

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, 15 February, 1988.

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 Finance.

HON. E. KOSTYRA: Thank you, Madam Speaker.
I'd like to table the report required under section 20 of The Public Officers Act, regarding a statement as to fidelity bonds.

MADAM SPEAKER: Notices of Motion . . . Introduction of Bills . . .

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MADAM SPEAKER: Before moving to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery where we have 47 second-year Business Administration students from the Assiniboine Community College under the direction of Ms. Laurie Murray. The school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Minister of Employment Services and Economic Security.

On behalf of all the members, we welcome you to the Legislature this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MPIC - resignation of Mr. Silver

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation.

I wonder if he can indicate whether there has been any change in the senior staff or senior officers at the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister responsible for MPIC.

HON. B. URUSKI: Yes, Madam Speaker, I wish to confirm that Mr. Silver, the president of MPIC, has resigned his position as president by mutual agreement. Madam Speaker, Mr. Silver indicated that he wished to pursue other career options.

Madam Speaker, I have prevailed on Mr. Silver to stay on in a consulting capacity basis to facilitate the

transition for a new president. As well, I wish to continue to use his experience and his advice and his knowledge in the day-to-day workings of the corporation over the next year, as well as having him appear before the legislative committee. Madam Speaker, Mr. Silver has worked very hard for the corporation through this very difficult period of time during the Canadian insurance business.

I wish to announce that Mr. Graham Lane, vice-president of Public Investments of Manitoba, has been assigned the responsibility of chief operating officer of MPIC. As well, Madam Speaker, I hope to make an announcement on the appointment of the replacement of Mr. Silver within 60 days.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, there have been times in the past, I think, that we have objected to ministerial statements being on issues that weren't very major or important topics, but surely this is an instance in which it called for a ministerial statement or an open admission of what was being done with respect to the senior officer of a major Crown corporation, the second president to leave the corporation in two years. The corporation's in a shambles . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Does the honourable member have a question?

MR. G. FILMON: . . . the corporation rates are skyrocketing, the corporation has lost close to \$150 million in the past two operating years.

Why did the Minister not have the courage to make a public statement, a ministerial statement acknowledging this major change in the corporation?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, we've had discussions on this matter over a period of time and over the weekend we finalized those discussions. I have now confirmed those discussions and we are continuing to . . .

MR. G. FILMON: Were you hoping we wouldn't ask?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, my honourable friend wishes to create whatever picture he can. The fact of the matter is — (Interjection) — Madam Speaker, the same Opposition was crying for Mr. Silver's resignation, that he was incompetent and the like. Madam Speaker, now they are trying to paint the reverse picture.

MR. H. ENNS: Now we want you to come clean, Billie.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I have indicated that the terms of the agreement we have reached with Mr. Silver - mutually agreed to - that he will be available to committee in the Legislature.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, was the board consulted in this decision for Mr. Silver's discharge?

Was the board in any way involved? Did they make a recommendation that Mr. Silver ought to be discharged from the corporation?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition - maybe he should go and see a doctor or someone. He doesn't hear very well and I will repeat again, Mr. Silver has not been fired.

Mr. Silver and I have reached a mutual agreement, and in fact — (Interjection) — Madam Speaker, the board is aware that Mr. Silver has intentions of leaving the corporation. Mr. Silver is not leaving the corporation in terms of assisting the corporation for at least another year. He will be here in a consulting capacity to the corporation over the transition period, Madam Speaker, and he will be here for another year and he will be here appearing before committee.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, I think that the House will understand our concern about the role of boards, these publicly appointed boards of directors, given the problems that we've had in corporations such as the Telephone System.

What I'm really attempting to find out from the Minister responsible is did the board have any recommendation with respect to whether or not Mr. Silver's employment with the corporation ought to be terminated?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, Mr. Silver's employment with the corporation was not terminated.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, Mr. Silver obviously left the corporation or has agreed to leave the corporation under certain terms and conditions. Whether the Minister calls that termination leaving, discharge, or whatever he wants to, Mr. Silver is no longer going to be there.

Madam Speaker, my question to the Minister is: Will he make public the terms and conditions of this agreement for Mr. Silver to leave the corporation?

HON. B. URUSKI: Yes, we will, Madam Speaker.

Autopac - appearance of senior officials before committee

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, just one other question with respect to the Minister's initial answer.

Am I to understand that Mr. Silver will appear before the committee of the Legislature reviewing MPIC, the committee on Crown corporations? Will we also have the opportunity to ask other senior officers who are also to be left in place obviously and who will be continuing in the active operating role of the corporation? Will they also be allowed to answer questions at that committee?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I have asked Mr. Silver to remain as a consultant to the corporation because we value his advice and experience. In fact, Madam Speaker, the nature, and I don't have the details of the contract, but essentially the nature of the arrangement is fairly close to the contract arrangements that he had with the corporation in his present capacity as chief executive officer.

Madam Speaker, I'm not at liberty to dictate what terms any committee of the Legislature will in fact employ in terms of who is or who will speak. Madam Speaker, members of the executive staff of the corporation will be at the committee meetings.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, I regret that the Minister is suggesting that once again the Opposition and the media are going to be muzzled from having questions answered by senior officers of the corporation.

Madam Speaker, I have one final question for the Minister. He has rightfully stated that we were very critical of Mr. Silver's appointment as president of a multimillion dollar insurance corporation, an individual with no previous insurance experience, with no senior corporate executive experience.

Madam Speaker, is the Minister now acknowledging, after two years of major losses in which the corporation lost close to \$150 million in total, that the appointment of Mr. Silver was absolutely inappropriate and wrong and very costly to the ratepayers of MPIC?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, absolutely not.

Madam Speaker, I think the Leader of the Opposition, if he has done some reading as to what has happened in the insurance industry across this country - I already told the Leader of the Opposition what the situation was in Ontario two years ago, in 1986, when the industry lost some \$350 million, underwriting losses in the auto insurance industry in Ontario. Madam Speaker, in terms of Manitoba, just to give the Leader of the Opposition some information - I think he misses the point of what the principles of insurance are. Insurance . . .

MR. H. PANKRATZ: I think you missed them, Billie.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I think members of the Opposition should be aware that the principle of insurance is to take premiums from a wide sector of clientele, pay for the claims out of those premiums and spread the rest.

The fact of the matter is, Madam Speaker, last year the corporation had just under 250,000 claims registered against it. Of those, Madam Speaker, about 35 percent of those claims were at-fault claims. As a result, there were over 160,000 claims registered against the corporation in which liability was not at issue. The cost of those claims had to be paid. The cost of those claims exceeded the premiums that the corporation took in. Those are the underwriting losses, Madam Speaker, that are there. No one hid those losses. They have been confirmed by the Provincial Auditor. They have been confirmed by the outside auditors of the corporation, Madam Speaker. The annual report will be debated at Public Utilities Committee, and all the questions that members have will be answered, Madam Speaker.

Autopac - setting of rates

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, is the Minister aware that Mr. Dribnenky, the vice-president of Finance, when he appeared before an Ontario legislative committee, in response to a question comparing MPIC's rates with

Ontario private insurance rates and experiences, said that it was unfair and not reasonable to make the comparison between the experience of the private insurance corporations in Ontario and that of MPIC in Manitoba?

Is he also aware, Madam Speaker, the vice-president of Finance said that the reasons we are in a catch-up situation today in Manitoba's rates are because political interference prevented the rate structure from keeping pace with the Claims section.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I want to indicate that Mr. Dribnenky and all executive staff of the corporation will be at the committee.

Madam Speaker, I also want to indicate, as I did on Friday, to the Leader of the Opposition, it's very easy for him now to indicate and "to say in retrospect," here's what happened in terms of claims. What he is not saying, Madam Speaker, is how many claims will there be in the next 12-month period. Madam Speaker, if he knows that, then he could predict what the underwriting loss of the corporation will be. He has not been able to predict that.

In fact, he had insurance experts commenting on the reserves of the corporation in 1986, indicating that a \$72-million reserve of the corporation was too high, Madam Speaker. That's what he said, and he said we should, in fact, reduce those reserves by \$20 million, cut insurance premiums by 10 percent during that period of time. If they were elected, they would have done that. If that would have happened, Madam Speaker, premiums would have had to have risen at least by an additional 10 percent and more, because there would have been the loss of income from those two years. That was his prediction in hindsight, Madam Speaker.

Manitoba Committee of Wife Abuse

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Kirkfield Park.

MRS. G. HAMMOND: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Community Services.

On Friday, the Minister announced the transfer of the crisis line for battered women from the Manitoba Committee on Wife Abuse to Klinik for a three-month period. Will the reported \$20,000 for the interim crisis line be funded out of the \$189,500 government grant given to the Manitoba Committee on Wife Abuse?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Community Services and Corrections.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: No, it will not, Madam Speaker.

MRS. G. HAMMOND: To the same Minister, Madam Speaker, will the Minister guarantee that all the Winnipeg service providers have a voice in the long-term planning for the permanent location of the crisis line?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: First of all, let me say how pleased I was that we had complete agreement by MACWA, by Klinik, by all the service providers and by the volunteers who were previously manning the line that, in the interim

period, Klinik was the best place to put the line to have the security and the stability of the crisis line for abused women. So we had a mutual agreement of all parties that is what we should do, while we determined where the best permanent location would be for that line.

We have, Madam Speaker, set up a committee that has all of those groups represented on it where MACWA, Klinik, and all of the service providers will be meeting over the period of the next three months. We will be jointly and cooperatively determining the best permanent placement for the line.

MPIC - resignation of Mr. Silver

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister responsible for the Public Insurance Corporation.

It obviously came as a shock today to most Manitobans to learn that the president, in whom this government had such confidence, had somehow or other come to a mutual agreement. Would the Minister inform us today just who initiated the discussions which led to the mutual agreement?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister responsible for MPIC.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Silver and I.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

A MEMBER: Suddenly came together.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: With a supplementary question to the same Minister, with part of the discussions between Mr. Silver and himself mutually arranged, did they include Mr. Silver's recommendations to change senior members of MPIC and the government's reluctance to do so?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, my discussions and my relationship with Mr. Silver in the time that I have been Minister have been very, very close. There have been times that we have had a lot of discussions on staff and all other matters. But to say that one of those issues is that issue, Madam Speaker, no, that's not the case.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: A question to the same Minister, Madam Speaker.

Considering the losses of MPIC over the past two years in particular, will this Minister guarantee that in his 60-day search, he will in fact be searching for people who have knowledge in the insurance industry, and not be used to hire another civil servant?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I want to indicate that the individual who has assumed the interim chief executive operating officer's role has had experience in the insurance industry.

Federal Budget - health care

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

MR. M. DOLIN: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I am somewhat surprised that I haven't heard any questions from the other side about this issue. I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Finance regarding the federal Budget.

I'm wondering about the effects of the federal Budget on the Province of Manitoba. Dealing with health care, is there going to be a continuing decline in the cost-sharing or is there any indication in this Budget that there will be more money for Manitoba health care?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. E. KOSTYRA: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I don't think all members, particularly members on this side, find the issue of health care in Manitoba a funny, laughing matter. But in response to the question, I think myself, along with other Manitobans, we're disappointed in the federal Budget because there has been no improvement in the ongoing situation of deterioration in support for health care in our province by the Federal Government.

We are now in a situation with respect to support through EPF, through the Established Programs Financing for Health and Higher Education, that we're down from a level of about 42 percent of our revenues coming from the Federal Government supporting those areas down to the figure of the low 30's percent level.

So we are seeing a continuing deterioration in an area of high priority to Manitobans and that is going to make our job that much more difficult as we look at the needs of the health care system and the overall approach to the Budget that we'll be bringing down on February 26.

Federal Budget - medical research facility

MR. M. DOLIN: A supplementary to the Minister of Finance.

Was there anything in the federal Budget that he's aware of dealing with the medical research facility for Winnipeg? Will it take place within our lifetime or is this just another pre-election promise?

HON. E. KOSTYRA: I'm not aware of any further announcements with respect to that facility in the Province of Manitoba. I note that it was announced some time ago, but I'm not aware of any specific plans to start construction in that facility.

As my colleague, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology, the other day commented, we are also concerned about areas regarding job creation and the fact that there have been no funds going from the Western Diversification Fund to Manitoba for projects that have been advanced by the province, that have been advanced by rural municipalities and advanced by the private sector.

