out Hydro Rate Stabilization Fund." Amen.

The most significant though and important sentence in the whole report is this, and I hope members opposite would at least listen to this one short line that Decter put in: "We can build slowly and solidly as have our predecessors or we can leave a fragile legacy to our children." Madam Speaker, that's precisely why I ran for government. I'm concerned about the children of this province, and the legacy that they're going to have isn't going to be a very good one.

Could the Speaker tell me how much time I have left?

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member has nine minutes remaining.

MR. E. CONNERY: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The economic indicators, Madam Speaker, put forth by the Bank of Canada, the Bank of Montreal, the Howe Institute has given some credibility to this government as saying, hey, it's got to grow. Things are looking not bad. The unemployment isn't too bad. This province is going somewhere at this point. But they all qualified, Madam Speaker, and this is the problem.

The economy is fueled by Limestone, the Core Area Initiative and North Portage Development and, on top of that, a housing boom that is taking place now because of low interest rates. The first three, Madam Speaker, are on borrowed money. We are in an economic bubble and, Madam Speaker, when Limestone and the Core Area and North Portage Development are finished, the bubble is going to break and we'll have proven to the world that we borrowed our way into short-term economic prosperity, and the long-range is going to be long-term bust for the people of this province and for the children and grandchildren of the members of this Legislature.

The private sector has not done well, Madam Speaker. The facts are, it has not done well. Some of the private sector that has been a spinoff because of Limestone and the other borrowed projects that the government have, yes, but the true indicators, the manufacturing, the processing and so forth, that exports outside of this province, whether to other provinces in Canada or to other countries, is the barometer of where we're going to get true wealth.

MR. H. HARAPIAK: What do the bankers say?

MR. E. CONNERY: What do the bankers say? What do they say? They say that, when the bubble breaks,

she's going to go. It's not going to be of any consolation to any members on this side when the bubble breaks and this province collapses to say, well we told you so, as we have told the Minister of Agriculture. We see what's happened there. If the bubble there is broke, the people are broke, the community is broke. We can say that we told you so. That's no consolation, because the people are suffering. Those people out there are human beings. They're neighbours and they're friends of ours, and we're not happy with that.

Madam Speaker, what has happened with this government? I think we should look at what's happening with the deficit. In 1978 through 1981, we had \$468 million in deficits under Sterling Lyon. As soon as he left, they went to \$434 million in the first year and, last year, we're somewhere over \$600 million for a one-year deficit, one-and-a-half times Sterling Lyon's total deficit for the four years that he was in power. Our total debt, Madam Speaker, has gone from somewhere just over \$4 billion to now where we're well over \$8 billion and approaching \$9 billion. This government, in the five years that they've been there, have put somewhere between \$4 billion and \$5 billion on the backs of Manitobans that cannot be paid in the near future, will be paid by the young people of tomorrow.

Madam Speaker, I have a couple of other charts that I would like to relate to, and it's called "The Debt," and we're looking at the per capita debt of what's going on. Madam Speaker, the liability - and the Minister of Finance continuously gets up and says we're borrowing at a low interest rate Madam Speaker, at this point, if we'd got the money for no interest, our liability, because of the exchange factor, is over 12 percent. So, Madam Speaker, Manitoba has one of the highest foreign per capita debts in the country or is the highest. Madam Speaker, we are second highest per capita debt in total, second only to Newfoundland, but then we are the highest foreign per capita debt, which leaves this province very vulnerable when there are the exchange rates going on.

Madam Speaker, Throne Speech '86, Budget Address '86, we were going to see Manitoba small business bonds. It didn't come to fruition. Throne Speech '87, once again we're going to have a Small Business Bond Program, slightly different wording, but I wonder if it's going to be the same monies that are going to be. What about the millions of dollars that we authorized finally last year, even though you had to withdraw it out of The Loan Act (1)?

Madam Speaker, it's very obvious that this party, this province, this government at this point is devoting too much energy to mega projects at the expense of small business. It was pointed out that 97 percent of the businesses now in Manitoba are small, and I think it says one thing: the large businesses have gone, the medium-sized businesses have gotten smaller. So, Madam Speaker, we have become a small business province; small businesses are not the big exporters. They're very vital to the life of a province, but they're not the ones that are going to generate new wealth coming into the Province of Manitoba.

The Canadian Federation of Business has a lot to say about the quality of this government and the factors that are detrimental to job creation. The payroll tax, which we deathly fear is going to be raised by another 1 percent is the first one. The Workers Compensation

now - I would like the Minister to hear - is the second most detrimental thing that they see to job creation and business development in this province. It's a change; it has now gone up and the previous Minister should be proud of the position that he's put the Workers Compensation in.

We're shown that there was almost \$39 million surplus when they took over, and now, according to the report, there could be a \$60 million deficit by the end of the year - tragic, tragic, tragic, tragic! But that's the sign of incompetency that the people will live with for a long time.

Madam Speaker, in tourism, we are the only province in tourism to show a decline in foreign people coming to Manitoba. That's a tragedy, but what did the Minister say when the question was put to her? "Ah," she said, "It's an insignificant and unimportant part of our tourist business." That's the growth sector, the new money, the new infusion of life into the Province of Manitoba, and she's saying it's minor, it's insignificant.

Madam Speaker, I think one of the important things is that we need to spend more money on tourism. Members opposite are going to say, well, you can't have it both ways. Do you want to cut the deficit and spend more money? But tourism, unlike most other programs, is an investment, because 10 percent of every tourist dollar spent in the province returns to the provincial coffers and this province, because of its poor funding of the tourist industry, has come to where it is now.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member's time has expired.

The Honourable Member for Thompson.

MR. S. ASHTON: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm pleased to be able to participate in debate on the Throne Speech once again as we enter the 1987 Session of the Legislature.

Madam Speaker, over the last few months I've had the opportunity to visit many people in my constituency directly in their homes, at community events in Thompson. I've had the opportunity to talk to many people about the concerns locally, some of the things that my constituents would like to see done in the Legislature.

I'd like to indicate at the beginning of my remarks that I certainly will be intending to speak on many of those local concerns in the upcoming Session of the Legislature. I'll be continuing to push for improved community facilities in Thompson - particularly for our seniors, Madam Speaker - continuing to seek greater economic diversification through such matters as increased tourism development in Northern Manitoba.

I'm going to be seeking continued expansion of educational opportunities in the North, and the maintenance improvement of our northern health system, because these, Madam Speaker, are items that have been raised as concerns directly to me in my constituency. I will certainly give notice now that I intend to speak on them in the upcoming months.

During that period too, Madam Speaker, I've had the opportunity to speak to many people about their views on the overall political situation facing us. If there's one thing that has struck me the most, as I come back

in here and sit through another series of Tory speeches on Throne Speeches, it is that they just haven't learned what has happened to their party in this province. They just haven't learned what has happened.

Last year, we came in very shortly after an election in which they were once again defeated, in which they lost both in terms of numbers of seats in the popular vote, Madam Speaker, and we heard them try and try and try to attempt to say that somehow there'd been an awful mistake, that they hadn't really lost the election or if they had it was a terrible accident.

I heard today from the Member for Portage the same sorts of things about the last election. In fact, I recall him saying just a few minutes ago that people weren't given a choice. They didn't know what decision they were making in 1986. Madam Speaker, here we are fully a year later, and the message the people of Manitoba are giving to the Conservatives is that if they were not that popular in 1986, they're even less popular today.

Madam Speaker, it's both the federal and provincial Tories that they're talking about. Just look what's happened in the last year. It's been a rather incredible year actually, I think, politically. We've seen a federal Tory Government drop to the lowest level of popularity in history. We've seen an incredible series of scandals and corruption; we've seen a government that has no credibility. We've seen it drop in every region of this country and particularly here in Manitoba.

Let's talk about some of the reasons why that government is in such sad shape federally, and why that same party, which is in opposition here in Manitoba, is also facing problems at the present time, Madam Speaker. Let's start with one obvious reason - the CF-18 fiasco.

Madam Speaker, in my memory, I can't think of one single incident that's demonstrated political cynicism and unfairness to this province any more than the CF-18 decision. We had a company here in Manitoba which had the best bid, which was recommended by the Civil Service in Ottawa, more than 70 civil servants having reviewed it, the best bid, the cheapest price, and we were told that we were not going to get that contract, that it was going to go to Canadair of Montreal because it was, quote, "in the national interest."

Well, Madam Speaker, national interest? I think not. Political interest? Very obviously. It was cynical politics of the worst kind, and we saw in this province unity that I've seldom seen on any other issue. We had a delegation that went to Ottawa. It included representatives from the Provincial Government, from labour, from business, from people of all political persuasions, from the city government itself, here in the City of Winnipeg. We saw them take a united position against the unfair treatment that we received from the federal Tories, but what happened here in Manitoba, Madam Speaker? What did the Tories do? What was their reaction provincially?

They sort of said they disagreed with it, but they went further. Their leader tried to suggest that the Premier's handling of the matter had cost its credibility with Ottawa and thereby cost it the contract. That's exactly what their leader said. Instead of saying it was wrong, period, he then attempted to blame the Provincial Government, at least partly, for the CF-18 decision. They went further.

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We had the spectacle of the Member for Charleswood putting a federal Tory fund raising body, of which he wasn't a member it turned out, the 500 Club, but then we had probably the most cynical and ridiculous proposition I've heard from members opposite on anything in the five years that I've been in this Legislature, and that was the suggestion, Madam Speaker, that the solution to their political problems over the CF-18 contract was to change the name of their provincial political party. Change to what name, I don't know.

We, in fact, were thinking of starting a competition in Manitoba to think of some names that people might want to give the provincial Tories. I don't want to indicate some of the suggestions I had, Madam Speaker. They're somewhat unparliamentary. But to really suggest that that would somehow solve the political problems, to change the name, I think is absurd.

Change the name, Madam Speaker. Well, as far as I am concerned, a Tory is a Tory is a Tory. It's always the Tory Party, Madam Speaker, and the people of Manitoba know that. We've seen over the last year just how well they know that; we've seen their response to the weak and half-hearted defence of this province by members opposite. We've seen their response to cynical moves such as attempting to change their name, and we've seen that it's meant - today it dropped to record lows in public esteem in Manitoba. But you know, they have another answer for all this, they have another answer, it comes from their leader and it's to blame the feds.

The Member for Kildonan, I think, pointed out that so well the other day, to blame the feds. They are saying, Madam Speaker, that they dropped politically because of the drop of the Federal Government, that it's nothing to do with what they've said or done, that it's only to do with their federal counterparts.

Madam Speaker, if that is what they truly believe, I think once again they've proven beyond a doubt that they don't understand what has happened. Because, Madam Speaker, what the people of this province see in the provincial Tories is more than just a reflection of Brian Mulroney and his caucus in Ottawa. What they see is that - and many people have expressed this to me - they feel that if the provincial Tories were in power in Manitoba we'd be seeing much the same sort of policies, the failed policies that we're seeing from the Federal Government. They are concerned about the provincial Tories exactly because they are Tories, Madam Speaker. They can change the name all they want but people know what to expect out of the members opposite.

I want to give you one crystal clear example of what I'm talking about. Last year in debate on the Budget, I referred to something which I don't often refer to in the Legislature - a poll. A poll, Madam Speaker, which showed that the people of this province saw the provincial Tories - this is the provincial Tories - as representing two groups in society, whereas the provincial NDP was seen as representing every other group in society, best representing their interests. Now, what were those two groups that the people of this province saw the provincial Tories represent? Madam Speaker, it was big business and the rich; big business and the rich. What's happening in Ottawa? What's happening in terms of taxation policy? What's

happening in terms of economic policy, where we have a federal Conservative Government? What is happening in Ottawa?

I want to quote from a newspaper article, from the Free Press, February 28, this year, 1987. The headline, Madam Speaker, states that only the rich have escaped the Tory tax bite. Increased highest for the poorest. It goes on to say, Madam Speaker, that corporations and the rich are the only ones to have escaped the Tory tax juggernaut, which has flattened the wallets of most other taxpayers, government figures and non-government studies reveal. It indicates, Madam Speaker, further that the latest federal budget projections suggest that the wave will continue for at least the next two-and-a-half years. That's assuming that anything is done in the upcoming tax reform.