We would hope that we could work cooperatively to get some of these projects in place so that we can

take advantage of the opportunities that exist in all areas of the health care field in Manitoba for further job creation in our province.

Federal Budget - gasoline tax

MR. M. DOLIN: A final supplementary, Madam Speaker.

The 1 percent per litre gasoline tax put on by the federal Minister of Finance, I'm wondering will there be any specific benefit from this amount, either to the people of Manitoba by way of additional money for Manitoba or to the farmers of Manitoba in some of the rebate systems, or is this discriminatory again against western farmers?

HON. E. KOSTYRA: Obviously the issue of the increase in the gasoline tax has caused members opposite some concern.

The reality of that tax, Madam Speaker, is that it does impact Western Canada and a province like Manitoba in a manner that is far greater than in Eastern Canada because of the kind of distances that we have to deal with in Manitoba, and even though — (Interjection) — In fact, there's a lot of concern, I'm sure, in Brandon with higher gasoline taxes. I know the Member from Brandon West is somewhat agitated with the actions of his federal colleagues in imposing this tax.

But the reality is that it does impact Western provinces, a province like Manitoba, far worse than provinces in Eastern Canada — (Interjection) — and even though the member from Sturgeon Creek says, baloney, the reality of distances here is that it does impact. Even though there is a rebate system for farmers, it does work itself back into the system of transportation that all farmers have to face, and the costs that farmers have to face in Manitoba. It is discriminatory towards a province like Manitoba, even though members opposite don't want to acknowledge the actions of their cousins in Ottawa.

Provincial judges - part-time

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Norbert.

MR. G. MERCIER: As a result of the five judges, Madam Speaker, I would ask the Attorney-General how many part-time judges' services will no longer be required?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

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

We had indicated some months ago that in fact we're phasing out the services of part-time judges, hopefully entirely over the next short period of time.

There will, in the next few months, probably be the requirement for some use of part-time judges, but our hope is to totally eliminate that in accordance with the basic wishes of most legal associations. How many? I don't know the precise number, but it would be all of the part-time judges who are currently involved with the province. In fact, I think very few people have actually been getting any work this year as part-time judges.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, could the Attorney-General indicate why none of the names of any of the part-time judges, some of whom have served since the 1960's, were on the list of judges he forwarded to the Bar Association for consultation?

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Certainly all of those people have served well and honourably.

When it came to the list for new appointments however, we were quite frankly looking to make the judiciary in Manitoba a little bit more representative of the population of Manitoba. There were, in that group, no women. There were, in that group, no people of Native descent, and I don't think there was a single person with any kind of legislative experience in that group. It was determined — (Interjection) — Madam Speaker, it was those kinds of determinations that went into the decisions.

I might add, Madam Speaker, that there will be some flexibility at the other end, with respect to supernumerary judges. There will be several supernumerary judges, people who are retiring as judges who will continue on in the range of half-time, maybe a little more or less, for a period of several years. That will provide some of the flexibility that is important in the judiciary, keeping in mind that there were serious problems to the legal profession with respect to the utilization of part-time judges.

The fact of the matter was that it was a bit awkward for people one day to be judging a case against another lawyer, and the next day to appear in court, side by side with that other lawyer, fighting a particular case. That is the reason why we wanted to get away from that practice.

Provincial judge - appointment of

MR. G. MERCIER: I have a supplementary question to the Premier, Madam Speaker.

The speculation, Madam Speaker, is that the judge who was unanimously rejected by the Manitoba Bar Association executive was Mr. Corrin, the former NDP MLA in this Legislature, whom the Premier wouldn't even appoint to this Cabinet.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

May I caution the honourable member of Beaushees Citation 321.(1), which says: "All references to judges and courts of justice of the nature of personal attack and censure have always been considered unparliamentary." Can the honourable member please keep that in mind while he's asking his question?

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, I ask the Premier: Did he make a deal with Mr. Corrin to get him not to run in the last election on the promise that he would receive the first provincial court . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

The question is definitely out of order.

MPIC - resignation of Mr. Silver

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for MPIC.

Would he inform the House if the discussions between himself and Mr. Silver regarding his departure from MPIC began prior to October this past fall?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I am not going to start getting into any kind of a witch hunt, like the honourable member is insinuating in his remarks.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Madam Speaker, my next question, which obviously I will get the same answer to is: Was it initiated prior to the end of January? I want to know. Is this a political decision or a financial decision to have the chief CEO leave MPIC?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, it was a mutual decision.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Would the Minister repeat that question, please? I couldn't hear it.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, the decision was reached by mutual agreement.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Madam Speaker, does this mean that the Minister responsible for MPIC is now saying that he asked for Mr. Silver's resignation because of the public reaction he got to the increased Autopac rates?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, absolutely not. It's only members opposite who can put those kinds of insinuations to those questions.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Madam Speaker, this is not an insinuation. This is not a frivolous question. When were the discussions between this Minister and the chief executive officer of MPIC first initiated, before Christmas or before the end of January?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I have been Minister since my appointment, and I meet on a regular basis with the chief executive officer and members of the executive on an ongoing basis.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Well, Madam Speaker, if the Minister refuses to answer that question, perhaps he will give us some insight into how he intends to replace Mr. Silver. Will he assure us and the people of Manitoba that the search for the new chief executive officer will be limited to those people who have experience and qualifications within the insurance industry?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, the search will include people who have experience in the insurance industry. In fact, Mr. Silver's replacement in the interim has insurance experience.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Ste. Rose, with a final supplementary.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Madam Speaker, I want to make it perfectly clear and give the Minister one more opportunity to make it clear to the people of Manitoba. Why did this chief executive officer decide to leave, and when was the topic first brought up? It is critical to know whether it was a result of the financial situation of the corporation, which would have been known in October, or is it as a result of the political heat that this government received since Christmas?

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, Mr. Silver is seeking other ventures. We've had discussions. I have asked him to stay on for an additional year in an advisory capacity, Madam Speaker, to the corporation. What our discussions were over the last number of months, Madam Speaker, I will not be sharing with my honourable friend.

Federal bill - plant breeders' rights

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. C. BAKER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Agriculture.

Presently, there is a bill being debated in the House of Commons in regard to what they call plant breeders' rights. Could the Minister of Agriculture tell us what this means insofar as farmers in Western Canada, all farmers of Canada for that matter, and what methods he plans to use to make our representation known in Ottawa?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. L. HARAPIAK: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I am pleased that I've had the opportunity to respond to a question in agriculture, and it's interesting to note that it is members from this side who have had to address the interests of the rural community while members opposite are pursuing frivolous matters.

Yes indeed, Madam Speaker, a bill has been tabled in the federal House dealing with the question of plant patenting. To the credit of the federal Minister, he gave considerable notice that it was his intention to do so, even though there had been considerable controversy over patenting of prescription drugs. Given that experience, he chose to proceed with this matter, has tabled legislation before the House.

We have written to all of the provincial Ministers of Agriculture, to various farm organizations, to federal members, to the federal Minister of Agriculture himself, asking to have this withdrawn because it is not, in our view, in the interests of agriculture in Manitoba. It is not, in our view, in the interests of agriculture in Canada. It will indeed simply force the price of inputs of agriculture up in the same manner that the bill dealing with the prescription drugs has caused an increase in the pharmaceuticals.

Youth - employment training

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In Thursday's Throne Speech, this government pointed out that: "Unemployment among our young people remains unacceptably high. Despite our ongoing leadership there is more to be done." Madam Speaker, there certainly is much more to be done, and I'd like to ask the Minister of Labour why this government enters into apprenticeship contracts with young people which it has absolutely no ability to fulfill.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

HON. M. SMITH: Madam Speaker, the member asked the question alleging some failure to comply. I would ask that she be more specific in her question. I really find it very difficult to know what specifically she's getting at.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: With a supplementary question to the same Minister, why did this government enter into an agreement with Michael Allemeier beginning in October of 1985 which was to include 2,000 hours of instruction, and that young man has yet to receive one single hour of instruction.

HON. M. SMITH: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for giving me those specifics, and I will certainly undertake an inquiry and make the information available to her.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Will the Minister also undertake to find out how many young people have been betrayed in this manner by the Department of Labour?

CRTC - telephone rates

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

MR. M. DOLIN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to direct a question to the Minister responsible for Manitoba Telephone Services.

My understanding from an article I read is that Callnet (phonetic), which is a telephone company in competition with Bell, I understand, had a decision from the CRTC regarding its customer-dialed account services being a basic service. The federal Cabinet has now extended this 90 days to allow them to do it. I understand this will affect rates across Canada and could set a precedent for differentiating between long-distance rates and home-basic rates. I'm wondering, will this affect MTS, and how.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister responsible for — (Interjection) — order please.

HON. G. DOER: Madam Speaker, the Provincial Government supports the original decision of the CRTC,

and is opposed to the federal Cabinet changing the original decision of the CRTC to allow for a period of time, some six months, competition in long distance. We are joined in the Manitoba Telephone System by consumers across the country, with the Consumers' Association of Canada, in lobbying the Federal Government to stick with the original CRTC decision to not have competition in long-distance calling.

The Consumers' Association of Canada have rightly pointed out that the experience in the United States with competition in long distance has meant that rates have tripled at the local consumer level and indeed have gone down for companies, particularly large companies that do a lot of long-distance calling. We in Manitoba are opposed to that and we support the Consumers' Association of Canada, and indeed wrote the Federal Minister not to extend by special Cabinet permission a decision that was already made by the CRTC consistent with no long-distance competition in this country.

MR. M. DOLIN: Just a final supplementary to the same Minister, Madam Speaker.

My understanding then, if Callnet wins, our home-basic rates could go up substantially. I can see the Member for Sturgeon Creek doesn't care too much about this. I'm sure most of the senior citizens in this province, who pay basic-home rates and don't make a lot of long-distance calls, would care a lot, Madam Speaker. I'd like to know whether this decision will affect the basic rates?

HON. G. DOER: Madam Speaker, we know that in a city of comparable size to Winnipeg, I think Des Moines, Iowa, is in the mid-20's for the rates compared to, say, Winnipeg that is at about \$8.65. So we do know the effect of long-distance competition. There are winners and usually those are businesses that have a lot of long distance calling in their particular scope. And there are losers and that is the local consumer base.

Madam Speaker, it's a particular acute issue, I think, for western Canadians because of the distances we have in this country and because of the distances in Western Canada. We know that in the Western United States those are the people that have been the losers even more so than, say, in the Central or Eastern United States and it would be the same thing in Canada. That's why we believe we should have a made-in-Canada solution to the telecommunication's area.

MADAM SPEAKER: Seeing no more questions, Orders of the Day.

NON-POLITICAL STATEMENT

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Thompson.

MR. S. ASHTON: I was wondering if I might have leave to make a non-political statement, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Does the honourable member have leave? (Agreed)

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

This past weekend we saw the holding of the 17th Annual Winter Carnival in Thompson.

One of the main features of the winter carnival is the Okimow of the North event which features 13 events, and I'm pleased to report that this year's winner is Robert Ducharme of Thompson - with his brother actually - Paul Ducharme of Leaf Rapids and James Buck of The Pas being the runners up.

I'm sure all members of this House would like to extend their congratulations to the winners of the event and also to the Thompson Kinsmen for once again being the excellent host of a very fine winter carnival in Thompson.

Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

MADAM SPEAKER: On the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for St. Vital, the Honourable Member for Burrows has 19 minutes remaining.

MR. C. SANTOS: Madam Speaker, as the many different countries in the world progress in their states of development from agricultural to pre-industrial to now, the post-industrial states of development, due to the greater mobility of people all across the globe, there are many countries in the world now that have developed multi-ethnic populations, with many different people of various origins, languages, culture, beliefs and expectations which appear strange to the originally homogenous population in many countries in the world today.

As a result of that multi-ethnic society, there is developed a natural domination subjection kind of relationship between a dominant elite core group in society which extends the sphere of its influence to all the institutional centres of decision-making power and opted us the institutional gatekeeper of the success and failure of individuals by laying down certain rules unconsciously and subconsciously systematically discriminatory, thereby precluding the advancement of these minority groups according to their abilities and skills to the various professions, occupations and lines of work in the society.

Therefore in the search for a continuing guide for a certain rule to social harmony and peace in many of these different countries, we have adopted certain moral basic precepts and principles.

Among those are those embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in our own Charter of Rights and Freedom, section 7 and section 15, to the effect that there will be certain guidelines as precepts to normative rules guiding conduct.

For example, the first revision of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights - *Tout le monde est né libre et égal en dignité et droit.*

Our own Charter of Rights provided in section 7 "Legal Rights" provision that "Everyone has a right to life, liberty, security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice." The Charter of

Rights, "Equality Rights" section 15, provided that "Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability."

Madam Speaker, all this points to one basic rule in all of the multi-ethnic countries in the world today and that is the high value of equality of opportunity. Equality of opportunity means not merely a moral rhetoric, but it is also an empirical condition observable across society. Equality of opportunity, in its empirical sense, means that every individual should be allowed to become what potentially he could possibly become according to his talents, abilities and skills without any artificial institutional or attitudinal barriers. The moment any particular society precludes the advancement of individuals to their natural potential there is a serious violation of the equality of opportunity principle in our society.

How then can we make the public service organization conform to this basic rule of equality of opportunity? How can there be a full development of the human potential, despite all the institutional rules that we have set up that had unwittingly and systematically discriminated against some of our minority groups? The answer I think, Madam Speaker, is that we should have a kind of public service which is exactly a mirror image the population makes in the society at large. If they are the exact mirror image of the population, those public officials in government, whether they are appointed or elected, will become sensitive to and will be responsive to the needs of the population which they are supposed to serve.

In order that we may be able to make our public service the exact mirror image of our society and our population, we still have the obligation to retain the high level of performance and competence for entry into the public services. Therefore, we should continue to recruit people and to hire them according to the triple criteria of predictive competence of honesty and of integrity in the performance of their public duties.

Competence means that there is the ability, the skill and knowledge that is required by the job. Honesty means truthfulness, sincerity of purpose, bona fide, in the performance of their public duty. Integrity means a life-long moral commitment to the demands of a just, upright, equitable decision-making in public responsibilities of positions of power.

Madam Speaker, let me conclude by saying that unless we develop a public service, which is the mirror image of the population at large, there will always be some systemic unintended, but real, discriminatory practices to the detriment of our people. We have to develop a public service that is compassionate, caring, just, and should be responding to all the demands of all the various groups in our society. This is essential if we are to have a civilized and truly democratic society.

I thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

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

It's a pleasure for me to have an opportunity once again to address the Throne Speech. I think it's one of the great privileges of being a member of this Chamber that we are able to stand up and debate in an atmosphere of freedom, to be able to state our views proudly, positively at any time. It's a statement of the strength of the democracy in which we live and I'm always pleased to be a part of that.

Madam Speaker, I also want to take the opportunity to welcome back all of the members of the House. Regardless of our duties and our responsibilities outside this House, I think that there is probably no greater responsibility as an elected public official than to be here to represent the views, the concerns of all of our constituents, and to raise issues to public attention in this Chamber.

Madam Speaker, last Thursday, the government offered its vision for the future, the immediate future of Manitoba. They spoke in glowing terms of sharing a vision, of meeting the challenge of economic justice and equity and fairness. Those are fine-sounding phrases, worthy goals, noble sentiments. Unfortunately, from a thorough review of the content, they aren't matched by a great deal of substance. There may be fine-sounding phrases, but there aren't many commitments to action.

They talk of vision, but the vision is blurred and the direction is uncertain. Rather than a vision, it's an illusion. Rather than commitment to action, it's damage control.

The Throne Speech is an opportunity for the government to set out its plan and clearly establish its objectives. Once again, this government has let that opportunity slip away. This government is masking the lack of initiative with verbal sleights of hand. They say this is a new agenda for action. Madam Speaker, it's no agenda at all. They say that Manitobans have a dream, but the people say this government is a nightmare. We have the right to expect more. The people of Manitoba demand to know what course this government is plotting. The NDP have had their opportunity and once again, Madam Speaker, they've failed.

Last Friday, this House had the unique opportunity to listen to a member of the NDP rake his own government over the coals or, in the Premier's words, offer constructive criticism. The Member for St. Vital, a former Speaker of the House, an individual who has listened for 16 years to many Throne Speeches, felt compelled to rise and challenge the lack of substance, the lack of purpose, the absence of any clear concrete action. The Member for St. Vital noted quite accurately that this government has mismanaged finances and wasted our resources on poorly conceived stopgap measures.

(Mr. Acting Speaker, C. Baker, in the Chair.)

In that debate, the member shared with us his experience with long-time New Democratic Party members, former supporters of this government. He spoke to us of NDP members who failed to renew their memberships, of others who had ripped their memberships up. He also spoke of some - and I'm sure that there are more than he cares to admit - who have stated that they will never again vote for the NDP party in Manitoba.

To illustrate his concern, the Member for St. Vital pointed to Autopac. As he so clearly set out, this government's current difficulties are not limited to this issue alone. Autopac has been a lens that has focused public discontent, but it has only been a symptom of even deeper problems. I suspect, Mr. Acting Speaker, that his pleas will fall on deaf ears.

This government has become so accustomed to extravagances of Crown corporations that a mere \$63 million loss in one year is, to them, acceptable. Maybe this is acceptable when compared to the government's skyrocketing deficit, the sorry shambles at the Workers Compensation Board, or their reckless adventures in the reinsurance business. But who are they kidding? Of course, this is not acceptable. It's outrageous, it's disgraceful, it's irresponsible, and it's a betrayal of the public trust.

For all the well-turned phrases contained in the Throne Speech, they have rejected openness and honesty as they have demonstrated in question period last Friday and again today. Let them remember, Mr. Acting Speaker, that they are judged by their actions, not their words. They are judged by what they do more than what they say they will do. It is indeed unfortunate for Manitobans that not only does this government lack credibility, it lacks vision.

I am not referring to the oft-repeated cliches that they dust off every year or so. No, Mr. Acting Speaker, I am talking about a vision that is in touch with the hopes and the aspirations of Manitobans. As we move towards the 1990's, what Manitoba really needs is an open and responsive government that will listen and act according to the public's wishes and in its best interests. Mr. Acting Speaker, we will see to it that that need is fulfilled.

For example, as government, my colleagues and I would not be afraid to publicly review increases in utility rates, because I believe that surprises, unpleasant surprises, on telephone, hydro and Autopac bills are no longer a laughing matter. We will welcome with open arms businesses who want to invest and help Manitoba grow, and we will never turn a blind eye on an opportunity like free trade that will have such a positive long-term effect on Manitoba.

There are some who will disagree with our policies; that is their right. We cannot be all things to all people. This government has tried and the results of their failures are evident every which way you look. There are many who want a clear, comprehensive vision of the future. They want leadership instead of vacillating compromise. They want potential realized instead of pipe dreams verbalized. They want what they are entitled to, a better future, a future rich with opportunity and prosperity. If we are to be criticized for taking a stand for defending our policies and offering a vision, so be it. The people of Manitoba deserve to know what we believe in.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we do have a vision for Manitoba. It is not clouded by uncertainty, not hampered by doubt, not mired in past bungling. It is real, concrete, and we believe what the people of this province deserve. There are some who will view our conviction with cynicism and disbelief, and who can blame them, considering the diet of deception served up by this NDP administration for the last six years. To those people, I say we can and we will do better. As well, there are

those who have become so disenchanted with government interference, bureaucratic red tape and fiscal disasters that they have lost faith in the whole political process. To those individuals, I can only ask that they be patient, that they recognize that this is a province with a future, that there is hope for tomorrow if we work together today.

This NDP Government looks backwards in horror and with a certain degree of embarrassment, I am sure, for they are unable, even unwilling, to look forward. Of course, they do have a goal, but, Mr. Acting Speaker, that's not the same as a vision because their goal is to remain in power. They've forsaken what's good for Manitoba, good for our children, our elderly, our working men and women, in their obsession with staying in power. It is this government that has created this abysmal situation. They are the ones who have squandered our opportunities and our hard-earned advantages. Therefore, Mr. Acting Speaker, I am now clearly stating that we will do everything possible this Session to force this NDP Government to go to the people in a general election.

Mr. Acting Speaker, they must not be allowed to make Manitoba an economic wasteland. They must not be allowed to drive away our entrepreneurs, our young people, our farmers, our professionals, our hard-working citizens who ask for nothing more than the opportunity to use their time, their energy and their talent to help our province prosper and grow. Mr. Acting Speaker, the people of Manitoba deserve better, and we are resolved on this issue and we are serving fair warning. This government will go.

Mr. Acting Speaker, recently, I gave a speech in which I described my hopes, my vision for Manitoba. I mentioned opportunity and growth. I noted our historical self-reliance and our will to succeed. I spoke about my own parents and their dreams. I told my audience that my parents, when they came here with my grandparents, they asked for nothing but a chance - not a guarantee of success, just a chance. I asked my listeners to respond to the current challenges, to strive and not to lose faith in the potential of this province.

When it was over, a young man came up and he asked an important question, and although he phrased it delicately, it amounted to: what have you done for me lately? I told him of our repeated challenges to the wasteful and destructive policies of this NDP Government. I pointed with pride to our legislative record. I mentioned our public meetings throughout the province last year when we listened to the problems and the concerns of Manitobans, and pledged to bring those concerns to the attention of government.

My young listener was polite - he recognized our role in Opposition - but he made it clear that he was looking for something more concrete. At that point, I realized that he knew nothing about the achievements during the Roblin and Lyon years. We've come to take those accomplishments for granted.

In the Sixties, a Progressive Conservative Government built the Floodway and the Portage Diversion, built the Concert Hall, the Planetarium, the Museum of Man and Nature, reorganized the public school system, designed and built community colleges in Winnipeg, Brandon and The Pas, established new universities in Brandon and Winnipeg, created the provincial parks system and established the most diversified economic base of any prairie province.

Just as a footnote, we left behind a total debt smaller than the deficit run up by this government in any one of its years in office. During the Seventies, our record was equally impressive. A Progressive Conservative Government provided low income renters with financial assistance in the form of the SAFER and SAFFR Programs. We created CRISP, the child-related income support payments, to help needy families. We led Canada in the reform of family law legislation and the establishment of a Canada-wide maintenance enforcement system. We reduced personal income tax, we reduced corporate income tax, and we maintained health and social services at a higher level than they are today. And, Mr. Acting Speaker, we accumulated a total debt in those four years less than the deficit of any one year of this administration.

I think my young friend had a new perspective on what it means to be a Progressive Conservative.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we point to our record with pride. I can't help but wonder what the members opposite will say in 10 years time about their years in government. I doubt that they'll remember deficits, taxation increases, closed hospital beds. Perhaps they'll look to the management of Crown corporations. — (Interjection) — No? Well, what about their efforts to clean up the environment? No? Well, maybe they'll find something else about which to brag. For their sake, I hope their listeners have a short memory. Fortunately, most of our citizens do not have short memories. They remember and will continue to remember. — (Interjection) — Now, Mr. Acting Speaker, of course the Member for Flin Flon starts to talk about what would we do differently. Well, let me tell you, Mr. Acting Speaker, I'm now going to depart from the traditional response to the Throne Speech.

Historically, the role of the Opposition is to point out areas of weakness in proposed legislation, to be a watchdog of the public interest. I think we've performed that function very, very well, too well it seems given the howls of indignation from the government over issues like MTX, Workers Compensation, the botched ICG takeover, MPIC, the hospital-bed closures and so many more. We have absolutely no intention of lessening our vigilance in this regard. Their incompetence, which has become legendary throughout this province and beyond, will continue to be raised to public attention.

Mr. Acting Speaker, not only are we prepared to say that this Throne Speech provides no real answers, no solutions to the problems facing Manitoba today, I am also prepared to demonstrate that there are measures within the grasp and jurisdiction of this government that are not being implemented to solve the real problems which face Manitobans.

There is no question, Mr. Acting Speaker, that this government's most glaring errors are evident in its handling of Crown corporations. Our Crown corporations are in chaos. The government has politically manipulated their board appointments and their selection of their senior executives, and they're doing it again today.

The government has imposed its own political agenda on their priorities and the setting of their rate structures. As a result, the short-term goals of this NDP administration have been achieved at the expense of the long-term best interests of the people of Manitoba and the ratepayers of this province.