These are studies, Madam Speaker, incidentally which were conducted by the National Council on Welfare, and also interestingly enough, by the Fraser Institute, which is a right-wing economic think tank based in Vancouver, which itself, a right-wing economic think tank, showed that only those with the highest incomes have managed to significantly reduce their share of what has been an increasing burden under the Tories.

Madam Speaker, there you have it, a Tory Government in power and who benefits? The rich and the corporations. What we are seeing in Manitoba is that people are looking at the Federal Government and saying that's exactly what we would get here. They still remember the years of 1977 to 1981; that's in the back of their minds. They see day after day after day, who the federal Conservatives really speak for, and they look, Madam Speaker, at who the provincial Tories speak for as well and for the vast majority of Manitobans it certainly isn't them.

I think, Madam Speaker, if ever there was an indication of the type of attitude of the Tories it was in, what I feel, were very unfair, totally unfair comments made by the Leader of the Opposition in his address to the Throne Speech when he made comments on the personal finances of the Minister of Northern Affairs. The fact that the Minister of Northern Affairs had sought a \$1,000 loan. Madam Speaker, I have no intention of getting up and making comments on the personal finances of some of the members opposite. I don't think that's appropriate in this House, but I think what is interesting is the extent to which the biases of members opposite come across. Perhaps if all members of this House were rich, they wouldn't be seeking loans. They wouldn't have to balance their budget and seek to deal with their personal finances, Madam Speaker, but all members aren't. Many members of this House come from very modest backgrounds in terms of income and wealth. I think it's very tacky - to use a word which is being used presently by the members opposite - for the Leader of the Opposition, of all people, to bring up that sort of tactic in the House.

It reminds me of a quote which I came across just recently I think which sums up the Conservative attitude. It shows how it hasn't changed in over 70 years. Here's a quote from Stephen Leacock from 1909. It stated with the Conservatives, the failing principles, the Conservatives fall back on personalities. That was 1909, this is 1987 - things haven't changed. When they run out of principled arguments, they get into personalities.

Madam Speaker, we've said that the federal Tory party, we know what they stand for. We know that they're

much the same here in Manitoba. You can see the parallels if you compare the election of 1984 and the election of 1986 - the federal and then later the provincial election. You can see the parallels if one recalls, for example, the great statements made by Brian Mulroney and the federal Conservatives about sacred trusts. Does anyone remember those statements and what has happened since? Sacred trusts with the social programs of this country. How they were going to be concerned about the poor and disadvantaged. In reality, Madam Speaker, it has not happened. The poor and middle income earners of this country have been hit time and time again, but the rich and only the rich have been spared. We've seen the usual dichotomy between the Tories in elections and after elections. We saw how in the federal election the Tories attempted to emphasize their so-called progressive aspect, and how afterwards they ended up being just another Conservative government.

We've seen, Madam Speaker, in this very Throne Speech Debate, that the exact same process has happened here in Manitoba with the provincial Tories. During the election they were talking with great concern about health and education and social programs and how they were going to increase spending. Yesterday, Madam Speaker, we saw the true colors of the Tories when their Leader of the Opposition came out and attacked, what? Essentially the usual sort of Tory tactic, talked about NDP spending. It was all budgets and deficits, as the Member for Lakeside knows so well. I will provide him with a copy of my notes afterwards so he can study it at greater detail. But we know, Madam Speaker, that is what the Tories always do. They are progressive - at least in terms of words - in elections, but when they're in the Legislature, either in government or in opposition, they resort to the same tired right-wing policies that have always characterized them as a party.

Well, Madam Speaker, the sad part is that if they are going to take that tack, they're going to have to do a lot better than they've done. I want to give you an example from the Leader of the Opposition's remarks in the address to the Throne Speech. He suggested that social spending had dropped from 58 percent of the Budget to 54 percent of the Budget, Madam Speaker, since 1981. I thought that the Leader of the Opposition might know something about accounting or how to look at the public accounts figures; I thought that he might but I was wrong. He made a very major mistake, Madam Speaker, in calculating the expenditures.

MR. J. McCRAE: The percentage of total expenditures.

MR. S. ASHTON: The percentage of total expenditures, yes, for the Member for Brandon West. He forgot, Madam Speaker, the one thing that this government did was to move income security payments out of the Community Services Department and into Employment Services and Economic Security; and if one adds back in the income security payments, one finds that social spending has not decreased but it has increased as a percent of the provincial budget. Madam Speaker, he plainly blew it.

He also didn't raise the fact that spending on health and education and social programs, programs which

the vast majority of the people of this province want maintained and enhanced, but that spending has increased significantly as the people of this province clearly want. Madam Speaker, the same lack of understanding is so evident in the Leader of the Opposition's statements on economic policy. In fact, it's obvious to me that that party has no economic policy from the comments that they made.

There was reference, Madam Speaker, to the fact that the deficit has increased these last few years. Are the Tories saying that the deficit should not increase in times of economic trouble? Are they saying, Madam Speaker, that governments should not expand job creation activities during times of economic struggle? Is that the case? If that is the case, let them say so. Let them say so now. There's room for legitimate philosophical disagreement in this House, but let them say so.

Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition talked about the Jobs Fund. He talked about short-term job creation through the Jobs Fund. He neglected to mention, of course, that that is balanced by long-term job creation. He questioned the \$80 million of expenditures on short-term job creation projects.

Does he want to look at exactly what kind of programs he's referencing when he suggests that some or perhaps all of that amount be eliminated? Does he really want to eliminate, for example, jobs for students during the summer, because that's a portion of that \$80 million? Does he want to eliminate some of the jobs and training programs that have been introduced to provide jobs to people who have no other source of employment? Madam Speaker, does he want to cut those programs out entirely? Well, I wish he would be more specific.

I will say, Madam Speaker, that there will be times in which job creation will be increased and when it will be decreased, depending on the economic circumstances. That is an economic policy that has been adopted by many governments and, particularly, has been a key feature of the New Democratic Party, the key policy feature.

So let's find out where the Tories really stand when they criticize short-term job creation programs and exactly what they would cut. You know I found it particularly ironic when the Leader of the Opposition referred to the comments by MACSW on the need for more employment opportunities for women.

Madam Speaker, I agree with their analysis. There is definitely a need to ensure the Jobs Fund projects do provide job opportunities to people who have been denied those in the past, including women, and including other groups in society such as Native people, in particular, and visible minorities and the disabled. But you know, there was no suggestion that the Jobs Fund be eliminated which is somehow what the Leader of the Opposition implied. The women of this province are saying it's good, but improve it; make sure it is targeted towards the needs of women and others who are disadvantaged in society, and let not the Leader of the Opposition twist that around.

One can see, as one goes through the speech by the Leader of the Opposition, just how much lack of understanding that he has about the economic situation in this province. He talked about the 97 percent of Manitoba firms that are small businesses and the fact that there are fewer large enterprises relatively as if

that was somehow a feature that was common to this economy.

In fact, what has been happening is that there's more and more emphasis on small business. In fact, Manitoba has one of the highest gross rates in Canada, if one looks at it, not just because of public investment but also because of the strength of the small business sector. Small business is providing an increasing number of jobs not just in the traditional service sector, which has expanded, but also in manufacturing.

I'm surprised that the Leader of the Opposition, who talks about small business, doesn't understand what is happening with small business both across this country and here in Manitoba. The fact is that small business has led the way in Manitoba and that is one of the reasons why we're doing so well, and that all the suggestions that have been made by the Leader of the Opposition that it just ain't so are not brought out by the facts.

He demonstrated once again his complete ignorance of the economic situation when he referred to the mining industry. Madam Speaker, he suggested that the mining industry of Manitoba had somehow become uncompetitive over the last several years. He made reference, Madam Speaker, to the health and education levy.

Well, Madam Speaker, if he would care to talk to the management of Inco, he would find that in Ontario, when you look at what they pay in terms of Medicare premiums and Workers Compensation premiums and all the other payroll-related premiums, that they pay a substantial amount more on those items than they do here in Manitoba. He would also find, Madam Speaker, that the mining industry in Manitoba has done very well, thank you, in terms of improving efficiency - it is competitive - and that to bring in the other aspects that he's done in trying to suggest they are is just not the case. Once again, another example of the lack of comprehension that the Leader of the Opposition has about economic matters.

Well, then, Madam Speaker, we got to northern issues generally. You know I find it amazing. I've been in this House now five years. I think this is the first time I've ever heard the Leader of the Opposition in the Throne Speech make any real reference to the North. But it's unfortunate that he didn't check with his colleagues first, because what I seem to see happening there is that while the Leader of the Opposition talks about economic diversity in the North, in reality, we deal with questions that relate specifically to that.

I'll give you one example: Destination Manitoba funding for the ski hill in Thompson that his own Member for Minnedosa argued against that quite strenuously in committee. So did the Member for Sturgeon Creek. So when northerners attempt to diversify, when they attempt to get tourism development, they find opposition from the Tory benches. We've seen it on employment and training measures for Limestone.

Madam Speaker, one just has to look at what the Tories said in the Thompson constituency in the last election and in various constituencies throughout the North to see that they bitterly criticized many of the special employment measures that were put into place and the training measures that were put into place to ensure job opportunities for northerners and Native people in Northern Manitoba.

It's not just that they've been critical, Madam Speaker, that annoys me. It's the fact that the Leader of the Opposition, when he does talk about the North, makes no reference to the fact that - (Interjection) - I'm talking about this year - the first time he's made any substantive comments about the North - to the Member for Gladstone. He makes no reference to the very major improvements that have taken place in terms of northern participation in Limestone. In fact, Madam Speaker, well over 400 northerners were working during the peak construction times last year on Limestone, far more than any other time in history.

The Leader of the Opposition made no reference to the fact that educational opportunities in Northern Manitoba are at the highest level they've ever been in large part because the initiatives of this government, the training initiatives are at the highest level they've ever been in the North at the initiative of this government. He made no reference to the fact that improvements in health have been brought into Northern Manitoba, and this very Throne Speech itself talks about expanding health facilities in seven remote communities that presently do not have adequate health facilities. So let the Leader of the Opposition, if he is going to talk about the North, deal with the facts, Madam Speaker, the reality, and that is that there have been a significant number of improvements in Northern Manitoba because of the actions of this government.

Well, Madam Speaker, I went through the speech looking for some substantive policy suggestions and once again I came to the realization that there just aren't any. I've mentioned the inaccurate criticisms of this government but there is no alternate policy. There is no alternate economic policy. There is no alternate health or education policy. There is no alternate policy for Northern Manitoba.

I think I know why. I think it is clear that the Tories are afraid to outline their agenda. If they're going to talk about spending being too high under the NDP, they realize that the first question that comes to mind when people look at comments such as that is: Well, what would you cut?

They still, after five years, have not come up with a satisfactory answer to that question, a very basic question. They haven't answered what they would do. They haven't answered what they would do on taxation policy, on employment policy, on economic policy. They haven't said anything on health, a major matter of concern. The only thing they referenced in their response to the Throne Speech was elective surgery. Elective surgery? We're talking about a multimillion dollar system with many facets to it, a system that does need reform. Do we hear any suggestions about ways to reform it? No, Madam Speaker, no we don't.

You know, Madam Speaker, we're seeing a new feature in this Legislature, and I find it rather unfortunate because I would have expected better. That is it's not just the Conservatives in this House who are failing to be specific about exactly what their plans would be. It's the lone Liberal, the Liberal Party generally in Manitoba which seems to be wanting to hedge its bets, to refuse to say where it stands on many important social and economic issues.

You know, I was struck by a quote in the paper today, and I think it sums up the attitude they seem to be taking here in Manitoba as well as federally. It's in

reference to the Cruise missile testing issue. It actually could be in reference to many of their stands on policy, both federally and provincially. It arose because one of the Liberals, their critic, was suggesting the Liberal Party was against the Cruise missile. Well the Leader, John Turner, says otherwise, and I will quote, Madam Speaker, what he said: "We'll have something to say when we have something to say." That's essentially, I think, what is happening with the Liberal Party in Manitoba and, just because the provincial Tories have been so bankrupt in ideas, I hope that they will not, as the other Opposition Party, attempt to follow their example and also refuse to give clear direction of where they would stand, what they would do if they were in office.