Public accountability for these actions has been deliberately clouded by the Premier and his Ministers. They've done everything possible to prevent public access to vital information, information that would uncover how our Crown corporations are spending our money, and to what extent they're placing it at risk.

But just how far is this government prepared to go to hide this kind of information? Well, we've seen over the past couple of weeks, Mr. Acting Speaker, they're even prepared to go to court, willing to use the law of the land to prevent us and the people of Manitoba from receiving information that is rightfully ours in the first place.

That's precisely what they did to prevent the release of the 1985 Kavanagh Report that was done for the Manitoba Energy Authority and Manitoba Hydro, a report that questioned the government's decision to advance the construction of Limestone. The Manitoba Energy Authority and Manitoba Hydro prepared responses to that report, and Kavanagh answered their concerns. Yet, obviously the details of this exchange were too controversial, so they had to keep it all quiet. They even went to court to accomplish that purpose.

Is it possible that Kavanagh told the government that their decision to advance Limestone was a bad decision? Is it possible that he may have warned them about another potential multimillion dollar loss in yet another Crown corporation? The fact that we may never know the answer to those questions is concrete proof of the cloud under which this Crown corporation is now having to operate.

To lift this cloud of uncertainty, Manitoba Hydro must be brought under public scrutiny. No longer is it satisfactory for the utility to operate at the whim of government. Ratepayers deserve the full protection that legislation can offer, and are entitled to more than a hit-and-miss examination of their affairs. To ensure openness and public accountability, we will bring forward an amendment to The Public Utilities Board Act, which will require Manitoba Hydro to appear before the Public Utilities Board to justify every single rate increase, because I believe that every time a Manitoban is asked to pay more for their hydro, they should know why.

The situation is even worse at the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation where cover up and political interference has reached an all-time high. For two years, thanks to the Member for Gimli, the NDP hit reinsurance losses that grew from \$12 million to \$36 million. They didn't respond to the increasing claims that had grown by 17 percent in two years. Why, because there was an election on the horizon.

There isn't a driver in Manitoba today who's not paying the price of this government's interference and they have every reason to be outraged with increases that range from 24 percent to 109 percent - 24 percent to 109 percent as a result of their political interference. Yet the government continues to stonewall the media and members on this side of the House when questioned about Autopac losses and rate setting over the past three years.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the Minister doesn't even have the courage, doesn't even have the guts to come forward with a statement, a ministerial statement, when his chief executive officer is no longer there at the corporation. The president is gone, the chief officer of

the corporation is gone, and he doesn't think that that's important enough to make a statement publicly here in this House. That's absolutely shocking and shameful, Mr. Acting Speaker. The government continues to stonewall everyone, the media, the public and the people on this side of the House, whenever they're questioned about any issues to do with MPIC.

As a final blow, as a final irony, Mr. Acting Speaker, the government is now refusing to allow MPIC's vice-president of Finance to answer questions before a committee of the Manitoba Legislature, despite the fact that he has already appeared before a committee of the Ontario Legislature answering those same types of questions that we want to have the right to ask him here in Manitoba. That's shocking and reprehensible, Mr. Acting Speaker, and these are the kinds of desperate tactics of a government that has lost the confidence of the people. But let's be realistic.

As Opposition members, we can't solve all the problems of NDP mismanagement. That won't stop until this government is stopped. What we can do is ensure a more open and accessible government. There are steps that we can take in this Legislature today that will ensure that problems are identified promptly and dealt with immediately before they get too far out of control. Manitobans want their government to do something about Autopac today. They aren't looking for a short-term bribe; they're looking for a long-term answer, and we're ready to provide some answers now. MPIC needs to be reminded of its mandate of providing service at cost - nothing more, nothing less. MPIC must get out of the high-risk foreign reinsurance business, out of the general insurance business; and they must examine options for providing more competition to lower auto insurance rates in Manitoba, today and in future.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we will replace the politicians and the political hacks on the board of directors with experienced and knowledgeable business people. MPIC is a multimillion dollar corporation and it deserves to be run like one. Most important to the pocketbooks of Manitoba drivers, we will bring forward legislation that will require MPIC to apply to the Public Utilities Board for all changes in Autopac rates. Never again will this or any other government be able to hide massive losses and buy votes with the taxpayers' money.

Mr. Acting Speaker, it's time that we opened up both of these corporations to full and complete public scrutiny. They must justify their actions, their investment decisions and their corporate priorities. They must be accountable not only to a government that wants to manipulate them for partisan purposes but to their real masters, the people of Manitoba.

Furthermore, Mr. Acting Speaker, we will be bringing forth an act to repeal the establishment of the Manitoba Natural Gas Corporation and the loan authority approved for that corporation. During the past year, we followed the contortions of this incompetent government in its misguided attempt to take over ICG. It became abundantly clear, Mr. Acting Speaker, that this government knows absolutely nothing about negotiations. They're totally ignorant of sound business principles and practices.

Their incompetence in negotiations led to the loss of Alcan, of the IMC Potash Mine and the Western Electric Grid in the past. Now it's led to the permanent

abandonment of the ICG takeover, fortunately for the people of Manitoba. Fortunately for the people of Manitoba, their incompetence this time prevented us from making a huge error, because make no mistake, Mr. Acting Speaker, another Crown corporation in the hands of this rag-tag bunch would have ended up costing us tens of millions of dollars of additional losses of taxpayers' money.

Mr. Acting Speaker, public pressure and the daily pounding of Opposition's comments brought them to their senses. When they took the responsibility away from the Member for Transcona and gave it to the northern lights from Churchill and Flin Flon, the deal was botched and the end was inevitable.

But we can still hear the plaintive pleas of the Member for Flin Flon, the Minister of Energy and Mines, saying that the government was right to try and take over ICG. He said it last Friday in question period. He claimed that the expenditure of \$1.3 million, according to the news reports - not the money that he says, \$589 thousand - but that expenditure of up to \$1.3 million was good for Manitobans. That's what he says.

Mr. Acting Speaker, this government would have us believe that we should attribute the current lower prices for natural gas in Manitoba to this exercise, as he called it, in taking over the gas company.

This government claims that the lower prices have nothing to do with their removal of the \$12-million tax on the pipelines. It makes you wonder, Mr. Acting Speaker, how did Ontario achieve those same low prices without threatening to take over the gas company and without spending \$1.3 million. How did Ontario manage to achieve the same low prices?

The terrifying thought that we have is that this government has learned absolutely nothing from this experience. They would buy the gas company tomorrow, regardless of the cost to the people of Manitoba, simply because it fits with their ideology. Their members continually pass resolutions at every annual meeting of the NDP in Manitoba. Mr. Acting Speaker, we will be introducing an act to prevent that insanity from happening and taking away the legislative authority from these people.

You know, I haven't talked, Mr. Acting Speaker, about morality and the ethics of this government. This government is determined to keep vital information from the public and to hide its political interference and manipulation. It's also a government that has allowed its members and senior staff to profit unfairly from its inside knowledge and political relationships.

Quite frankly, the appointment of a provincial judge with close political ties to this government against the unanimous opinion of a committee of the Bar Association raises the question of propriety. But that action pales by comparison to some of the things that were done in the past three years.

We first had the incident of Doug Davisson, an Assistant Deputy Minister, drafting the terms of reference and recommending to Treasury Board a contract with WMC Associates, a consulting firm in the city. After he had done that, within a month or two, he left the employ of the government and proceeded then to get a job with WMC Associates and fulfill the remaining terms of that contract with that corporation and then he filled his company's workload for the next year with consulting contracts with this government and its Crown agencies.

Then, of course, Mr. Acting Speaker, we had the case of the former Clerk of the Executive Council, Michael Decter. What did he do? He resigned from the government to go directly into a consulting firm, the October partnership, and took with him a \$45,000 contract to study taxation in this province. When that was through, he got a contract from the Minister of Health to study health care in this province.

A MEMBER: Well, how about Andy Anstett?

MR. G. FILMON: And then, of course, we had the case of the former Minister of Natural Resources. While a Minister, he negotiated with a northern fishing lodge the terms and conditions for the renewal of a licence for an airstrip in Northern Manitoba. He then retired to the private sector where he got a contract as a consultant acting on behalf of the lodge to negotiate a huge settlement with the government to buy out the lease. Can you believe that?

Then, finally - because there are so many more, I don't want to go on. There are so many more of these kinds of incidents, Mr. Acting Speaker. We had the incident of the Minister of Health. He announced his resignation from Cabinet last August so that he could take on a position as executive director of the Manitoba Health Organizations. But that position, of course, required him to lobby the government on behalf of the hospitals of this province.

You might think that's strange, Mr. Acting Speaker, because he knows all of the budget projections for the department. He knows the priority directions that the department has chosen. He knows all of its expansion plans and all of the inside information. Obviously, he's a good choice for the Manitoba Health Organizations. He has a lot of information that can be very, very valuable to them. But obviously as well, Mr. Acting Speaker, it's a clear conflict of interest.

I suggest to you that all of the cases that I have cited contain conflicts of interest. For four years now, we've been trying to teach members opposite what constitutes a conflict of interest because they think that it's just show and tell. All you do is get people to put their assets, list them publicly, and they no longer have a conflict of interest. They don't understand that government contracts and insiders dealing with governments constitutes a clear conflict of interest. Mr. Acting Speaker, I say "hogwash," and I use that term because it's a term that the Premier seems to be fond of.

To protect against this kind of abusive power, we will be bringing in legislation on ethics in government during this Session. As well, I want to assure the people of Manitoba that we are committed to opening up the deep, dark caverns of government secrets and exposing them to public attention if the information has not already been shredded, because all of this information that is contained within government files that we have been talking about and asking questions about is important to the public and the public has a right to know. Therefore, we will introduce a resolution to proclaim The Freedom of Information Act.

How long has it been since that was passed? How long has it been since this government brought in that Freedom of Information Act? They began to talk about

it way back in 1983. They eventually introduced it into the House and passed it in 1985. They passed the act in 1985. At the time they were debating in the House, they called it "sunshine legislation." They said it would open up the deep dark secrets of government to the people of Manitoba. Here we are, two-and-a-half years later, it has still not been proclaimed. The secrets are still hidden and that sunshine has never shone into the files and the secrets of this government.

Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, we will proclaim that legislation when we become government and we're going to put them on the spot to see what their convictions are, because we're going to introduce a resolution authorizing the proclamation of that Freedom of Information Act.

There's another thing that the Premier could and should be doing right now if he believed in open government, government that represents people. He would be calling a by-election in St. Boniface, absolutely.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I've urged and I'm sure that most Manitobans would prefer a general election, the sooner the better, but since the Premier won't screw up his courage, at the very, very least he has to ensure that all constituencies are represented in this Legislature.

The former Member for St. Boniface gave him plenty of time. In August, he announced his intention to resign. In September, he resigned from Cabinet. In November, he took the position as executive director of the Manitoba Health Organizations. But, Mr. Acting Speaker, this Premier and his government have so little concern for the people of St. Boniface; in fact, they've shown callous disregard, and they instead have urged the former member for St. Boniface not to resign before the start of this Session. So, as a result, St. Boniface remains unrepresented.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, just as they have muzzled their senior officials at MPIC by not allowing them to come before the Legislature committee, just as they have muzzled Manitoba Hydro by not allowing it to release reports on the justification for advancement of Limestone construction, they are also muzzling the people of St. Boniface, allowing them no representative in the Legislature during this Session, and that's a crime. St. Boniface residents are concerned whether it be skyrocketing Autopac rates, rising hydro rates, closure of beds at St. Boniface Hospital, they have concerns. They have issues that need to be raised in this Legislature, and they have concerns that ought to be expressed.

What about Meech Lake? Isn't it ironic, Mr. Acting Speaker, that groups from Quebec will come to our legislative committee hearings on Meech Lake and St. Boniface doesn't have a representative who can speak on their behalf on Meech Lake, when it's debated in this Session?

This isn't the New Democratic Party. This is the non-democratic Premier, that's what we have here in Manitoba today.

Mr. Acting Speaker, not only has this government not been open, it has not been in touch with the real concerns of Manitobans. When we're kind, one might suggest that the NDP has confused priorities. Realistically, they simply have the wrong priorities.