I talked about what the Leader of the Opposition has said, the Conservatives and Liberals in Manitoba have said or not said. You know, we have set our clear directions in this speech, the Throne Speech, and we have said it clearly as a government right from the start. We do place a priority on economic development and job creation. We make no apologies for that. We believe that the Jobs Fund is the best example of that. We believe it is an excellent example. It's an example that should have been followed by other provinces during the economic recession, and should be followed by the Federal Government. It's exactly that kind of job creation and training initiative that we need.

Because of that, Madam Speaker, because of the Provincial Government initiatives, not in spite of them as would suggest the Leader of the Opposition, we are clearly having one of the best records of economic growth and economic development in the country. I quote from the Globe and Mail, Monday, January 26, 1987, and it said: "Economists are unanimous that Manitoba will enjoy one of the highest growth rates in Canada this year." That's not an accident, Madam Speaker. It's no accident that we were 9th and 10th out of 10 when the Tories were in government, and that we are now first and second on pretty well every economic indicator nationally. It's because of the policies of this government.

Well, Madam Speaker, we've seen in Health and Education that we do, as a government, provide priority for it. Just compare what's happening in Manitoba with 4.5 percent increases to the public school system to what is happening, for example, in Tory Alberta, where there is a 3 percent decrease and where some grants to social agencies are being cut by as much as 10 percent - 10 percent, Madam Speaker! That's the kind of alternative that we're seeing here in Manitoba as against other provinces.

You know, we do talk about fighting for fair treatment of Manitoba consumers, whether it be in regard to natural gas pricing or other issues, and we see how much that contrasts with the members opposite. But when it comes to the lending practices at the banks with farmers, defend the banks. When it comes to the pricing system operated by the oil companies, they defend the oil companies. Now when it comes to the natural gas ripoff, because that is exactly what it is, how they once again fail to take a stand fully in support of Manitoba consumers.

Yes, in Manitoba, Madam Speaker, this government, this party, also stands for social justice and human rights. We stand for it unequivocally. Madam Speaker,

it has certainly been a major part of the background and philosophy and policy of this party. I note with interest that the Leader of the Opposition made no reference to that in his comments, no reference to our commitment to improve social justice here in Manitoba.

You know, Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition criticized us for using such terms as "fairness" and "caring" and "sharing," and I make no apology for that. We are faced with difficult times, Madam Speaker, but we have chosen an economic development. We have chosen to emphasize job creation, and we have led the way in many social programs. We've led the way. For example, we pioneered in the area of day care. We pioneered in many areas related to women's rights. We brought in an Affirmative Action Program for visible minorities, for the disabled, for Native people and for women.

We've led the country in many areas, Madam Speaker, but of course they choose to ignore that. They choose to criticize it. And that essentially has always been their role as a party. It's interesting, I think, as we look back on similarly tough times, we look back to the 1930's, we look back at some of the speeches that were made by their predecessors. You look back at what they said, and you see the same situation. We saw economic crisis. We saw crisis in agriculture, and we saw posturing by the Conservatives then with no policy substance. We saw them defend the system as it exists. We saw growing problems economically which they refused to admit existed, such as the growing concentration of ownership which was a problem in the '30's and is a problem in the 1980's.

But you know, they still don't understand. They still don't understand here, 50 or 60 years later, that the New Democratic Party does seek fairness, it does seek equality, it does seek sharing. And we make no apologies for that, because we see in society - yes, even here in Manitoba - that there are continuing problems.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Brandon West on a point of order.

MR. J. McCRAE: No, Madam Speaker, just that the Honourable Member for Thompson appears to have run out of steam, and I was wondering if he would entertain a question.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Thompson.

MR. S. ASHTON: Madam Speaker, I am far from running out of steam and, if I have any time left at the end of my remarks or if they wish to give me leave to answer the question, I will be glad to answer the Member for Brandon West's question.

As I said, Madam Speaker, we do see in Manitoba many problems still in society. We still have unemployment, and it is a serious problem, Madam Speaker. No matter how good it is relatively, it is still a major problem in Manitoba. There is poverty, yes there's poverty. No matter how well we have done relatively, and we certainly have, there is still poverty in Manitoba.

There is still inequality for many people in society who do not have adequate opportunities, and there is

still a clear, clear powerlessness in society that is felt by so many people. What is needed is not the cynical politics of the Tories. What is needed is a recognition of the very real problems that do exist and, yes, a commitment to the fairness and sharing that those members opposite so cynically criticize.

You know, no one suggested, and I certainly would not suggest, that this government has been perfect, but I don't think anyone can suggest that we have not tried to introduce fairness and sharing in society. And that is because we see our role as a party as being different, Madam Speaker. We do see ourselves as being distinct from the cynical politics of the Liberals and Conservatives. We are willing to say, yes, we need to reduce unemployment; yes, we do need to work to eliminate poverty; we do need to seek equal rights for all our people.

I was reminded of that so much this past year with the passing of Tommy Douglas. In Saskatchewan, they were the one and only CCF Government for many years. They brought in the first human rights legislation, an interesting parallel to some of the issues we'll be discussing today. They pioneered in the health care system in a very similar way to the way I think we're pioneering today in the day care system, and they did bring services and economic development to all areas of that province. They were the only CCF Government. They led the way.

I see the role for the NDP in Manitoba as being the same today. I think we've already done it in many areas. I see a number of areas in this upcoming Session that we can show the way as well, in the environment and in human rights. I see so much more that can be done in the future. I see that as being our role, however, as a party, whether in government or in Opposition, and that is to lead the way in this country.

Madam Speaker, let members opposite cynically refer to our vision of a better society and our efforts to make sure they will be brought into place. They can refer, as they've done for the last 50 or 60 years, but they should look now at a time when the NDP is nationally on the rise, when there are very real possibilities, Madam Speaker, of the fact that we may have not just an NDP Opposition in Canada but an NDP Government as well.

They should be reminded, I think, of what this party stands for and what it's always stood for as it was summed up by J.S. Woodsworth. I've mentioned this before in the Legislature, Madam Speaker, but I think it should be mentioned again. "What we desire for ourselves, we wish for all." We truly believe that today, as much as we did as a party and a movement 50 or 60 years ago, and we're determined here in the Province of Manitoba to lead the way. Let the Tories have their cynical politics. We are going to deal with fairness, sharing, equality and justice in Manitoba.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Brandon West.

MR. J. McCRAE: Madam Speaker, does the Honourable Member for Thompson have any time left to entertain my question?

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member has one minute remaining if he wants to answer a question. It's his decision.

MR. J. McCRAE: Madam Speaker, I think honourable members for granting leave should the member's answer go beyond the one minute.

MR. D. ORCHARD: We didn't grant leave for that.

MADAM SPEAKER: Does the honourable member have a question?

MR. J. McCRAE: Yes I do, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Leave has not been granted.

MR. J. McCRAE: For my question?

MADAM SPEAKER: Oh, for your question, not for an extension of the member's time.

MR. J. McCRAE: Madam Speaker, the honourable member referred affectionately to Tommy Douglas, to whom I always refer affectionately as well, and the man who he tells us pioneered Medicare in this country.

My first question would be: What would Mr. Douglas be thinking today and earlier this year when the New Democratic Government of this province caused 29 beds at Brandon General Hospital to be closed, and when we now hear that about 10 percent of the beds at Health Sciences Centre are in danger of being closed? What does the member think of a government that promises to protect and enhance health care as little as a year ago, and does these things so soon afterwards? Does the honourable member criticize an Opposition for criticizing such action on the part of a government?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Thompson.

MR. S. ASHTON: Madam Speaker, I'm always somewhat offended, as many people in Saskatchewan were offended during this last provincial election, when Tories get up and try and use the name of Tommy Douglas to support whatever political arguments they have of the day.

Tommy Douglas pioneered a health care system and, if he was in this province at this present day, he would be the first to say that we need to look at health care reform that looks at the need for structural reform in the health care system, which needs a greater emphasis on community health or prevention. He'd be the first to be standing up in this Legislature, if he was a member, supporting what this government is doing in health care today.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Gladstone.

MRS. C. OLESON: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's interesting, Madam Speaker, to follow the Member for Thompson in his address to the House. I'm sorry, I have to admit this - it's rude, I know - but, generally, when the Member for Thompson speaks, I leave. But

today, I couldn't very well because I was next on the speaking order.

A MEMBER: Did he come up with his hardball statement?

MRS. C. OLESON: No, it was mostly puffery. The Member for Thompson found so little in the Throne Speech to talk about that he went into a diatribe on the Conservative Party and other parties instead of telling us, for instance, how things are going in his constituency, what his constituents want. Have they any problems? I'm sure they must have. It isn't all peaches and cream up in Thompson, I'm sure. Nothing is perfect anywhere in the province.

I think he maybe would have done his constituents justice if he'd mentioned some of these things. I don't think his constituents will be terribly thrilled when he sends out copies of that address, which I am sure he will.

A MEMBER: He'll hand deliver it all.

MRS. C. OLESON: Madam Speaker, I welcome this opportunity so early in the debate to speak on the Throne Speech and set before you some of the concerns of my constituency of Gladstone. But before I do that, Madam Speaker, I'd like to, on behalf of my constituents, congratulate the Honourable George Johnson for his appointment as Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Manitoba. I'm sure he'll be a worthy representative of the Crown in this province.

Some of the areas of my constituency, Madam Speaker, are particularly proud of his appointment because of his Icelandic ancestry. I have quite a number of people in my constituency with the same ancestry and they're proud that this is the first person of Icelandic descent who has been appointed as Lieutenant-Governor of the province.

I also wish, Madam Speaker, to wish you well and all of the members of this Assembly in the coming Session. We may differ strongly as, of course we've heard today, on many matters, but I'm sure that we all agree that, and we must all be aware, we have a right to be here representing our constituents and stating what is the best for them. We're here to seek solutions for the betterment of this province and so that all its citizens can participate equally in this province. We cannot legislate good will, and I would be the last to suggest we do, but we can and we should as legislators set an example of understanding and tolerance, and I think perhaps we could begin in this Chamber.

If from time to time, I get carried away and hurl some insults at the government, it is because of my frustration of what these people are doing to our province, and I'm here to represent my constituency and speak on their behalf.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair.)

Now in the time allocated to me in this debate, I will attempt to point out to the government some of the concerns which directly affect my constituents. If I don't get through all of them today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, then I'm sure I'll have an opportunity on the Budget Speech

and many occasions during this Session to bring these matters to your attention.

The first of these matters I would like to mention, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and point out to you is one of the most important features of my constituency is agriculture. The many villages, towns and hamlets which make up my constituency are all dependent on a strong, vibrant agricultural sector. The farmers in my constituency, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are waiting in vain for some help from this government. They're waiting patiently, some of them, and not so patiently, many of them, but they seem to be waiting in vain for something to help them in times of acute distress.

But what does this Throne Speech give them in the way of encouragement? Let's look at it a moment. There are approximately 45 lines devoted to agriculture. They talk about the uncertain short-term future. Now if the Minister of Agriculture has some information that he's not sharing with us that this is a short-term problem, perhaps he would share it with the House because, if something isn't done immediately, it will be a long-term problem for many of the individual people, individual farmers. So when he says, short term, I hope he's right, but I have a suspicion that he is not.

I quote from Page 7. It says: "Initiatives within the jurisdictional competence and financial capabilities of the province will be announced during the coming Session." When are these going to be announced? As we sit here in this Chamber today, most of the farmers of this province are planning and arranging for financing for the coming year's crop. Many of these farmers need operating loans simply to exist and they will not get them. Others will be forced to pay higher interest rates because of the risk involved in loaning money for agriculture given today's climate.

What does this government tell them? This government relates measures which were taken last year. They mentioned those in the Throne Speech, like The Family Farm Protection Act. Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like the Minister to tell us just exactly how The Family Farm Protection Act will help a farmer get a loan this spring? It may, I'm not saying that it will not help anybody through some crisis with their farm. We never did say that there was not a single soul would be helped by it. But the people who are working very hard and trying to pay their bills will not be helped by this legislation.

Then we go and we move along and we find the FarmStart Program. We heard about that last year in the Throne Speech. Mr. Deputy Speaker, can you tell us how the FarmStart Program will help any farmers get an operating loan this spring? It will certainly not help them. It might help a retiring farmer sell his land to his daughter or his son. It might, but then really, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how far can we go in really encouraging people to go into farming right now. Why should we encourage people to go into it, to a sector that is so terribly distressed that it's almost impossible to make a living at. So I wonder at the thoughts of the Agriculture Minister when he's promoting this and regurgitating it again in this Throne Speech, the same as he did last year. They're so short of programs that they have to keep saying it over and over again. I suppose it's like the old adage that the more you say it, the more likely someone is to believe it.

Now fortunately, this program shouldn't really cost the government anything because it is a loan program,

so when they talk about the Budget on Budget Day, let them not refer to the massive sums that that's going to cost because eventually it shouldn't cost them anything unless the people that are borrowing the money all go broke. In that case of course it will.

Now in the next paragraph of this document, on Page 8, there is concern expressed for a national inquiry into farm chemical prices. Now, haven't we heard that one before, if there's such concern on behalf of this government about chemical pricing - they had an opportunity last year, during the Session, quite early in the Session to approve a resolution put forward by the Member for Virden. I'll read the resolution to you just to refresh your memory; maybe the Minister might want to use it this year, and unanimously approve it, and get on with it.

It says:

"WHEREAS the Manitoba farmers are facing a severe cost-price squeeze due to high input costs; and

WHEREAS the gross income of grain farmers will decline in '86-87 due to lower export prices;" - that of course will follow on for this year too;

"WHEREAS projections indicated dramatic decline in farm net income for 1986-87;

WHEREAS farmers are unable to pass along their cost of production to the buyer;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Manitoba Government consider the advisability of establishing an Input Cost Review Commission to determine if the farm costs for fertilizers, chemicals and fuels reflect a competitive retail market situation."

There you have it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They could get with it and do that and recommend to the Federal Government, if the Federal Government needs to be involved, but not continually ask and wait for the Federal Government to do the things that they could very well do themselves.

We are encouraged to read that the government intends to streamline the operations of crop insurance. I'm sure that will be welcome, depending of course what the amendments and the changes are. But in discussing crop insurance with some of my constituents, I'm told that many farmers will not be taking out crop insurance this year. It is one added input cost that they cannot afford, and in many cases it does not do them any good. If they have an absolute complete crop failure it has some benefit, but it doesn't help recoup the input costs if you have a mediocre crop, and some of them have just decided that it is not worth it and they're not going to spend the money on it this year.

I noted also in that same document on Page 8 that they mention revisions to The Surface Rights Act. Now, depending of course on the revisions this might be very helpful. We'll have to see what they are. But will part of the package be to put the surface rights office back into Western Manitoba where it belongs? I wonder about that, and perhaps the Minister when he speaks on this debate will tell us about that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government does not seem to be fully aware of what is taking place in the rural areas beyond the borders of the City of Winnipeg, and in parts of Manitoba other than Northern Manitoba. The citizens who live in the largest agricultural area of the province are asking this government for understanding in a time of difficulty. Why is it that the people that feed us in turn must go as beggars to their

government to ask them for help? No one, I'm sure no farmer is asking for something for nothing. All they're asking is a helping hand in a crisis so that they can continue to feed us with the best agricultural products in the world.

A constituent of mine told me an interesting example about this the other day. He operates a mixed farm, and he tells me that with his beef alone on his farm, he feeds 500 people, and yet he can't make a living farming.

So let's look at what other jurisdictions have done for agriculture. Saskatchewan, with a lengthy list of programs, spent \$1.64 billion on agriculture in 1986, 6.2 percent of their provincial budget. Alberta spent 3 percent of its provincial budget on agriculture, or \$575.6 million. What did Manitoba spend on agriculture, 1.8 percent of the provincial budget, a total of \$36.5 million. We also, of course, must add that there was 65.3 million spent on loans to farmers. So the 36 million isn't the only thing that has circulated with agriculture. But the 64 million was loans.

So when we discuss the deficit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we cannot blame the agricultural sector for the deficit. We can't look at them and say you caused this deficit because there hasn't been spending in that sector that could anywhere remotely account for the deficit.

While the NDP Government tell us they care, and we heard again, care, care, care from the Member for Thompson - they're continually telling us about caring, but they do nothing in the way of financial commitment to the farm community to prove that they care. No, the deficit cannot be blamed on the agricultural sector of our economy.

The Throne Speech says on Page 7, and I quote, "The family farm and rural communities represent a vital economic and social cornerstone of Manitoba," and I emphasize "cornerstone." If the government really and truly believes this, then let them prove it by their action and not empty words.

Now, I mentioned a few moments ago what other provinces have spent on agriculture. It is interesting to note that in the meantime the Federal Government has increased its spending for agriculture by 62 percent since they were elected in 1984. This is the same Federal Government which is continually being bashed by this NDP Government for not helping the citizens of Manitoba. I would call 62 percent increase in spending on agriculture a help for the citizens of Manitoba.

We in the Opposition have been telling this government for years that agriculture is in trouble. The Minister stood up in this House the other day and said that we had suddenly realized this. I don't know where he's been this time.

The NDP Government by its inaction has increased the problem. I'm not saying they're responsible for the problem; they're not responsible for the world grain prices, I will certainly be the first to admit that. But there is a shared responsibility by the Provincial and the Federal Governments to help people in need. You help other people in need in other sectors of the economy and if one sector is under stress, then you help them out. We hear a hue and cry like you wouldn't believe if one person in Winnipeg loses a job, and nobody is saying that we are not upset about them losing a job.

But what about the farmers in the rural businesses losing jobs by the dozens? What about the services

that are put at risk in the rural areas? There is declining population and population shift in the rural areas. School divisions suffer, hospitals suffer, everyone suffers. The businesses all over the rural areas are suffering because of the lack of funding in the rural areas.

There are areas in my constituency in which no one will plant a crop this year. This was evident last year, but it is worse this year. In the Edwin-Rosendale area of my constituency - it is right on the border of my constituency, between Gladstone constituency and Portage la Prairie - I am told that there are approximately 20,000 acres that will not be seeded this year. Now most of that is rented land, and that seems to be the picture. It is rented land that is not being seeded. The people who own that land, of course they need to make a living too - now another area, one ward of a municipality where five farmers will not be planting a crop this year. That's the trend. We must remember also that, even if that land isn't planted, it still costs the farmer money to maintain it. You can't let it grow up to weeds, and you have to spray it and you have to cultivate it.

As one of the members reminded me also of course, you still have to pay taxes on it, whether it's producing anything or not. The municipal officials are concerned and very concerned, because sometimes the burden of the maintenance of that land falls back on them because the farmer cannot maintain it, and the neighbouring farm land of course must be protected.

All these situations, Mr. Deputy Speaker, impact on the fuel dealers, the implement dealers, the grocery stores, the seed-cleaning businesses. Every business in rural Manitoba is suffering because of this problem. So it is time that the Premier and his colleagues realized what's going on and did something about it.

The government has already in place a vehicle by which it could help agriculture. It has the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation. The corporation at present is overly restrictive in its eligibility requirements. MACC programs assist only 10% of Manitoba farmers but, with changes to reflect today's realities, the corporation could be more in tune with what's going on and help more people.

We all know that more loans are not the only answer to the problem, but MACC has the capability of lending money at cheaper rates than the credit unions and the banks. MACC could play a major role in helping agriculture out of a crisis. So let the Minister take a good look at that and see if he can come up with something quickly which would help before it is too late because, as I say, even as I am speaking people are being turned down for their operating loans. The time is now and not in a few weeks.

A constituent came to me only yesterday with a problem about an example of how his situation is. He told me that three years ago he had clear title to 800 acres of land. Now he owes the bank thousands of dollars, and he is faced with losing that farm. That farmer, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is sixty years old. He has put his entire working life into that farm. Where is his pension plan? Where is the justice in years and years of good farm management and hard work, and resulting in this farmer left with absolutely nothing, no land, no pension, no retirement with dignity and the possibility of keeping the farm in the family for many years and living reasonably and comfortably in his retirement.

Think of the screaming we would hear if another segment of society in this province was uprooted from their job and their home with nothing to finance them for the future, because we must remember that, when a farmer is uprooted from his farm, he is uprooted from his home as well, unlike a person who loses a job and still has their home. That's what this is all about, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's about people with problems. In this case, it's farm people.

I'd like to dwell for a few moments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the Natural Resources Department. I am not going to take a great deal of my time with this today. I will make remarks on other occasions. There is such a litany of things one could say about the Natural Resources Department that I don't think I would do it today. We'll spread it out, because it's too massive to deal with in one short speech.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair.)

I'm very concerned, Madam Speaker, with the Natural Resources Department. Its history in the tenure of this government has been dismal: a change in Ministers at least once a year, morale problems with the staff, changes in staff. Now added to this, we have a Minister who cannot make his mind up about anything, and has succeeded in creating confusion within the department.

I will cite you some examples. In my constituency, hunters and wildlife groups are upset with the designation of hunting trails in Spruce Woods Park. They fear that eventually that means no hunting in the park. They are upset, but they can't get an answer. Nobody is willing to say, yes, this is how we are going with the park in the future or, no, we are not going to restrict the hunting. They can't get any answers, and they are frustrated.

Local municipal officials in the area of Spruce Woods Park are upset with the lack of consultation. The Attorney-General leaped up in the house the other day and screamed about not being consulted on something. Everyone wants to consult, not the Minister of Natural Resources. They've learned that Spruce Woods Park has been designated as a heritage park, and they learned after it had been designated. There was no consultation with the local planning board, no discussions with the councils. In fact, the Reeve of the South Cypress Municipality tells me that he had written the Minister a letter about it in early January, and he still hasn't even had an acknowledgement of the letter. So I wonder if the Minister could get busy and at least tell the Reeve of South Cypress that he got his letter and that he's thinking about it. These are concerns to people and they want to know what is going on.

Then we come to the commercial fishing problem on Lake Manitoba. The commercial fishermen on Lake Manitoba, Madam Speaker, are waiting and waiting and waiting for this Minister to give them an answer about how their licensing is going to take place. There has been a change in their licensing. They have made a proposal. They tell me that they are unanimous in their desire to have a new and proper licensing system. They have drawn up what it should be to the Minister, and still no answer. The south basin fishermen have been ignored in their pleas about the three-inch gill net.

The Minister listens only to his bureaucrats, only to the people in the north basin of Lake Manitoba and

just merrily goes along, didn't give the south basin fishermen an answer until well after the time for three-inch gill nets was passed and received.

The Minister has caused more confusion than we would have ever thought possible on the elk-ranching subject, absolutely a disaster. It's so bad that the people in his constituency are calling for an inquiry. People on both sides of the issue are angry and want some decisive action by the Minister, but we will leave further discussion of that till a later date. I mean, it would take hours to tell him about the problems with elk ranching - (Interjection)- right. Between the two of us, maybe we'll get through to him.

In my own constituency, and the Member for Portage la Prairie raised it just a few moments ago when he was speaking, there is the drainage problem, the Overhill Drain. He mentioned the White Mud River. All these problems, they're of long standing. I don't expect this Minister to have solved them immediately. I know he is not superhuman, but at least he could start some solution to the problem and do something about it because with the weather being the way it is this spring, with continual snowstorms, we're going to be looking at massive flooding in that area once again. I don't think the Minister wants to enter into anymore lawsuits.

In fact, one of the problems with the Natural Resources Department right now - and it continually is told to me by people who phone me about drainage problems - they suggest to the department that some drainage be done which is badly needed and the department officials throw up their hands and say that we can't do anything because we're afraid of a lawsuit. Well, if you're always under absolute dread of doing anything, how are you going to help these problems?