Many times in the past, this NDP administration has taunted us, challenged us: What would you do differently? How often have we heard that, particularly

from the Minister of Finance and the former Minister of Finance? Well many times we've told them what we'd do differently and they've ignored our advice. How many times in the past six-and-a-half years have we told this sorry excuse for a government the risks of foreign borrowing? How many times have we argued it? I know I have. I know that the former Member for Turtle Mountain, when he was finance critic, argued about this government's policies on foreign borrowing. I know that the Member for Morris, as finance critic, has told this government that it's on the wrong track with foreign borrowings.

We've all said: Get out of foreign borrowing. It's an uncontrollable risk that history has shown will cost you big money - big money - and you'll lose big money because of it. And it hasn't just been us. The Member for The Pas says, "We're listening now." But over the past six-and-a-half years, virtually every brokerage firm, every securities firm, every financial analyst, the government's own consortium of financial analysts and economic advisors such as Professor McCallum have said it's dangerous, it's costly, it's a bad practice, and the government is dead wrong by going into foreign borrowing as heavily as it has.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair.)

What did the members opposite say over these past six years? Just as their advisor during the Schreyer administration said - Mr. Cherniack - he said, "We know better." He said "We're smarter than all of those brokerage houses; we're smarter than all of those financial advisors." The former Finance Minister, now the missing Minister from Rossmere, he said it was a smart practice. The Member for Concordia, that new super Minister in charge of Crown corporations, last year at committee defended the practice of Manitoba Telephone System in foreign borrowing despite the fact that they had lost \$19 million in the previous fiscal year on foreign borrowing. He still said it was a good policy. The Minister of Finance, the current Minister of Finance, has staunchly defended foreign borrowings. He said that they know better than we do, that they know better than all the experts.

According to Midland Doherty, we now have the second-highest per capita foreign debt of any province in the country and the second highest proportion of our overall debt in foreign borrowings of any province in the country. And the bottom line is, according to a recent newspaper article, that our foreign exchange losses today stand at \$1.49 billion.

Madam Speaker, you can imagine my surprise when I read the article that detailed the \$1.49 billion. And it had certain quotes from our Finance Minister, because this was the person who for years now has said foreign borrowing is healthy, that a certain mix of foreign borrowing isn't bad, that they are going to, in the long run, do well by this practice, that they are saving money for the people of Manitoba. Here's what he said on January 24 after being shown the results, the ravages, to our budget and our economic and fiscal future of the \$1.49 billion loss.

I quote: "Finance Minister Eugene Kostyra said the province is taking steps to protect itself from foreign exchange losses." He said it will soon announce a Swiss franc loan in which the interest is payable on the

Canadian dollar equivalent. He said another loan in Japanese yen has been converted to the more stable U.S. dollar, reducing the province's potential losses. "The province has also begun to amortize its foreign exchange losses over a period of several years so that sudden losses do not occur when loans come due." And here is the punch line, Madam Speaker: "As well," Kostyra said, "the province is trying to minimize its borrowing in offshore markets."

Can you believe it? Six-and-a-half years later, six-and-a-half years after they've been hearing it from all the experts, from people on this side of the House, after they have run up \$1.49 billion of taxpayers' money in losses on foreign exchange, he says, "Well, we've now learned and we're going to get out of foreign borrowing."

Can you imagine, Madam Speaker, what services could have been provided for Manitobans with that \$1.49 billion? How many hospital beds could we have kept open? How many crisis shelters could we have funded? What programs could we have provided for the farmers of Manitoba? How many RCMP detachments would have been kept open with that \$1.49 billion that he now recognizes was as a result of a poor policy decision on the part of this administration?

Madam Speaker, it's no different than MTX. We criticized the formation of MTX way back in 1982. The ink had not even been dry on the Order-in-Council and we were asking questions why. Why would you go into a foreign market? Why would you set up a foreign export corporation for the little old Manitoba Telephone System? What expertise, what technical knowledge do we have that we can export in a foreign country whose business practices, whose religious customs are very unusual, unknown to us, and we would be in competition with the giants of the world, the IBM's, the Bell Internationals? Why would we think that we could go there and outsmart those people? We were asking those questions.

We said it's a wrong decision. There wasn't one penny invested; there wasn't one penny lost to the Telephone System. In principle and philosophically, we quarrelled with them and said it was a bad, bad move, but they didn't listen. We were saying to them the mandate of the Telephone System is to provide the best possible telephone and telecommunication service at the least cost to the ratepayers of Manitoba. That's what our mandate is. Why do you want to go and expand it? Why pass the Order-in-Council? Why pass the change to the act to allow for it? Why?

Well, Madam Speaker, as it turns out, in retrospect, they were being faced with a problem they didn't want to solve, they didn't want to face. Their senior officials in the Telephone System were telling them that we were in the midst of a recession. We were in the midst of a recession and people weren't asking for telephones to be installed anymore in Manitoba at the rate that they were before, so there were going to be massive layoffs. They estimated perhaps 200 or 300 people laid off. So they went to the politically-appointed chairman of the board, Mr. Miller, and he went to the Minister responsible, the Member for Brandon East, and he said we've just come into government and we don't want to have to face the layoff of 200 or 300 staff at the Telephone System, but we've got a better idea here. Somebody in the corporation says that if we set up a

corporation to do business in Saudi Arabia, we can employ all those people - no layoffs - and the best part of it is, Mr. Member for Brandon East, we are going to make millions on this. We are going to make millions on this.

Madam Speaker, I don't know of one person in this province who believed that the Telephone System could make money on the MTX adventure. That was before a nickel had been invested. That was before a penny had been risked. People said it doesn't make sense. You aren't going to be able to go over there as the little old Manitoba Telephone System and beat Bell International and beat IBM and beat all of those international corporations.

Madam Speaker, we weren't armchair quarterbacks then and we aren't armchair quarterbacks now. We were asking about the Reinsurance Division of MPIC in committee in 1983, in 1984, in 1985, but nobody on the government side was listening. The Member for Gimli was too busy covering up the losses from everybody, including the Auditor.

We all recognize, Madam Speaker, that the road back to prosperity is not without problems. Manitobans have in the past responded to challenges and they can do so again, but they must have leadership. Over the past six years we've all had to plan better. We've all had to work more efficiently, get the job done better at less cost. We've all had to adapt and reorganize our priorities to keep our households, our businesses, our family farms running on an even keel. Heaven knows, ask every one of my colleagues who's an active farmer today and he'll tell you what it's like. Once the price for your commodities that you're selling drops in half, your income takes a massive cut - the changes you have to make, whether it be in your lifestyle, the way you operate your farm, or any of the other things. Ask every businessman who went through the recession of the early Eighties who dealt with double-digit inflation all the way upwards of 20 percent, ask them what they had to do to change their operations. They all know that you have to make changes. You can't always keep spending. Yes, we've all adapted, everyone except the NDP. Sure, there's never enough tax money to go around to pay for every single demand, but why would you cut hospital beds in order to give grants and contracts to political friends? That's the priorities that they're dealing with.

Madam Speaker, as Progressive Conservatives, we will live within our means and I can assure you that it's not done by squandering hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money in one fiasco after another, whether it be MTX in Saudi Arabia, MPIC in foreign insurance, Manfor, Flyer or any of the other absolutely wrong-headed fiascos they've got us into. It's not done by building unnecessary bridges in the Premier's constituency.

Madam Speaker, it's also not done by building unnecessary bridges in the Premier's constituency. — (Interjection) — Madam Speaker, I acknowledge that I have made an error. The Member for The Pas just reminded me that the bridge was actually built in the constituency of the Member for Gimli.

So, the Member for Gimli now is responsible for MPIC's reinsurance losses as well as the bridge to nowhere in Selkirk. Madam Speaker, I wonder if, as a result of that, that will be sufficient grounds to have him removed from Cabinet.

Madam Speaker, it's also not done by trying to purchase a gas company that no one wants or needs. It's certainly not done by giving handouts to every special interest group that has a political interest in the NDP. These are not the priorities of the people of Manitoba; these are the political priorities of a government that is prepared to bleed us dry just to hold on to power. This government has become obsessed with power, with its perks and its privileges. They've forgotten that the positions that they temporarily hold are held in trust for the people of Manitoba. Madam Speaker, it may be repetitious but I believe it bears repeating.

Last year when I responded to the Throne Speech, I noted 12 months of irresponsible spending. I noted this government's callous disregard for a rising deficit and the increased tax burden thrust upon every single Manitoban. I noted their lack of support for our vital agricultural economy and their failure to meet the rising demands in the areas of social services, education and health. I listed item after item reflecting their arrogant belief that the money tree would forever bloom, that the well would never run dry. I warned that the wage earner and the employer, both large and small, would have to dig ever more deeply into their pockets to finance these NDP misadventures and poorly conceived stopgap measures. I suggested that NDP policies would, if not changed, damage not only the future of our province but our present as well.

Our warnings were disregarded; our views were dismissed as mere rhetoric. Members opposite continued to do what they had done, reacting rather than acting, moving from one crisis to another without a clear vision of what they wanted or what was best for Manitobans. They promised in 1987, in the Throne Speech of 1987 - and I'll quote it, Madam Speaker - they promised to enhance the quality of life in Manitoba. Is that what they had in mind when they raised taxes by 20 percent? Is that what they had in mind when they raised Autopac rates by 24 percent to 109 percent?

Perhaps, Madam Speaker, the problem is language. We don't share the same common language. We're not understanding what they mean. Madam Speaker, we have NDP newspeak in a lot of this information that we've been given, and as George Orwell did in his novel, "1984," to explain his version of newspeak, perhaps the NDP should provide us with an appendix at the end of their speeches, their Throne Speeches, and their public announcements and policy statements, just to explain exactly what they mean.

For instance, fiscal responsibility, what does that mean? Raising taxes. Raising taxes by 20 percent in the last Budget; that's what they call fiscal responsibility. Crown corporation accountability, you know what that means to this government? Another level of bureaucracy, another department, the Department of Crown Investments, Crown corporations, more bureaucracy to separate the Minister responsible from the Crown corporation. But here's the best one, Madam Speaker. Do you know what they mean by health care reform?

A MEMBER: Bed cuts.

MR. G. FILMON: Closing hospital beds. As a columnist noted in the Free Press on February 5, statements

rationalizing their Autopac flip-flop fall into the category of creative communication. Instead of creative solutions, the government is now looking for creative excuses. If there's an art in politics - and we all know this - if there's one essential skill, it's in the area of communication. How many times have you heard at political meetings, "We're not getting our message across. We're not getting our message across"? Governments must be able to say what they mean, although I think many people assume wrongly that they mean what they say. However, in the case of this government, they must be able to explain better their policies and their objectives. Even the NDP recognize the importance of this vital aspect of good government. They're so convinced of this that they've hired a whole battalion of PR types. — (Interjection) — The Member for Concordia is sitting back now and chiming in, but he's the one who dubbed them the "apple polishers." He's the one who identified that there was an increase of 132 political support staff as a result of this government's actions in its first four years of government. Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, the NDP use their creative writers to hide the facts or to colour a situation or cover it up if it could prove embarrassing to the government. And again, the Member for St. Vital noted on Friday, and I quote: "Occasionally, those communicators are paid not to tell the people what the government is not doing properly."

Once again this year, Madam Speaker, we've been presented with a list of promises carefully delivered in NDP newspeaking, designed to baffle rather than to make clear, designed to escape and to avoid rather than to meet challenges head-on.

It's ironic, Madam Speaker, that as I listened to the Throne Speech, I found myself agreeing with some of the government's observations. We are indeed, and I quote: "... a people who can turn dreams into reality." On more than one occasion, I've noted the spirit of Manitobans, their ability to achieve and to create. Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, those dreams are turning into a most unpleasant reality, in fact a nightmare, many Manitobans are saying today, an ongoing nightmare from which Manitobans must eventually awake.

Long after this government is gone, stories will be told around campfires about the four dreaded horsemen of the NDP. The first, of course, is the Minister of Finance, chanting, give me your money, all of it. The second might be the Minister responsible for MPIC, muttering, if you can't afford insurance, walk. The third would be the Minister of Tourism, humming the Battle Hymn of the Republic. And finally, their Leader, the most feared of all towering over all of them, humming his normal refrain, "It's all Mulroney's fault, well I mean it's Reagan's fault, well I mean it's Wilson's fault. Well it's got to be somebody else's fault. It sure isn't mine." That's all we get from the four dreaded horsemen.