Another subject I should raise in connection with the deficit, the government, of course, we know others have given the figures on the deficit. I won't bother at this time. It would just take the time of the House to reiterate it. But when I was thinking about this the other day, it came to me that I don't think you can blame the constituency of Gladstone for this deficit. You certainly can't blame the highways that have been built in the constituency of Gladstone.

Where is the work on the Plumas Road? You know, the other day I was up at Plumas. They opened a beautiful new hall up there. I had heard from one of my constituents that, oh, good, they were so happy, the Premier was going to come up and help them open their hall. Well, of course, we got there and the Premier wasn't there and I too was just as disappointed as those people at that gathering. They didn't see their Premier and they wanted to see him.

I was upset because he didn't have an opportunity to drive on the Plumas Road. That is one of the worst roads in this province, so we can't blame the deficit on the Plumas Road because there's been no work done there and we certainly cannot blame the deficit on the Treesbank Bridge. We have been asking for a bridge and asking for a bridge. They tell us, oh, we have to redesign the bridge. Well, we've heard today about redesigning bridges. - (Interjection)- Maybe the Assiniboine got wider at that point and they had to redesign it, I don't know. But anyway we haven't got a bridge in our area. We've been promised one for years . . .

A MEMBER: North of Selkirk, they got one they don't want.

MRS. C. OLESON: North of Selkirk, they've one they didn't even ask for.

MR. H. ENNS: Charlotte, ask for the other half.

MRS. C. OLESON: We asked for both halves at once, but we didn't get any. We didn't get a road there that - they're talking about roads there too. They couldn't decide for awhile. They blamed it on the Shilo, the DND area up there. They said, oh, they don't want it through there and they talked to the commanding officer at Shilo and he said, "We settled that long ago. It's not our fault." So obviously we were being strung a line there.

We can't blame the deficit on No. 2 Highway construction because there wasn't any there this year. No. 2 Highway is getting to be a very, very - even in the wintertime it's terrible to drive across. I dread to think of what it's going to be like when the spring breakup comes.

No. 5 Highway, three miles of pavement were put in last fall just as it froze. I don't know what it'll look like in the spring. Maybe there's something I don't know about that kind of pavement. Maybe it likes frost, I don't know. But at the very last moment of the construction period of last year, suddenly they found some money to pave that little bit of road. Very nice, I'm very grateful and I'm sure all the workers at the Carnation Plant are grateful too, because it went from No. 1 Highway just to the approach of the Carnation Plant, a piece of road that desperately needed fixing, but you can't blame the deficit on three miles of pavement.

So there are many, many stretches of road in my constituency, too many to enumerate today and I'd probably leave one out and I'd be in trouble in one community. But the point that I want to make to the Minister is that if you do not fix these roads . . .

A MEMBER: You're in a lot of trouble.

MRS. C. OLESON: Yes, you're in a lot of trouble, but besides that, they're going to cost more in the future. If you would fix them when they need fixing it's much cheaper, but I don't think that you'll be blaming the deficit on the road construction and the roadwork in Gladstone constituency. If you do, you will be misrepresenting what is going on in that constituency in the line of roadwork. - (Interjection)- No. 50 is coming along, yes, eventually. It's been years.

Madam Speaker, I would like to mention for a few moments the matters concerning the Department of Employment Services and Economic Security. That's kind of a tongue twister of a name so I get twisted up on it.

The Throne Speech refers to maintaining economic security, and on Page 17 of the Throne Speech we find three references which rather intrigue me. For example, is this government so short of material for a Throne Speech that it has to include in the Throne Speech of 1987 measures that were taken two and three years ago?

Now, I refer to the granting of eligibility for social assistance to single fathers, support fathers. Now, Madam Speaker, the Minister introduced that one year,

then it took him at least a year to put it into place, and only then when he was pressured to do so. So why would you put it into a Throne Speech? You must be short of something to put it in there.

Secondly, Madam Speaker, the Throne Speech, in the same paragraph, takes credit for the waiving of overpayment due to administrative error. This is on social assistance. Now, there is a biggy. Why would anybody take credit for doing something that they shouldn't have been doing in the first place? They shouldn't have been deducting from people's social assistance when they themselves had made an error.

Now I brought this to the attention of the Minister several times and to his department. His clients were phoning me, and on their behalf I brought it to his attention. Now he's taking credit for stopping something which he should have been doing before.

He also takes credit for stopping the liens on property. The Federal Government insisted that he do so. So why put it in the Throne Speech? Also in the Throne Speech is reference to the Canada-Manitoba agreement, \$6 million training agreement. There's no mention in the Throne Speech that \$3 million of that is federal funds and \$3 million provincial, no mention of that. It's listed as if it were all provincial. I mean it didn't say it was all provincial but it implied that.

Now, there's another point, of course, in connection with that program is that the Saskatchewan Government entered into a negotiation over a year ago to join that program and I wonder why the Manitoba Government didn't do it before. They missed out on a year's funding with that program.

Another subject I should raise, certainly I was reminded of it - I've been reminded of it several times by my phone ringing but I was reminded of it even more when the Member for Thompson got up and talked about all the sharing and caring, and particularly the caring. Now a short while ago the Federal Government increased the Canada Pension benefits to people who are disabled. Officials in the Social Assistance Department of Economic Security called it an earning and deducted it from the cheques of their disabled recipients.

Now I wonder, Madam Speaker, is this a sharing, caring government that would take away payments from people who need it so badly. Does this mean that the disabled people of Manitoba will be helping pay for the interest on the deficit? Is that what they're looking for? We're not talking, Madam Speaker, about people who are able-bodied social assistance recipients for a short term in a crisis; we're talking about people who are disabled, who cannot support themselves through no fault of their own. They had an accident or they were disabled for some other reason and they're dependent on the government for their very existence. Does it make any sense that a government that is continually talking about fairness and concern should in turn take away badly needed funds from the disabled? I find it very difficult to believe, but that was what was happening and it still happens.

Madam Speaker, there is another topic I should raise. It was raised to me by an elderly person who lives in the City of Winnipeg, and I raised it in Estimates last year. This woman was receiving SAFER - shelter for elderly renters allowance. In the meantime she had an increase of \$6.94 in her pension, and when she got

her SAFER allowance cheque later, it was reduced by \$9.00. So in order to get a \$6.94 increase in pension, she had a reduction of \$9 in the SAFER program. So naturally she was upset.

The Minister assured me that she would certainly take care of that and she would look into the matter immediately. After some conversation and telephone calls, finally in January I got an answer from the Minister's office. Now this was in August that I raised the question; I believe, according to my notes, it was the 18th of August. I was told that they were looking at the SAFER program because they had found that the complaint was legitimate. After questioning, I found out that there were many others who were having problems with this program, too. Obviously this program had not received the scrutiny it deserved to make sure it continued to be the same program that the Lyon Government intended it to be. It is intended to help elderly renters who need help.

What sort of help is that to be deducted from your payments because you get a small increase in your pension? Now, hopefully, that problem has been ironed out and we will be questioning the Minister about that and to see also if those people were reimbursed for what they had lost because of that program. I am glad the woman raised that question with me and I was glad I was able to raise it in the House and raise it with the Minister so that some steps would be taken to improve it. But it gives me an inkling of what's going on with this government; it's typical. The government does not pay attention to what they are doing and how it affects the people who they are serving. They don't pay attention to what's going on out in the real world and find out how their programs affect real people. This was just another example of what can happen if you don't pay attention.

We have, in this province, Madam Speaker, received increases to every licence, every tax, everything possible this government has increased, and yet we still have a deficit. I am pleading on behalf of my constituents, on behalf of all the people of Manitoba, that this government pay more attention to their fiscal arrangements. We are not asking them to pay out massive sums and treat every problem by throwing money at it, and that is about what they do, except in the case of agriculture. They can throw money at everything but agriculture.

So in closing, Madam Speaker, I would just remind the Minister of Agriculture that when they get around that Cabinet table and they talk about funding, keep the farmers of Manitoba in mind and, for God's sake, don't blame the deficit on them.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I wanted to take part in this debate as a result of the rest of my week being filled with other activities in the House and out of the House, and also a funeral of a very close friend of mine tomorrow, so I thought that I would take the opportunity, Madam Speaker, of taking part in the debate this afternoon.

I want to congratulate you on taking a firm hand in controlling the procedures of this House, Madam

Speaker, and I look forward to your continuing guidance and participation in the activities of this august Chamber.

I also want to pay tribute to the Mover and Seconder of the Speech from the Throne. They, as MLA's representing their constituencies, both rural and urban, certainly do credit as representatives of their respective electorate and their constituencies. I especially want to pay tribute to my colleague, the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, as my Legislative Assistant. He certainly plays a very active and invaluable role in assisting me and my colleagues in dealing with matters relating to agriculture, to land use matters and all issues pertaining to rural Manitoba. I certainly want to indicate to him that I value his counsel, his advice and his activity as a strong member of this government, and I look forward to his continued support.

Madam Speaker, I guess in taking part in this debate one should view what I would consider, as Minister of Agriculture, the most important industry in this province and that is agriculture, and take the moments and the time that I have to bring about some overview of what is occurring in the industry, where we have come from and where we should be going, and of course make some commentary on what I would consider a tired, worn out, lacklustre Opposition in this province of Manitoba, Madam Speaker. They are totally bankrupt of ideas. They have been for five years and they continue to be bankrupt of ideas, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Pembina with a point of order.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Oh, no, Madam Speaker, I wonder if the Honourable Minister might permit a question.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I will entertain a question if I have some time remaining at the end of my remarks. I will certainly entertain one at the end of my remarks.

Madam Speaker, I want to put into context where agriculture has been, where we are now, and where we are headed, and try to relate that over the time frame that I have to what has been said by members of the Conservative Party in this province, both during the election, what has been their record. Because I believe that Manitobans, as well, want to know what the official Opposition has said, what they are saying and, in fact, even when they do claim that they want to debate in agriculture and then adjourn the Assembly, Madam Speaker, one has to question their integrity and their seriousness about the constituents whom they represent.

Madam Speaker, when we came into office in November of '81 we defeated a government that supported the insane high interest rate policies of the federal Liberal administration. Farmers were being subjected to the highest rates of interest; homeowners, businessmen were subjected to the highest rates of interest that ever occurred in the history of this country; that bank profits were never higher in the history of this country during those years. And they are a group

that continually took the position that the monetary policy of our national government was the right policy; that we, in fact, should use high interest rates to force down the rate of inflation. That was their position and they continue to do that.

Madam Speaker, farmers, as well, during that period of time paid exorbitantly high prices for land. And why, Madam Speaker? Because it was their colleagues that watered down a piece of legislation called "The Farmlands Ownership Act," where they allowed speculation to occur on farm land. In fact, Madam Speaker, the Member for Portage la Prairie was one of those who came to my meetings when we were proposing changes in The Farmlands Ownership Act and said we need this kind of legislation, but I'm afraid, because it's an NDP Government, that I don't trust them, but we need this kind of legislation.

Now, Madam Speaker, I must admit that in terms of the bringing in of that legislation that we, in fact, in many instances, were close to being too late in terms of where the economic conditions were going in agriculture. We did assist some, but, quite frankly, Madam Speaker, there are many hundreds of farmers in Manitoba today who have either lost their land or are in severe financial difficulty because they ended up being fed up in the speculation that went on in farm land during the late Seventies and the early Eighties.

It's occurred in many municipalities, especially in the region of the Member for Portage la Prairie, and in other areas in and around the City of Winnipeg and other areas of the province where in fact they bid against the speculators in farm land who could see that the investment at that time was a good investment. Land prices were rising at 15 percent per year and that was the kind of investment to make.

But, Madam Speaker, do we now take money and say let's throw money at the problem, or as they talk out of both sides of their mouth? The Member for Pembina continually says that we shouldn't give money to those who don't need it, and then we have the rest of the Conservative rural caucus say we should bring about programs like they did in Saskatchewan and make a blanket program for everybody, whether they need it or not, on loans for operating capital. Let them make up their mind what they are, in fact, saying. They don't know what they want, Madam Speaker. They want a lower deficit and they want more spending.

Madam Speaker, at that time, we also had a livestock industry in chaos. We had hog producers. Only the embarrassment of the then Minister of Agriculture forced them to put in several millions of dollars into the hog industry in the early Eighties to save it from total collapse.

As well, they ruined a stabilization plan that was put into place in the mid-Seventies, got farmers out of stabilization, and said there's nothing now left for you. Madam Speaker, that was the kind of situation that we inherited in the fall of 1981, a chaos in the livestock industry, a drought in 1980, which was not their fault, but clearly the pressure on farmers was starting to build back in the late Seventies and the early Eighties. No one can deny the pressure on the farm community.

They talk about the lack of leadership, Madam Speaker. Let's just go through what has happened over the last number of years and talk about either the lack of leadership or the leadership and where the Conservatives stood on many of these issues.

Madam Speaker, we were the first government in this country to recognize that high interest rates were doing irreparable damage to our rural communities, to homeowners and to small businesses. We brought in an Interest Rate Relief Program that assisted 1,200 farmers for several years, over \$12 million of assistance to those farmers.

As well, immediately upon re-election, we brought into place a hog and beef assistance program, almost \$60 million of calf support to the beef industry in the last four years - direct income support. Madam Speaker, do you know what is occurring now? I hear that from many of the beef farmers to say that look, there isn't enough support in the beef industry from you. In fact, members opposite are cajoling us and telling us why don't you join the federal plan when their support is even lower than the provincial support under the plan as it exists today. They are the ones who are saying cut the support to the beef farmers.

What they are saying to us is that you need more support in the beef industry, and when you ask what is the rationale, well, please help me out of the dilemma that I have and the financial problems that I've got into on the grain side because I can't afford to pay much of the debt load that I've gotten into on land or on equipment to farm grain. That's where it's coming from.

There is a crisis in agriculture, and for the first time, Madam Speaker, members of the Opposition came to their senses and said, gee, we should do something about it, maybe we should have the Agricultural Committee meet. Madam Speaker, for four years in Opposition they sat there and did nothing. Not until a month or two before the election did they decide that maybe it's time to go out and talk to the farmers and just find out where things are at and maybe we will really be able to garner the kind of support that we got federally.

MR. C. MANNES: We're still here, Billy. We're all here.

HON. B. URUSKI: You're still there, and you will remain on that side of the House for many years to come, for the Honourable Member for Morris, because Manitobans know that the Conservative Party has not and cannot be honest to itself. It cannot be, Madam Speaker.

The Conservative Party - and I wonder how some of those members on that side can in fact stay with that party. How, on the one hand, can they say let's slash the deficit; let's bring some semblance of control to public spending in this province? On the one side, the Member for Morris, and now we have the Member for Pembina say, "We're going to show people how to manage," and on the other side you have the rest of crowd saying, "Spend, spend, spend, spend." They cannot be true to themselves, and that's why they sit on that side of the House, Madam Speaker.

We, as well, when I said we brought in the Beef and the Hog Stabilization Program, both long-term programs, we provided the Interest Rate Buy Down Program which saved Manitoba farmers \$18 million of the life of the loans and brought those loans down to \$13 million. We provided interest rate writedowns for MACC clients in the hope that we could embarrass

both the private lending institutions and, most of all, the Federal Government. I do not apologize at all for that, Madam Speaker, because we did attempt to embarrass them into lowering those crippling interest rates from the backs of Canadian farmers, and we have continually.

Here's the irony of the whole situation, that the Farm Credit Corporation, the lending institution of the Federal Government, continually charges interest rates between .5 percent to 1.5 percent higher than the provincial lending agency.

Can you imagine, Madam Speaker, the pressure put on a small lending agency such as MACC, and we have the entire Tory caucus saying you are not providing the service to the farm community. The agency tripled its budget during our term in office. It was virtually mothballed while they were there in government. The agency cannot provide the kind of service that is demanded of it, there is no way, and I have said before I will not even apologize for the agency. We should attempt to do more to speed up the approval process, but we will not be able to respond to the needs of Manitoba farmers of the kind that is attempted to be created by members opposite.

We, as well, provided an Operating Loan Guarantee Program running for four years, and members opposite have said we should provide more. Well, we did; we've extended it for an additional two years to continue the \$100 million Operating Loan Guarantee Program and it's continuing on for an additional two years. That was just announced, Madam Speaker. Now had we put that into the Throne Speech - well, they're just rehashing old hat; they are tired and worn out. So we did not put that into the Throne Speech.

Madam Speaker, we committed ourselves to two major programs in the election. FarmStart is there and it's a policy and it is working; it has begun.-(Interjection)- You see, Madam Speaker, they want to know how many approvals. You'll have your opportunity to talk about details of all the programs that are there and we'll certainly want to debate them. Madam Speaker, it is an option now put into place that wasn't available there before.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Pembina, on a point of order.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Since the Minister of Agriculture is so wont to share with us all the wonderful programs, could he tell us how many approvals there are under the FarmStart Program?

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member does not have a point of order. That's a question.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, we will deal with all the -(Interjection)- Madam Speaker, talk about an Opposition that is devoid of ideas! They could not, they would not support The Farm Lands Protection Act because they said it was going to do irreparable harm to agriculture. The second election commitment . . .

MR. D. ORCHARD: Billie, when you have your first original thought on agriculture, call a press conference.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, The Family Farm Protection Act that was brought in - what did we hear,

we heard we should talk to farmers - that was the opposition. We should consult with farmers. Those are the kinds of ideas as to what should be done for agriculture. MACC should have some sort of program of lending; that was the then-agricultural critic for the Conservative Party. In the last Session of the Legislature, the major opposition to that piece of legislation was the moratorium was going to create irreparable harm to agriculture. Madam Speaker, two weeks after the Session ended, the agricultural critic of the Conservative Party wrote me and asked me for a selective moratorium of provincial lending institutions. Can you imagine that, Madam Speaker? He asked for a postponement of debt on crop insurance and he asked us for a postponement of debt on MACC. If that isn't a moratorium, Madam Speaker, what is?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Virden on a point of order.

MR. G. FINDLAY: I challenge the Minister's definition of moratorium from the facts he gave from the letter.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please. A dispute over the facts is not a point of order.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I wish - I may have the letter here, and I certainly will want to - I am going to read the entire letter dated September 29 from the Honourable Member for Virden constituency.

"This is to confirm our telephone conversation last Friday about a serious lack of grain sales income for the Manitoba grain farmer because of no red wheat quota. To this point in time the income of farmers has been far less than one-half of what it should have been. Farmers simply do not have the money to meet all their financial commitments at this time. The province could certainly help the situation by delaying payment date for MACC and MCIC payments for three to six months, with no interest penalties. We urgently request your immediate attention to this request."

Madam Speaker, if a moratorium is not a delay then what is? If a moratorium is not a delay in payments, what is? The very issue that the Conservative Party in this House condemned us for putting into legislation, the prospect of a moratorium, two weeks to three weeks after the Session closed, their own agricultural critic demanded a moratorium, but not on everybody, just on the provincial lending institutions. Why not on the banks, Madam Speaker? Why not on FCC? Why not on everybody, Madam Speaker, but not just the province - just provincial lending institutions.

I want to agree with my honourable friend that the situation was very serious, and I told him that on the telephone, and I told him I would check out crop insurance because the Federal Government is involved, in terms of the payments because they do pay 50 percent of the premiums. There is no doubt in my mind, I have never hidden that and I give them full credit because they have responded to most of our requests on the crop insurance side, both feed security and other programs that we have brought in. But to make the case week in and week out, to say that it will hurt farmers; the moratorium would hurt farmers, and then yourself call for a moratorium, Madam Speaker, that

is the height. I won't even say the words of what I thought of of the Conservatives on that issue, that is really - they are really bankrupt. But on whose side did they stand? Did they stand on the side of farmers on land speculation? No, they stood on the side of speculators on The Farm Lands Protection Act. On whose side did they stand when it came to protecting the family farm? They stood on the side of the banks, Madam Speaker, because the banks wouldn't loan them money. They cannot be true to themselves on the issue of protecting Manitoba farmers.

On the question of fuel tax and fuel rebates. Madam Speaker, the province offered to provide the full benefit to farmers and in fact make a double payment; make a payment on the basis that the farmers received the benefit when they bought their purple fuel, and make a payment on last year's purchases on the income tax form. That issue, Madam Speaker, was not approved by your colleagues in Ottawa. They would not allow that system, a very simple system because the fuel charges are on the income tax form, rather than creating another large bureaucracy and a whole new set of forms. We could have taken it from the . . .

But we did in fact bring about some changes and some measurable benefit to the farm community with respect to the opening of the borders, Madam Speaker. It quickly allowed the farm community right across the province to realize the full benefit of the provincial fuel tax exemption as well as receiving one to two cents above that - the first time in about four years that that occurred, in terms of that competition that really brought into this whole area.

Madam Speaker, another issue that will keep coming up this Session that I want to touch on is the issue of the red meat industry in this province and the packing industry. It's a very, I believe, a very, very serious issue, and I believe members opposite should, in fact, be ashamed of the work that was done by their federal colleagues on this issue. Madam Speaker, in 1982 there were rumblings that Canada Packers was going to close their plant in Winnipeg. Members of this government went and began discussions with Canada Packers in early '83. In fact, Winnipeg was going to close and Edmonton was going to remain open. Within six months the decision was made by Canada Packers that Edmonton close, and it was closed, and Winnipeg would remain open.

We furthered our discussion, with not only Canada Packers, but with the entire meat-processing industry because we felt that the meat-packing industry to the stability of Manitoba agriculture and to the economy of Manitoba, was very crucial in terms of the value added benefit to that industry to our province as a whole. We then began detailed discussions with Canada Packers and other packers in this province.

In fact, Madam Speaker, in 1984 there was an application, in the summer of 1984 prior to the election of '84 to the then-Liberal government in Ottawa by Canada Packers for assistance to rebuild the entire meat-processing plant, with the exception of the beef kill. We knew then that in terms of the amount of killing capacity in the province, that the beef kill would not be replaced by Canada Packers. But the entire hog plant, the entire food processing plant would be rebuilt. That application, Madam Speaker, was rejected by the Liberals, was resubmitted to the Conservatives when

they were elected, and was rejected by the Conservative government, by your colleagues in Ottawa in '84.

Madam Speaker, within months we had an announcement by the Federal Government that we will provide \$1 million or thereabouts of assistance to a hog processing plant in Neepawa. We raised the concern to the hog promoters, to the Federal Government to say that if that went through, there could be dire consequences on the processing sector in Winnipeg. Madam Speaker, the direct result today is the closure and the loss of over 800 jobs and they can rest very clearly on your shoulders and your colleagues' shoulders in Ottawa. Madam Speaker, we have not heard one Conservative member of the Legislature repudiate those actions of the Federal Government that they in fact jeopardized over 800 jobs in the City of Winnipeg.

Madam Speaker, they support those actions. As a result, now it doesn't matter. We've lost a significant player in the processing industry in this province and in Western Canada, Madam Speaker, no thanks to members opposite and it was not the numbers of cattle or hogs. Madam Speaker, the president of Canada Packers, when he was interviewed on the radio and another newscast, said it was the volume of product that would have to come out of the plant, that to deal with the entire market, not the volume of raw product to the plant. But it was the decisions of the Federal Government to provide assistance to a plant that virtually undercut the entire processing industry in this province, Madam Speaker, clearly on their hands.

Madam Speaker, the other issue was raised by the Member for Portage about the sugar beet industry. Now let's deal with the sugar beet industry, Madam Speaker, because that certainly will be an issue. Madam Speaker, he was a year out of date. The Member for Portage didn't know - he had his years mixed up unfortunately in terms of timing.

Madam Speaker, he was a year too late because last year there was an interim program. We certainly have suggested to the Federal Government since there are tribunal hearings now on the question of a Canadian sugar sweetener policy that they do continue their interim policy for one more year because the tribunal will be reporting at the end of March to the Federal Government and making recommendations on a national sugar sweetener policy.