Madam Speaker, there are other choice phrases within the Throne Speech. I'm beginning to think that even their speech writers are losing their touch. They used to more clever as they twisted words to make them sound okay. But I'm amused, I must say, by the use of term "bellwether." They used the term "bellwether" in reference to this government. So I looked at the Oxford Dictionary, and it has two meanings. Firstly, it could simply mean a leader, but it

could also mean a lead sheep in a flock. I just sort of conjured visions of Howard with his staff, you know, as Little Bo Peep leading all the other provinces of the country in their charge against Ottawa. That's inspiring, isn't it? That's the kind of inspiration we got from the Throne Speech, Madam Speaker.

But of course, that conjured up other meanings as the lead sheep of the flock. What about us getting clipped in Autopac rates, or in our Hydro rate increases, or the tax increases - I'm sure that they understand that principle of clipping people - or just take the end product after the sheep, taking the wool, taking us to the cleaners. I think that too has something in the story of the bellwether, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, one has to assume that even they meant bellwether meant leader. So what area are they saying that we are leader in? Well, I think there are a number of areas in which I'd be willing to concede that this government is No. 1: No. 1 in creative taxation - that we saw in last year's Budget; No. 1 in auto insurance increases - that's for sure, everybody in this province knows that; No. 1 in foreign borrowing - people unfortunately see that all too often; No. 1 in Workers Compensation increases; No. 1 in all utility increases in this year.

Madam Speaker, I'm surprised that nobody over there is chanting, "We're No. 1." Is it just their desire for decorum in the House? Madam Speaker, I can assure them that Manitobans will remember all of the areas in which they are No. 1, but I just say be careful which finger they use to show them.

One year ago, the Throne Speech said that they were proud of their accomplishments in labour-management relations and then they gave us final offer selection. One year ago, they said that they were strongly committed to ensuring economic, social and environmental vitality and the health of the City of Winnipeg. Then they gave us Harvey Bostrom at \$56,000 as Secretary of the Riverbank Renewal Committee of Cabinet.

Madam Speaker, the problem is not that the NDP tried to confuse and baffle the people of Manitoba. No, Madam Speaker, the truth is that they're speaking a language that only they understand. They have their own vocabulary which almost resembles that of everyone else, but it's significantly different in these vital areas of good rather than creative communication.

Perhaps, Madam Speaker, this language is more fully understood by the Honourable Member for River Heights, because I'm sure that as an educator and as somebody who's read a lot of Liberal policy before, she probably understands creative communication and language better than most. Madam Speaker, maybe in fact she has developed her own language that sort of coincides with much of what this government has been using and really she understands it better than the rest of us because last year, for the most part, the Member for River Heights was silent in the criticisms of Crown corporations.

In fact, there was a point in time at which she publicly took issue with us for spending too much time in question period criticizing MPIC. Madam Speaker, maybe instead of her silence meaning that she agreed with our position, she really was just understanding of what the government had been doing. I'm not certain, Madam Speaker.

Frankly, I must confess that I am confused by the language that is being used by this NDP. I don't understand how words such as fairness, such as equity, such as commitment, can apply to this government. I suspect that many Manitobans share that dilemma, especially when they look at Autopac, when they look at last year's Budget, when they look at the hospital bed closures.

This government has either completely lost touch with the concerns and the financial realities faced by every Manitoban or they've deluded themselves into believing their own propaganda. Either way, they're continuing to ignore the plight of ordinary Manitobans.

Perhaps they'll try and use statistics, charts, graphs, speeches and sincere utterances to convince us that the lot of ordinary Manitobans is improving. Maybe they hold to the concept that if you say something often enough, people will believe you. That is not so, Madam Speaker. We only have to look at our Hydro bills, our Autopac bill, our driver's licence fees, our education taxes and our income tax deductions on our pay slips and we know that our standard of living has deteriorated under this administration. Go ahead and try and tell us that we have a better standard of living today than what we had when you came into government. No one will believe that, I'll tell you that.

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have to look beyond the words because they, like the rest of us, like everybody else in society, have to be accountable for their actions. The NDP are desperately seeking ways to avoid responsibility. They blame everyone. They gaze eastward at Ottawa; they gaze south at the Americans and try and make a scapegoat of the Americans over the free trade issue. When they look at Ottawa, the excuse is transfer payments are not great enough. When they look at the Americans, the big bad American businesses are going to come and buy us out and take us over.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, who is their scapegoat going to be next month? Madam Speaker, we had of course the president of MPIC laid on the altar today as the scapegoat for MPIC, just as we had the senior officials for the telephone system, five of them, laid on the altar because of MTX; just as we had the three commissioners of Workers Compensation laid on the altar as sacrificial lambs for this administration's sins and errors and blunders in operating those corporations, because they could not sacrifice one member of their front bench. They have nobody to replace them with, so who do they choose? Senior officials in the corporations. Every time, they find scapegoats in a frantic desire to avoid the responsibility themselves.

Unfortunately for them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitobans are tired of excuses. Manitobans won't believe the NDP anymore. The citizens of this province have lost faith and the NDP have lost credibility. Soon this government will be forced to recognize that their destructive economic policies and their ethical misadventures have created a disenchanted public, a public that deserves better.

The people of Manitoba want to work. They want long-term jobs. We have a proven history of individuals

who have grasped opportunities and made this province vibrant and dynamic. The best social program is a job, a truism but accurate nevertheless. The government can tell us repeatedly how well off we are, but the brutal fact remains that more and more of our young people have to look elsewhere for jobs. More and more of our entrepreneurs are looking for more favourable economic climates. The exodus of people willing to risk capital and start businesses translates directly into lost jobs. Most people only feel the effect of NDP policies, but they are beginning to realize the cause of their concern.

Manitobans want the best possible health care. They want the best doctors and facilities, not waiting lists for elective surgery. As our population grows older, there will be greater demands on our health care services. The NDP are unable or unwilling to look forward. They prefer short-term gains to long-term solutions. They invite skilled medical professionals. The Minister of Health has done it already in his very short tenure as Minister, invited skilled medical personnel to leave the province if they're not satisfied, an invitation that many of them are accepting. The example is that 16 psychiatrists have left in the past 16 months, and a seventeenth has announced that he is leaving as well. The situation cannot be allowed to persist if we expect to meet the challenges of the next decade.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was away for a brief vacation just before the opening of the Session and, among other things, my wife and I attended a reception in Los Angeles for University of Manitoba alumni. The reception was held there and, as a past president of the Alumni Association myself and my wife being the incoming president of the Alumni Association, we were invited to attend.

What has happened, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that the University of Manitoba Alumni Association has set up satellites in three areas or is about to set up satellites in three areas of North America: Toronto, Vancouver and California. Why? Because there are so many of our graduates who have gone to these places in search of greater opportunity. I met there doctors who had left this province because of NDP decisions and because of NDP administrations. I met, Mr. Deputy Speaker, people who have gone there to pursue business interests, people who have gone there to pursue everything.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, these people think it's funny. They think that anybody who doesn't like it can leave it, and they say so regularly. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say that it's a crime and a tragedy.

There are some other concerns in the field of education. Everyone recognizes the need for first-rate universities, community colleges, our public school system. Every member would agree that our future is in the hands of our young people. What is the government doing? They cut funding. What's happening in our universities? Mr. Deputy Speaker, what's happening in our universities is that in many areas — (Interjection) — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am getting to the Member for Flin Flon who was dumped in the position of Minister of Education because he wasn't doing a good job.

A MEMBER: An abject failure.

MR. G. FILMON: That's right. He's an abject failure and so now he's — (Interjection) — yes, an abject failure, a total failure, and so now he's chirping away.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government's funding decisions have resulted in the universities having several faculties whose accreditation is at risk. That's what this government's funding decisions have done. Everywhere in the province, people are saying the increases aren't meeting the needs that they have out there. What are they going to do next? Tell our young people to leave the province in search of education? Is that what they are going to say, just as they did with our doctors? Well, those are the problems that we're facing as a result of their priority decisions over the past number of years in looking at short-term solutions at the expense of our future.

The list goes on. Every day I hear from individuals who are concerned about NDP practices. There are answers; there are solutions. Unfortunately, the NDP are so lacking in their perception that they don't even see the problems, let alone the solutions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, many of these problems existed before they were brought to the NDP's attention. They tried to ignore them. For years they tried to ignore the MTX problem; for years they tried to ignore the MPIC problem. The Minister from St. James sat there in committee stonewalled, saying, and I think I quote him accurately, that we stood to make millions of dollars on MTX at times when legitimate questions were being asked, at times when legitimate concerns were being laid on the table. Mr. Deputy Speaker, they don't even see the problems, so how can they give us a solution?

I am told sometimes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we are too negative when we talk about the NDP Government, that I should mention just a few things about their performances in the past that are positive. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is pretty difficult to find too many positive things to say about this administration. In 1986, we had the MTX fiasco with its kickbacks, its falsification of documents, its cover-up of financial information from public attention. It involved corruption, incompetence, financial dishonesty.

In 1987, we had the MPIC reinsurance fiasco with a Minister deciding in 1984 not to report the reinsurance losses that eventually totalled \$36 million, the reinsurance losses. Files with vital information were shredded, financial statements were misrepresented - again, corruption, incompetence, financial dishonesty involved.

Then we had the revelation that the Workers Compensation Board had reached a deficit position of almost \$200 million in a six-year period after being in a \$35 million surplus position in December of 1981. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it still isn't achieving its goals. They totally underestimated the long-term liabilities of all the decisions they made. They had direct ministerial and union interference in claim settlements and then they covered it all up from public attention, covered it all up.

I've laid on the table a letter written by your predecessor, the Member for Radisson, who directly intervened in the case of a worker on behalf of a union. I laid it on the table in the last committee. You obviously can't read. Again, incompetence and financial dishonesty.

What about CEDF? What about CEDF, Mr. Deputy Speaker? My colleague from Arthur raised in this House

the loans that were made to a former NDP MLA whose business was located in Saskatchewan and to a Winnipeg businessman whose office was used as the headquarters by the Member for Rupertsland for his political campaign in the last election. Both loans were made outside of the mandate of the corporation. The mandate is for Native and Northern Manitoba and remote locations and small businesses in those areas. Both were against the recommendation of the board of CEDF. Both were made by ministerial order. It shows the incompetence, the corruption and the financial dishonesty again of this administration.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I haven't touched on the last Budget, the crushing blow that the Member for Seven Oaks gave to Manitoba taxpayers last spring. Because after six straight years of \$0.5 billion deficits, Manitobans finally realized that they had to pay for the disasters at the Crown corporations and the waste and mismanagement in every government department - \$368 million in additional taxes, more than two-thirds of it on individual taxpayers. Every taxpaying family is paying an average of \$700 more per year as a result of these increases.

But where is the money going? Is it going to better social programs? Not on your life. We're closing hospital beds in record numbers throughout the province - entire wards. Emergency units are being closed under this NDP Government's policies. People are being sent to North Dakota in record numbers for CAT scans. Our Child and Family Services, our child welfare system, is in crisis.

Is the money going to education? Is the government meeting its election commitment of 90 percent funding for public schools? That's what the Premier said during the 1986 election. He said that the public schools would get 90 percent funding. Is that where the money has gone? Not on your life. Now it's just a hope, he tells the Manitoba Teachers' Society.

Well, this government's record of fulfilling its promises is beyond hope. Now they're trying to cover up for the deceit and dishonesty in saying that they had \$4.3 billion worth of hydro export contracts. You may recall that promise during the 1986 election campaign. You may recall that it was put in the Throne Speech that year. You may recall that they said that they had entered into these agreements. They didn't say that they hoped they would enter into the agreements. They didn't say that they were negotiating these agreements. They said that they had entered into agreements to sell \$4.3 billion worth of hydro-electric energy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, now that all of this has fallen apart, that they have been shown to be not only incompetent but dishonest, and they put in charge the clean-up hitter, the northern light from Flin Flon. They put him in charge now to give the bad news to Manitobans. The bad news is that they don't have those agreements, they never had those agreements, and the prospects of those agreements are dim, dim, dim - just as dim as the Member for Flin Flon is.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, so what are they doing now? They're trying to trump up the allegation that the reason they can't sell hydro exports to the U.S. is because of the free trade agreement. Can you believe that? Can you believe that? — (Interjection) — Well, the Member for Kildonan says he believes it. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is nothing farther from the truth.