It is our hope and it has been our submission, as well as the producers' submission, that a sugar sweetener policy be developed in the country on the basis of a small excise tax on the basis of imports of sugar coming in. Basically what is being requested is that a small levy be placed on the 90 percent of imports of offshore sugar into Canada to help pay for a support program for the 10 percent of production that we have in this country, now in Manitoba and Alberta, since Quebec is now out of sugar beet production. So, Madam Speaker, we have said to the Federal Government, we would hope that you will hold off on your proposal of tripartite for the rulings of the federal tribunal for at least one more year, pending that tribunal hearing and pending looking at those issues.

Madam Speaker, we have an agreement from the Federal Government which said that there will be no further financial contributions required from the Province of Manitoba to the sugar beet industry beyond the 1985 crop year. - (Interjection) - Well, Madam

Speaker, the Member for Virden says you have a letter, not a statement, not an agreement. Madam Speaker, what is he saying as to the word of a federal Minister of the Crown? Is he saying that his word is no good? If that's what he is saying, Madam Speaker, let him get up in this House and say that Charlie Mayer's word is not worth the paper it's written on. Madam Speaker, let him get up and say that, because that's basically what he's saying.

Madam Speaker, another aspect to this whole question. The Federal Government saved over \$15 million on stabilization payments to Manitoba farmers which they owed for 1983 and 1984 which were not made. That was part of our agreement. The sugar beet producers came to us and said, "Please, Mr. Minister, don't hold up this interim program. We will negotiate that \$15 million from the Federal Government, forget it, forget it." So we took that requirement out of our agreement, Madam Speaker.

The Federal Government, by not making that payment, has saved more money - more money than that \$15 million in terms of the program that is in place. They can, in fact, carry on the special program for an additional year and still not cost them much more than what they have already saved by not paying those back payments which were owed the farmers under stabilization.

Madam Speaker, they are now telling us that we should join the stabilization plan and it will only cost the Province of Manitoba some \$350,000 a year. Madam Speaker, if that would be the only amount that is on the table, I believe that the Province of Manitoba would have to seriously consider that. Madam Speaker, what is at issue goes far beyond it. The next three years show a deficit in that plan in excess of \$7 million, the liability, of which 50 percent is on the Province of Manitoba, Madam Speaker, we are liable to 50 percent of those costs. So notwithstanding the program, notwithstanding if we were to rethink our position, notwithstanding the Honourable Member for Virden's comments that, oh, you've got a letter, you don't have an agreement, that we should rethink our position. Madam Speaker, we believe we have an agreement. If a federal Minister's telex to the Premier of this province doesn't mean anything, Madam Speaker, than everything that the Federal Government says doesn't mean a damn thing, forget it.

Madam Speaker, for years, members opposite said when they were in government that the Liberal Government was in fact reneging its contribution, its support to agriculture and they were right. We supported them on that. They lambasted the federal Liberals month in and month out that they were not doing enough for agriculture.

Now, all of a sudden, we have the flowery statements coming from the agricultural critic and other members saying, "Agriculture is a shared responsibility between the Federal and Provincial Governments." Since when, Madam Speaker, since when? Since as a result of, Madam Speaker, on extension programs there is no difficulty, but when it comes to income support historically the responsibility for income support to Prairie and Canadian farmers have been the responsibility of the Federal Government, not of the provinces. Does Uncle Sam ask the states of the U.S. to support the U.S. farm bill and the billions of dollars

they're supporting? No, Madam Speaker, it is only Conservatives in Manitoba and other provinces that say, oh, yes, we have to bow out and help Michael Wilson and his deficit. It is Manitoba Conservatives who will continually be so wed to their colleagues in Ottawa that they will do anything to support that position of saying, look, we have to bail out those fellows in Ottawa. They are in such a mess so we have to shift some responsibility on the provinces and let the province bear some of that responsibility.

Madam Speaker, we will resist every move as we are doing in health care and education in which the dollars are far greater. We will resist those moves to offload, Madam Speaker, by the Federal Government. We'll resist it in sugar beets. We will resist it because, Madam Speaker, we are farmers in this country.

Now, I'll tell the honourable member why. Madam Speaker, in the grain industry we have a stabilization plan in which Western Canadian farmers pay between 25 and one-third of the costs. Madam Speaker, we have a stabilization plan in Eastern Canada in which the farmers pay zero costs and they receive more than \$100 million under the Special Farm Assistance Program when the bulk of their red wheat is sold in the domestic market at more than \$6 a bushel. Is that equity, Madam Speaker? Is that fairness to the farmers of Western Canada, Manitoba? Have we heard anything from the Conservative Opposition to that kind of unfairness? We have not.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Virden on a point of order.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Madam Speaker, the Minister is talking about the amount of wheat sold to the domestic industry in Ontario. I wonder if he'd like to give us the figures.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please. On a point of order?

MR. G. FINDLAY: On a point of order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

MR. G. FINDLAY: That if he's talking about the amount of grain sold by the Ontario wheat producer to the domestic market, he might be able to give us the percentage.

MADAM SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. That's either a dispute over the facts or a question, I'm not quite sure which, but it's not a point of order.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, whatever the percentage, the sale is still there and the unfairness of the treatment of farmers in this country is very clear and the members on that side cannot stand there and defend the actions of their federal colleagues. Madam Speaker, we do need to provide greater assistance to Manitoba farmers. I have said this, but there is no provincial government that will be able to provide the kind of assistance that is necessary to carry through and save the thousands of farmers who are on the verge of bankruptcy.

Madam Speaker, we do have to look at new approaches; we can take a new approach in terms of looking at the farm community as a human resource, as a wealth of this country. Do we take the position that, well, when it comes to the figures like the Federal Farm Debt Review Board, if on the pure example of dollars and cents you are insolvent, out you go, transitional assistance, and off the farm. Do we take that approach, or do we say that if, in fact, management is reasonable and there is some hope of survival, do we do, for example, as we are doing in MACC, provide for lease-back provisions - and there is a subsidy. There will have to be a continued subsidy and we have told the banks that we will, in fact, exempt them from The Farmlands Ownership Act if they provide lease-backs for a longer period of time to farmers to keep family farmers on the land. Our entire assistance extension program is geared to financial management and counselling support for farmers in crisis, both from our home ec support program to our ag reps to our farm management specialists.

Madam Speaker, we are targeting our support program to those families in greater need. Obviously, whatever we do it will not be enough, and I don't believe, Madam Speaker, that any provincial government will be able to withstand the onslaught that will be coming in terms of the need for massive capital dollars of income support to the grain industry. We will not be able to do it. We will do whatever is in our competence and the Minister of Finance will, of course, be dealing with some measures in the coming weeks and months ahead, and we will be assisting - (Interjection) - well, Madam Speaker, we will be assisting farmers of this province. We will, and clearly by our record, we have not let the farmers of this province down. We have not let the farmers down. We are providing . . . - (Interjection) -

Well, Madam Speaker, I want to thank you for the support that you have provided this House. I want to thank all honourable members for their contributions. I hope that in the next weeks and months ahead that we will get into some very constructive debate and have some ideas on new approaches, and I believe a new approach has to be taken in agriculture. A new approach in terms of income support to agriculture has to be taken, and we will have to look at a totally new approach as to how we keep farmers on the land. And, Madam Speaker, I look forward to some new ideas. We do have some ideas, we will be bringing those forward in the months ahead, Madam Speaker. I look forward to some new ideas from honourable members opposite.

There are a number of other issues that we could have, in fact, touched on. The chemical industry and those other issues that they've talked about, there are a host of issues that I would have wanted to touch on, but certainly I will have an opportunity as the debate continues on other issues.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Lieutenant-Governor, who has come to office since the last Session of the Legislature, should be

welcomed by all of us to this House, and I hope that he serves well and in good health.

Madam Speaker, I hope that you return soon to your full health and I commend your personal health initiative in giving up smoking, and that of the Member for Portage la Prairie, and I hope that the Members for Lakeside and Kildonan and others will soon join with you so that they too can enjoy full healthy lives and those of us who don't smoke can as well.

Madam Speaker, I have put my time to good use since the Session ended early in September. I, Madam Speaker, have been listening to Manitobans and whether they are in Thompson or in Selkirk, or in The Pas or Virden, in Neepawa or Deloraine, in Gimli or in Winkler, the message is the same. They want politicians to listen, Madam Speaker, and this Liberal in the Legislature has listened and I have a message for both the government and the Opposition. They want you to stop fighting; they want the government to stop attacking the feds, and they want the Opposition to stop attacking merely for the purpose of attack. They want both of you to listen as Liberals are listening.

Throne Speeches, Madam Speaker, have generally been likened to a great bowl of porridge from which each citizen can take a spoonful, and the speech read to open this Session of the Legislature is no exception. It was even smooth without too many lumps. The Throne Speech talks of many things, some of which I can wholeheartedly endorse, and I pledge to work with the government on these initiatives to improve them if I can, and to bring them into being.

Among the things that I find laudable in the speech are the work to maximize the Manitoba business contribution to Northern hydro-electric development, and the very important work to ensure that residents in Northern Manitoba have a fair shot at the high-paying jobs associated with this development. This deserves accolades and support as the project develops.

But, while the government takes pride in the 1,100 jobs or training positions that it has fulfilled under the Limestone Training Initiative, it fails to mention the 30 percent who dropped out, or the 27 percent who failed to find employment. Who is listening to the frustration of these individuals? Liberals are, because we know that to sell false hopes of a brighter future, only to destroy those dreams, is worse than not dreaming at all. Although promised since 1981, and the act, indeed, has been ready since 1984, I am delighted that we will have a new human rights code, have courageous government, cover everyone, including those whose sexual orientation is different from the norm. They deserve our protection from discrimination, and listen to their pleas.

I am pleased, Madam Speaker, with the introduction of a new Mental Health Act to bring Manitoba definitions and practices into accord with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and I strongly support this initiative and pledge to work vigorously on it. However, what of new Mental Health Services? Manitobans have said clearly that they want community-based services. Is no one listening? Why does Manitoba have 1,198 chronic beds for psychiatric care, whereas Saskatchewan has 200? Do we lack the political will? Is it because the Brandon and Selkirk Institutions are located in government seats? Are they afraid of the political fallout? It didn't bother them at Manitoba Developmental Centre but,

of course, that was located in the riding of an Opposition member. We know that the treatment of the mentally ill in communities is far more progressive, is less costly and is easy to achieve. If you have the will to do it for the mentally retarded where the cost is high, why can you not do it for the mentally ill where the cost is low and where good mental health can be so quickly restored?

The work of the government on prime crime prevention and support for the victims of crime is a very difficult challenge and one that the government needs non-partisan support in order to move ahead on. But the government didn't listen to the cries of despair from Reston, Deloraine and Winnipeg Beach who wanted to prevent crime by keeping their RCMP detachments open. Good police services are a major factor in crime prevention and I met and spoke with these citizens and the Liberal party listened. The Attorney-General sent his staff.

I welcome proposed amendments to The Family Maintenance Act and the creation of a new Family Property Act to consolidate, modernize and simplify existing acts and, once again, pledge to use my energy and ability to produce the best legislation to respond to the concerns of Manitobans. And I look forward to hearing from the public as they make representations with the presentations of these acts, because it is in listening to the public that our legislation is enhanced.

The work of community colleges and training institutions to provide more and better training opportunities for women, for workers threatened by job displacement, for Native people and others who have been left on the sidelines of the labour force deserves support. The government deserves credit for these initiatives, but where are the initiatives to develop better apprenticeship programs so desired by labour? Does this government not even listen to those who support it? Promised legislative initiatives to deal with discriminatory business hiring practices overdue but welcome, particularly as these relate to the activities of Manitoba companies and countries which don't abide by standards of human rights protection practised in Canada. The government really should get on with this as quickly as possible. I am pleased that the government did listen to this suggestion of mine in the last Session of the Legislature.

The new Manitoba Environment Act is also a piece of legislation I look forward to contributing to. I will strongly support the government in attempts to protect Manitobans from toxic and hazardous wastes and, generally, to maintain high environmental quality standards, but they must listen to what the public is saying. Manitobans like the Environmental Council. They don't believe that citizens will be heard if advice comes only from ministerial staff.

I am also encouraged by the intention of this government to proceed on a revamping of The City of Winnipeg Act. I'm disappointed that they felt they could not proceed directly to draft legislation and feel that a White Paper is required, but I will support the government in its attempts to ensure that city government has the proper authority and responsibility for responding to the concerns in its jurisdiction and that local issues can be dealt with through streamlined local decision-making processes.

It is unfortunate however that a report presented after much listening to the people of this province is

rejected in favour of a White Paper presented by staff personnel. These are some of the things, with reservations, that I like about the Speech from the Throne, and I think the government deserves some modest praise for its initiatives in these areas, but that reminds me of a little anecdote told about Winston Churchill, who had a total lack of regard for one of his opponents in the late 1930's. Churchill asked if anyone would give him one good reason why he should have any regard for the man and got the answer, "Well, he's a modest man." To that, Churchill replied, "Yes, and he has a lot to be modest about."

The Government of Manitoba, in its Throne Speech offerings, also has a lot to be modest about. Some of the major criticisms that can be levelled at the speech consists not so much of what is there but what is not there, and there is a great deal that is not there. It is almost as if the authors of the Throne Speech tried to write the novel, *Anne of Green Gables*, without including the character of Anne.

Basically, what we have is a Throne Speech that evades, ignores and is silent about the major issues of the day. Perhaps that is too harsh. The speech is not silent about all the major issues of the day; it simply doesn't propose to do anything about the major issues of the day. The Government of Manitoba and Ministers in Manitoba are constantly concerned. They emphasize, they discuss, they study, they hope, but far too often they do not do. They do not introduce and they do not create.

There is a curious passivity hidden beyond the verbiage of the Throne Speech. It is a passivity that is related to the evasion of responsibility for getting our own House in order. This government too often foists off its responsibility to act on the Federal Government. Manitobans are tired of hearing Provincial Government bleatings from the NDP and, before them, from the Conservatives, that inaction is the fault of a stingy and uncaring Federal Government.

Yes, financial arrangements are tight and, yes, it would be nice to receive more funding from the Federal Government, but Manitoba has to get down to business within the framework of what is and stop using the dream of what might be as a reason for its inaction. Let's set our sights on the achievable rather than the mystical.

When the Throne Speech says, quote, "My Ministers are committed to standing up for the interests of Manitobans, interests which can best be served with a rekindling of this true spirit of cooperative federalism," let's realize that for the self-contradictory rhetoric that it really is. So there is nothing in the speech that persuades me that this is a government that has any plans for improved federal-provincial cooperation.

Does the government have a strategy for the agricultural depression? Not so far, and nothing in the Throne Speech convinces me that they have anything very useful for the future. The Family Farm Protection Act that they talk about so proudly is a counter-productive measure for the farm community. It only delays the day of reckoning for the farmer on the brink, and means additional paperwork and even additional costs for all farmers using the commercial lending system.

The Provincial Government's record on protection of the family farm shows their failure to follow up on

their own rhetoric for better federal-provincial cooperation. It seems to me that here was the perfect opportunity for Federal and Provincial Governments to bring their farm debt review panels together; perhaps even use existing business development mechanisms, such as business loan guarantees, to make the farm debt panels a useful force in provincial agriculture. Instead, we now have two farm debt review procedures, one federal, one provincial - neither of them effective.

This kind of outcome is what makes the average citizen despair about government. The Government of Manitoba has not demonstrated a real short-term commitment to the farm sector in Manitoba. Just compare their expenditure levels with levels in two other Prairie Provinces. Moreover, the Government of Manitoba has shown that it has no long-term approach either to the agricultural sector. A major long-term thrust for government in the agriculture area is in research, and the only thing that the Throne Speech says about research is that the Government of Manitoba will oppose any federal legislation on plant breeders' rights, pending the outcome of an informed public discussion.

The plant breeders' rights issue has been debated in Canada since about 1972. Plant breeders' rights are a fact of the research environment in both the United States and Europe, and has served to stimulate the investment of private research money into the agricultural sector. It seems to me that the government could much more profitably use its bully bull pit powers over federal legislation by saying that it will oppose the introduction of plant breeders' rights unless the Federal Government guarantees maintenance and even enhancement of existing public sector research maintenance.

The problem in agriculture is with overall deficiency of research investment, and plant breeders' rights can be used to encourage incremental investment and research if properly introduced. They should be allowed to proceed without the Government of Manitoba's stonewalling.

The Government of Manitoba curiously seems to have missed one of the major educational and social challenges in Manitoba, and that is dealing with the need for quality education in the core area schools. Many of the children in these schools come from disadvantaged backgrounds and anyone who has taken the time or has cared enough to see what is going on with our young people in the downtown area must realize that schools in the core area have to play a special and enhanced role. They must be exciting, vital centres which children will want to come to each day, will enjoy attending, where they will broaden their horizon, their outlook, their understanding and their ability.

This means a concentration of financial resources, capital investment, teaching skills and innovative education programs. Why doesn't the Government of Manitoba create a special institute or centre to give some focus to the response to our core area educational challenge? Why are we not discussing the need in this province for a longer school day? We have added program after program after program and weakened the essential programs of language arts and mathematics and the basic skills of our young people has declined.

And what of high school review? Why has everything been put on hold? Gifted children are denied program

opportunities like the International Baccalaureate Program, despite its proven track record, because this government refuses to remove the designation of pilot program. We hear the phrase used over and over again, "no excellence without equity." Well, Madam Speaker, it's time that we hear the phrase from the Education Minister and his colleagues, "excellence with equity."

Our universities need careful examination. Yes, they will be held together this year because of additional funding, but what of the future? We need a public inquiry, Madam Speaker, to discuss new directions for our universities. We must find answers to the questions: Do we have too many universities? Could there be better cooperation between the universities, particularly the three located in Winnipeg? Are our universities underfunded? Have the standards at our universities declined? Why are so many faculties in danger of losing their accreditation? Are professors giving fair value for salaries earned, in that many of them have set up independent consulting companies? Is tenure necessary now that the courts have taken a more comprehensive look at unjust dismissal and severance? Tough questions, but they must be examined.

Will the people of Manitoba actually be able to believe that this government will in fact make decisions about the Crown corporations which are in our best interests? Or will the suspicion linger among the citizens of this province that Crown corporation decisions are based also on the political interests of the government in power. The claims made in the Throne Speech do not give me any satisfaction or confidence that Manitobans will have any more control over their corporations.

Why shouldn't the government commit itself to a more open and thoroughgoing auditing process, which would bring independent results back to all party legislative committees? Why shouldn't the auditing process ensure that the standard of business behaviour of Crown corporations, whether operating here in Manitoba or abroad, is a standard that we can be proud of? Why shouldn't senior appointments to Crown corporations be renewable by all party legislative committees? We need concrete assurances and workable mechanisms to give us hope that politics will not play a major role in the decision-making process of Crown corporations.

Madam Speaker, children are dying of abuse in this province; 12 children died just last year. Our murder rate was 24, making us the crime capital of Canada, but 12 children died of abuse. Is no one listening to their cries for help? Ideologically, breaking up Children's Aid made sense because it was to give better delivery at the local level. But the budget has increased by \$10 million, and our children appear to be even at greater risk.

Where are the controls? Why is it not working? Why are teenagers placed in Main Street hotels? Why are children picked up at night by agencies, only to be released the next day? Is no one providing the service? Why are our children falling through the cracks, and yet more and more money is spent?

Nowhere is this lack of care more evident than with our Native people. These citizens, our citizens - they are ours - have the lowest education level, the highest unemployment, the lowest life expectancy. They fill our jails because of their anti-social behaviour. They suffer from alcohol abuse. This government says it supports self-government. Well good for you but, meanwhile, Ma

Mawi is the only family service agency that doesn't have mandated service. They cannot apprehend and they cannot provide protection. The Native community of Cormorant is denied control over local government affairs. Show the Federal Government that you mean what you say about self-government. Prove that you are prepared to support Native initiatives in your own province.

This government prides itself on its day care policy. And I agree. Manitoba has a very good system, but I believe it could be even better. When you look at the number of people on the waiting list for spaces, it's not hard to conclude that reforms are necessary.

The government is overlooking the contribution of private day-care facilities, properly regulated and properly inspected. They can make a solution and bring about a solution to day care requirements in Manitoba. Not every day-care space in Manitoba must be a publicly funded, publicly operated space. There is room for diversity in our system as long as it meets the standards of quality and safety.

This government promised 4,000 day care spaces in the 1986 election campaign. Last year we got 400, a mere 10 percent, but we lost 130 from independent operators. So what we really got was 7 percent of those promised. Meanwhile 500 independent spaces lie vacant.

Health care is our biggest budgetary item and the No. 1 concern of Manitobans. We know there are not enough resources to meet all the demands. We must have a coordinated approach to research and training between provinces. We can't do it all in Manitoba. We must end costly duplication of services and meaningless competition between hospitals. Manitobans don't care what hospital they go to. They just want it to be the very best when they finally get there.

We need better management techniques. This is a crucial public resource, and it must be managed in an effective way. If we are training too many doctors, then stop doing it. If we don't have enough in our rural area and too many in the city, then let's encourage those in the city, through an incentive program, to go and live in rural Manitoba. Don't introduce an arbitration process, try it out for a year and, if it doesn't work exactly as you feel it should work, throw it out. Make some long-term plans for our health care system.

Madam Speaker, we need an appeal board for our home care patients. This government took over the services of the Winnipeg Orderly Service, because they said it failed to meet the expectations of patients. Well they're still not being met by the government. These patients depended upon others for things that you and I take for granted, must be lifted in and out of their beds and toileted. They have little dignity in their lives. They have simply asked for an appeal board to whom they can bring their complaints. I know we could find citizens who would sit on the board for nothing. It would cost us nothing, but this government will not listen.

Madam Speaker, the largest unlicensed day-care centre in Manitoba is in the halls of the Winnipeg Convention Centre. The only creative idea this government announced between Sessions was a wide-open gambling policy. They are not listening to the people of Manitoba, who tell Liberals that this does not reflect the values of Manitobans. It is a tax on the poor and the dreamers; it is destroying our social fabric; it is a bankrupt policy.

I find it astonishing that, in a Throne Speech in the current public environment of growing mistrust for government, government institutions, politicians and public servants are not addressed. The basic question of their relationships to the citizens are not addressed. It seems to me essential that the public trust in government must be restored. Many steps are required to do this. Reform of our Election Finances law is one such reform, new legislation governing conflict of interest situations, a stronger role for the Provincial Auditor, more resources and ability for members of the Legislative Assembly to exercise an oversight on functions of the government departments. New and higher standards of accountability for public servants in the exercise of their duties, and legislative review of senior government appointments are other worthwhile initiatives.

These are but some of the initiatives that the Government of Manitoba should be taking to restore public trust in the basis of our democratic system. This whole area is ignored in the Throne Speech. It's a pity, because it is an area of reform that our citizens would gain a great deal of satisfaction from and would not create major new expenditure initiatives.

The people are talking to this government, Madam Speaker. They can't speak directly to the Premier and his Ministers, so they speak to the Liberal Party as I travel this province because we are willing to listen.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to end this speech with a proposal. This Legislature needs to encourage the NDP to rename itself. It is certainly not new. The Throne Speech was very old and tired. It is not democratic and it's not much fun, so it can't be a party.

Madam Speaker, I propose a competition. Some of the words that have come to mind for "N" are such things as "never, nebulous, nepotism." For "D", words like "dull, despondent, depressed" come to mind. For "P", I would suggest "passive, paternalistic, pompous, pious, puritanical."

By the end of this Session, I am sure that we can come up with a label which represents their lacklustre performance and I will even give a prize, Madam Speaker, a two-litre bottle of "No-Name Cola" because it sells for 29 cents cheaper than a two-litre carton of 2 percent milk.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I wonder if we could call it six o'clock and I could carry on with my speech?

MADAM SPEAKER: Agreed? (Agreed) The hour being 6:00 p.m. then, the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 . . .

MR. J. DOWNEY: Madam Speaker . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: In the name of the Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The House is now adjourned and stands adjourned till 1:30 p.m. tomorrow. (Wednesday)