Our province was built by individuals with a pioneering spirit, individuals who are confident in the future and confident in themselves, risk takers who would stop at nothing to open up a new frontier. The character of Manitobans hasn't changed much over the last 100 years. We're still a proud people. We're still ready to tackle new challenges head on. That's why I believe in free trade. I believe in the people; I believe in their ability; I believe in the jobs it will create; I believe in the lower prices it will bring and I believe in the new markets it will give us access to.

Yet the Premier, the Member for Selkirk, is trying to tell us that we're not good enough. He says that Manitobans can't compete with the Americans. He says that we'll fail if we try. I want to tell you that not only is the Premier dead wrong, he's scared stiff, absolutely scared stiff because I know that Manitobans have a competitive nature.

Our producers and manufacturers are prepared to tackle new frontiers. They're prepared to provide the highest quality of goods and services at the lowest possible price. Last year, Manitoba exported \$1.4 billion worth of goods and services to the U.S. alone.

Sure, free trade means that the inefficient and the non-competitive will have to mend their ways or pay the price. I wouldn't have it any other way because Manitoba will only be strong if it encourages the best, not protects the worst.

So what's the real reason that the Premier is afraid of free trade? Well, he's afraid of free trade because he knows that it's not just individuals and businesses that have to compete under free trade. Governments have to compete as well, and he knows that this government will never be able to match up to other administrations. They have saddled Manitobans with a dead weight of the payroll tax, skyrocketing Workers Compensation rates, suffocating labour laws and tax rates that are the second highest in the country.

Under those circumstances he is making it difficult for Manitoba businesses and manufacturers to compete. It's because of the dead load of NDP policies and NDP taxation that Manitoba businesses will have difficulty competing. That's what the Premier is afraid of. He won't be able to match up, nor will his government.

You may recall, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in 1985 the Premier travelled to four midwestern states to beg governors there to lift their ban against the export of hogs to their states. He made an impassioned plea; he made a great deal of public notice of it, publicity. He said: "Let us sell our hogs into your states, please let us in." He did all of that and he still doesn't understand why we need a free trade agreement.

Is the Premier protecting Ontario's interests? We in Manitoba - in fact, people all across the West are tired of selling our commodities on an open market worldwide at a very low rate at whatever the market will bear, at the same time having to buy commodities from Ontario on a protected market basis at much greater cost than we could across the line. We're tired of that inequity and we're going to change it with free trade.

Free trade will mean lower prices. Why is this government against lower prices? A savings of \$40 million has been calculated in the western reports and its tariffs are removed, more savings as competition increases. Free trade will mean more jobs. The Federal

Government says 120,000 jobs in the first five years under free trade, net new jobs. The Economic Council of Canada said over a 10-year period, 350,000 net new jobs, net new jobs - 15,000 of them in Manitoba. What's the matter with these people? Don't they want jobs for Manitobans?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, mining, construction, agriculture, manufacturing, every one of those industries will enjoy positive and significant gains in employment and production according to the Economic Council of Canada. Free trade will open up new markets. It will ensure the security that we as an exporting nation must have. In fact, 77 percent of all exports from Canada went to the U.S. last year. Free trade would protect and enhance that market.

So why is the Premier protecting Ed Broadbent's interests instead of Manitobans' interests? You know, Ed Broadbent represents the riding of Oshawa. Last year, General Motors invested \$2 billion in Oshawa, over \$4 billion since 1981, tens of thousands of jobs created in Oshawa by a foreign multinational company from the United States. Is the Premier saying that foreign investment is good for Oshawa, is good for Ontario, but it isn't good for Manitoba?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, another question I have for the Premier. Why has he changed his mind? On May 14, 1985 the Premier was quoted in the Winnipeg Sun saying free trade with the U.S. is, and I quote: "... quite consistent with the common market arrangement in Europe." And he said further: "It'll be good for all of Canada." And then he said: "I wouldn't have supported it if it hampered Manitoba jobs." But now, what's he doing? He's spreading his fear, he's spreading his misinformation, despite the fact that virtually every issue that he raised over the course of the negotiations was taken care of.

Early on, you probably heard what issues he raised with respect to free trade. He said, I'm concerned that Medicare, social programs and regional development should not be touched. The agreement doesn't touch any of them, wiped out those concerns. Then he said a little later, I'm concerned that the brewing industry ought to be protected. He said, I'm concerned that the trucking industry ought to be protected. He said, I'm concerned that the supply-managed agricultural commodities ought to be protected. They're all protected in the agreement.

But despite the fact that they're all protected in the agreement, he's against free trade. He's against free trade because now he's busy dancing to Ed Broadbent's tune. He's not listening to Manitobans. He's busy dancing to Ed Broadbent's tune. He's even gone so far as spending \$85,000 of Manitoba taxpayers' money for an advertising campaign against free trade at a time when it would be good for Manitobans, and the majority of Manitobans support it. That's how far he's prepared to go to protect Ed Broadbent's backside. It doesn't make sense. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say to the Premier: "Stand up for Manitoba or step aside, because we know what Manitoba needs."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that free trade is the opportunity of a lifetime for Manitobans. Let's not let this opportunity pass us by because of this government's crass political agenda. Last fall, many Manitobans got a letter from the Premier stating why he was opposed to free trade. This was the third set

of reasons that he gave as to why he was opposed to free trade. I already covered the first two sets that he gave. This is the third set of reasons he gave.

He said, firstly, he was against free trade because he wanted to have greater control over foreign investment. I thought we wanted to encourage foreign investment. Why did he spend \$50,000 travelling to Japan and Hong Kong last fall if it wasn't to attract foreign investment? But now he wants to control foreign investment.

The second thing he said in that letter, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was he wanted to control our energy resources. Isn't he the one who has sold almost half the output of Limestone, and then trying for years to sell more to the Americans? Didn't he employ a lobbyist in Washington to argue against the coal lobby to try and make sure that our ability to export energy to the States wasn't stopped by this U.S. coal lobby? Hasn't he been doing all those things to try and sell, desperately, our electrical energy to the States? And instead he says now he is against free trade because he wants to have greater control over our energy resources.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, of course the greatest irony is that in 1984, talking about control of our energy resources, a minority Federal Liberal Government, with the support of the NDP, passed legislation to sign an international energy-sharing agreement with all the developed western world nations. That agreement committed us to share our energy resources with the Americans in times of shortage. — (Interjection) — Right, that was an NDP-Liberal administration that did that. Is he now saying to us that we should not sell our energy to the Americans, despite the fact that's what he's been doing for many years, that's what Ed Schreyer did, despite the fact that's what he committed us to do in that agreement?

Is he saying, let's let the Americans freeze in the dark and we'll hoard our energy supplies, that he's going to renege on contracts that he's already signed with the American hydro utilities? If he says that, then let him say it publicly so that the Americans know what kind of person they're dealing with.

The next thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he says about free trade is he says it will not adequately protect our farmers. Every analysis of the deal, Mr. Deputy Speaker, says it will secure and expand the markets for beef, for pork, for our oilseeds and our grains. And our poultry, vegetable and dairy producers are protected by this agreement.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is the Premier and his colleagues who say that they speak for farmers in Manitoba. The Keystone Agricultural Producers at their annual general meeting passed a resolution supporting free trade. Every one of the commodity groups represented in KAP supports free trade, and yet this Premier and his Minister of Agriculture say they are against free trade. Now, how do they get off speaking for the farmers of Manitoba? Surely they don't want to forever condemn Manitoba farmers to the harsh times they're currently facing. Free trade can be their salvation, their opportunity for a prosperous future.

If farmers needed any more evidence that this government doesn't speak for them, you know, they had it before when this government wouldn't sign certain agreements, tripartite stabilization agreements. This

government wouldn't sign for the sugar beet producers until they were absolutely forced to their knees. This government wouldn't do anything for the farmers, and they wouldn't provide the kinds of support programs that other provinces to the west of us are getting.

Well now, when they've got a program that doesn't even cost them any money, just agree to something that will be of long-term positive economic benefit to the farmers, they won't even do that. They won't even agree to that.

The other point that the Premier made in his letter, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was he said that the dispute settlement process was unfair to Canada. Well, Professor John Crispo of the University of Toronto says that's absolute nonsense. He says, and I quote: "The Binational Disputes Tribunal will ensure that each country administers its existing countervail and anti-dumping laws fairly. This is precisely what Canada has been striving for." That's what he says about the hogwash that the Premier put forward. So what's the real reason that the Premier is opposed to free trade? Surely, his commitments to Ed Broadbent aren't greater than his commitments to the people of Manitoba.

Well, the Throne Speech gave us yet another, yet a fourth set of arguments against free trade being put forward by this administration. Those arguments contained in the Throne Speech have been addressed very, very thoroughly in today's Free Press editorial. It's called "Preposterous Arguments," and it has done the job so well that I don't need to repeat it, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the great initiative in the Throne Speech on free trade is of course that we are going to counter the entire weight of the whole federal free trade initiative by preventing Americans from owning beach-front property in Manitoba. I can see the flying hand of the Minister of Tourism behind this. We will fight them on the beaches! That's where we got it in the Throne Speech, Maureen-AI.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, free trade is not for the faint-hearted. It's not for companies or governments who are wasteful, inefficient or mismanaged. Free trade is not for the cowardly. Given that the NDP are all of those things, it is quite easy to understand why they are opposed to free trade. Fortunately, most of our citizens are not so short-sighted, not afraid of opportunity.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I stated earlier, we are serving notice that we will use every means at our disposal to protect the interests of Manitobans, to defeat this NDP Government as soon as possible. For the past six years, this government has been on a spree, increasing spending at twice the rate of inflation. They've more than doubled the provincial debt and forced our interest charges up more than fivefold. Our taxes are the second highest in Canada, while prices for utilities and services continue to soar. This government has mismanaged the economy and wasted taxpayers' dollars through its misplaced priorities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the most alarming question that I've been asked recently is: Is it too late to turn this province around? Is it too late to ease the burden of overtaxation, too late to put an end to the waste and mismanagement? Is it too late to get a hold on government spending that is clearly out of control?

I say, absolutely not. We must have a government that will live within its means, a government that will

plan for tomorrow today. We must have a government that listens to the problems and concerns of all Manitobans, to their hopes and their aspirations. Manitoba can reach its full potential, but it will take hard work and determination. This government is not capable of providing the leadership towards that goal. This government has an attitude that is not only dishonest but it's cynical.

The Premier, last Monday I believe it was, responded to questions about his party's recent decline in popularity by saying, we've been there before. What he's saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that they can fool the public again. He's saying that they will make the public forget Autopac, MPIC, Workers Comp., the huge increases in taxation, the disasters in our child care system, all of the problems that they've created in the hospitals and health care system. He's saying that they will make Manitobans forget. They'll lull them into a sense of security. They'll delude them into thinking that there is nothing wrong again in this province.

He's convinced that he can run and hide from all of the province but, no matter how far they run, no matter how long they hide, this government will not be able to hide from their record. No one can run very far to get away from the burden of the 2 percent tax on net income - it's affecting every taxpayer in Manitoba - the higher telephone bills; the increased Hydro rates; and of course our Autopac premiums. No thanks to any of you are those rates among the lowest, no thanks to any of your mismanagement, not one. The fact is that, for decades, governments with sound business practices ran those corporations and kept their rates low. In fact, Telephone System had three rate increases in a period close to 30 years until you people got it under your grasp. No thanks to you are those rates low.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have focused my response on the important issues of credibility, on having an achievable vision, of being honest and open with the people of Manitoba, but there are many areas that should be addressed, areas that the Throne Speech has ignored, areas that are too crucial to our future. My colleagues and I will be addressing many more items as this Throne Speech progresses.

In the area of health, there has to be a better answer to health care reform than simply closing hospital beds. We have to have community-based facilities in place before we cut back our hospital beds. Sixteen psychiatrists have left in 16 months. The seventeenth is about to leave. We can't just say, if you don't like it, leave the province. We can't afford to lose our valuable health care professionals. We can't keep our elderly in hospital beds when they should be in personal care homes.

We have to start bringing in concrete action on preventative medicine, to make sure that people are not continually dying because of self-inflicted illnesses. They have to be aware of the effect of stress, of diet, of exercise, of all those things, the positive effect it can have on their lives. We have to keep our healthy people well. Nothing is being done by this government towards that goal.

In agriculture, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the support program in beef stabilization for the feedlot operators is coming along. It's coming along a little too late. The fact of the matter is that we have been advocating it

and promising it for a number of years. But finally, this government goes into it when we have lost Canada Packers, when we have lost feedlot operators all over, when so many of our cattle are being sent out of this province for finishing. Now finally, after all the losses have taken place, they finally listen to us and bring in the stabilization program for feedlot operators.

They still aren't doing anything about a tripartite stabilization for beans, for honey. They're not doing anything to listen to those farmers in need.

On the Education Tax Relief, the program was bureaucratic. The program had so many discriminatory practices in it. So what have they said? We're going to extend it for another year. We're not going to address the problems with it; we're simply going to extend it for another year.

In day care, they still have their ideological blinders on. They're still saying that day care, if it's provided in the private sector, isn't good for our children. As a consequence, we're short by thousands of day care spaces because they won't listen to the needs of the people of Manitoba.

In education, we still aren't seeing people talking about and doing something substantive about quality of education, of putting in standards into the system, of putting in province-wide checks and balances to try and ensure that our students are prepared for the challenges of the future, in the technologies in all of the development areas. What are they doing? Absolutely nothing, all of these concerns.

Our concerns about tourism - the fact that senior officials in a tourism department are being cut. That as bad as our expenditures and tourism have been, they're going to be worse, that now they're abandoning their responsibility for tourism and saying instead that it's somebody else's problem. It's the problem of the private sector; it's the problem of the City of Winnipeg; it's somebody else's problem is what they're saying in tourism.

Conservation - where have we seen concrete programs brought in, in the conservation of our natural resources, our agriculture, our energy, all of those things?

What about concerns for the elderly? My colleague, the Member for Rhineland, is going to be talking about the special needs, the unique problems that are faced by the elderly.

What about the concerns of the business community? Nowhere are they addressed in this Throne Speech, not one comment other than to say that they're going to cooperate with the business community. The business community has seen what their cooperation has meant - taxes and more taxes, payroll taxes, Workers Compensation rates going up. They've seen the problems. They've seen what they've done in this administration as a result of their cooperative attitude. Mr. Deputy Speaker, all of these things will be covered in much more detail by my colleagues.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if this government is unable to meet the challenges, unable to be responsive to the needs of Manitobans, rest assured that we are ready. Our critics are prepared to offer plans, offer criticisms and, when necessary, to speak out on the issues that Manitobans want addressed. We know that our citizens expect action, not just words. They expect initiatives, not just empty promises; and since this government can't deliver, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will.

Therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Brandon West, that the motion be amended by adding to it the following words:

THAT this House regrets:

- (a) the government's mismanagement and political manipulation of our Crown corporations resulting in millions of dollars in losses and massive increases in Autopac and other Crown corporation rates;
- (b) the government's failure to provide a plan to deal with the serious economic and financial problems facing Manitoba;
- (c) the government's lack of openness and honesty in providing vital information to the public on all areas within its jurisdiction;
- (d) the government's insistence on opposing the free trade agreement with the United States contrary to the best interests of farmers, workers, manufacturers and suppliers, and contrary to the results of its own economic studies on free trade;
- (e) the government's mismanagement and wrong-headed priorities which are resulting in a lack of funding for vital health services, education and agriculture programs; and
- (f) that this government has thereby lost the confidence and trust of the people of Manitoba.

Thank you.

MOTION presented.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Opposition House Leader.

MR. G. MERCIER: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Member for Sturgeon Creek, that the House do now adjourn.

HON. J. STORIE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister on a point of order.

HON. J. STORIE: Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, my colleague, the Minister of Community Services, who has been Deputy Premier, now the Minister of Labour, was on her feet several times long before the Member for . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is tradition, after the Leader of the Opposition has introduced his amendment, to have someone reply.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair.)

MADAM SPEAKER: The question before the House is that the House do now adjourn. All those in favour, say aye; opposed, say nay. In my opinion, the nays have it.

The Honourable Minister of Labour.

HON. M. SMITH: Madam Speaker, I rise in my place to speak against the amendment to the Speech from the Throne and in support of the Speech from the Throne.

Madam Speaker, I guess this is the one place in the province where a debate about different visions and different ideas of how the economy of Manitoba works and how the people of Manitoba want to live should rightly take place.

Madam Speaker, I sat in my chair very attentively listening to the response to the Speech from the Throne from the Leader of the Opposition. I heard him go through the issues that over the past few years we've certainly heard him raise his voice on before, and that's good and proper as it should be, Madam Speaker. I heard him talk about activist government, but then I heard him give all sorts of reasons why government, in fact, should do nothing, should fold up its tents and shrink. Madam Speaker, I heard him talk about fairness and humaneness, but I didn't hear him talk about how the system that he is proposing would in fact increase the fairness and humaneness for Manitoba. I found, as I was listening to him, that I went back over the changes that have come about in my own thinking about politics and about government agenda and why we have a government such as the New Democratic Party Government.

Madam Speaker, we have this type of political belief simply because the philosophy, the vision, the proposals that come from the other side, they lack, they don't even focus on so many of the problems that we feel are the problems that people face in their everyday life. Their philosophy is based on what I consider naive.

Again, with respect, I appreciate their sincerity in voicing it. People say it's stupid. Well, I'm not one to be unkind to people who perhaps don't see things in any depth, but this is the place. This is the place, in Manitoba, where we debate not only our vision, where we talk about not only our values, but we talk about why we are here. Although we believe business, money, the market, have very important roles to play in Manitoba, indeed in the world, but where, Madam Speaker, there are many problems, many issues, many groups of people whom they do not serve well.

We believe that philosophy, that approach to government is short-sighted; we believe it is shallow; we believe it supports the privileged. We believe it talks about courage, imagination, entrepreneurial spirit, but it comfortably forgets, Madam Speaker, those people, those groups who, for whatever reason, are not equal in the race, have had disadvantage, who may be very young, who may be very old, who may have accidents or sickness, who may have disabilities of one sort or another, who may have been raised in remote parts of the country where they have not had the advantages. My reaction to the ideas and the complaints raised by the Leader of the Opposition is that they quite simply fail to deal with those issues, and what we hear instead is a litany of the problems and the difficulties.

Now having sat through and worked - worked like crazy over six years in government, Madam Speaker - I would be the first person to say that there are difficult problems for any party in power. There are difficult problems for a government to deal with, and we've had our share, but we are not running away from them. We face up to them, we look at them, and we look at what is the best solution for all the people in Manitoba. We do not naively trust in this market system, the words like "free trade," the words like "taxes are always too high," that whenever government intervenes it's

somehow evil and irresponsible. That's a counsel of despair; that's a counsel of cynicism, short-sightedness and shallowness, Madam Speaker.

Now my perspective on what's gone on in government is very much informed from my own experience, my own past, growing up in a one-industry town, seeing the good times from the market system in foreign investment and high prices, seeing the bad times when the world markets disappeared, when the foreign investors are fleeing rather than coming to invest in a primary resource, and when the people who've invested their life savings, their life's work in a community, are suddenly bereft and don't have any supports or transitional supports. So that's one aspect.

I've seen the entrepreneurial spirit, the building of one-industry towns, the excitement, the creativity of the market system, but I've also seen its weaknesses and its failures. It's great when things are on the up. It's a rather ugly threatening situation when things are on the down. And as a government, we have attempted to deal with that by evening out some of the disadvantages - yes, by requiring some kind of contribution when times are good; yes, expecting employers to contribute their fair share to Workers Compensation; yes, expecting people to pay part of the tax for health and post-secondary education, for caring for the young, for dealing with abuse, for supporting a health care system, for looking after the seniors. There are no magic answers and we know that, but we do believe we should share the load over time, and if business must pay its fair share, so be it. That's our vision of Manitoba, that's our vision of Canada, and that, quite frankly, Madam Speaker, is why we are very concerned about the beliefs and the direction that this new trade deal seems to be taking us in.

I have also, Madam Speaker, been very much influenced in my political attitudes and beliefs by the constituency I represent. It's neither Inner City nor is it well-to-do suburb. It's an in-between area where people worry about having jobs, about their pay cheques stretching to pay the mortgage or to repair the house, where they worry about whether their children are going to have adequate education, safe streets, whether they're going to have adequate health care. And that is the group of people - they are neither well-to-do, nor disaffected and unemployed. Most of them are modest wage earners and their concerns have very much become my concerns, so when issues come up, Madam Speaker, I, for one, try to look at it through their eyes and listen to their welfare.

I also hear many of them, when they talk about jobs, they don't only think of small business, they don't only think of resource development. They also think of the social programs as offering them good jobs, worthwhile jobs, in which they want reasonable working conditions.

Then, Madam Speaker, as I've had the opportunity to experience different types of portfolios in government, the economic development side in Tourism, the social program side on the Community Services side, and now the areas of Labour, Housing and Status of Women, I have had an opportunity to address the problems and seek solutions from many different angles. What I feel great pride in is the courage and the innovativeness and the steady progress that my particular government has achieved over the past six years, not without having to face up to a severe

recession, to really difficult fiscal situations, to a changing federal scene, to a changing world scene, but we've faced up to those problems and looked for the fair, stable, steady, reasonable approach to all those problems, Madam Speaker.

We believe, and I think have demonstrated it by our programs, that the role of government is not just to follow the prudent housekeeper role of managing always within their means and contracting their expenditures when times are tough. In fact, government has the opposite role, how to provide stability and cushion people when times are difficult; and that I think, with job creation, with job training, with income support systems is what we're all about. We do believe that jobs are the best kind of social welfare, but we're not about to abandon the people who are not able to achieve jobs, or for whatever reason have not had appropriate training. We are working towards a full employment economy, but we're not going to abandon all the people who are not successful enough to plug into such a full employment economy as we move.

We'll also work at the training, the access to training, the adequate education and health services for those people as we strive for the full employment economy, but I haven't seen any great success from the trickle down rely on the market, only what business does is good approach to job creation. We need social jobs as well as economic jobs. We need environmental protection jobs. We need child care jobs. We need jobs throughout the health care system, not just at the professional level, if we're going to find the right mix and balance. I believe that the way our government has approached these problems and dealt with the programs is responsible, caring and shows clear direction, Madam Speaker.

Now, what challenges have we been facing? Let's start with the issue of fiscal management. We dealt with a very sharp recession when we first were dealing with the economy. Now, we could have said there is an economic downturn, we're going to run for the hills because obviously Professor McCallum will be happier if we have a balanced Budget. Madam Speaker, what would have been the result of that? The unemployment number is up. Many people abandoned to insufficient resources losing hope, losing any belief that government could somehow work on their behalf. That was not the choice we took. We went for a deficit increase during that period. Now that we are in a somewhat more stable state of the economy, not as good as we would like it, not as good as we hope it to be in the future, but relatively speaking, we are in an upsurge. We are working on deficit management and reduction, but the Opposition never hear us and they don't bother to look at the record either, Madam Speaker.

We talk about Crowns. If you look at the overall service that the Crowns have delivered to Manitobans, the quality of service, the low level of cost, and the occasional problem which when we find that we deal with it, I think we can stand proud in the Province of Manitoba in looking at the record of our Crowns. We believe in making them more accountable. We believe in dealing with the problems that have arisen, and we will continue to do so, Madam Speaker. But if they are to be judged, they are to be judged in a broad perspective in terms of what service they have offered to people, and not merely because there have been difficulties.

We have looked at health costs, Madam Speaker, not just for the simple question of how many psychiatrists we can retain or whether we ever have to close beds. Madam Speaker, if that is the version of the health care system that the members opposite have, I don't think they've been reading their Budget papers very carefully the last few years. I don't think they're aware of the fact that the health care system operating as it has been, if we carry on without major reform, will eat up not only all the increased revenue year by year, but all the revenue that should be going to other programs, Madam Speaker. The system itself requires a major review and reform.

One of the little facts that seems always to be forgotten by the Opposition when they look at a bed closure, they don't look at some of the other side. When we had the reduction of some beds in Brandon Hospital last year, what they failed to hear was that, at the same time as we reduced the number of beds, we actually shortened the waiting list because we offered the same services in a not-for-admission mode. But those two facts never get brought to the fore, Madam Speaker, because they want to believe their own rhetoric.

They want to see the health care system reformed by privatizing it, by deregulating it, by following only what the high-tech people want. We believe that the basic health care system has to build in access for people for basic care, that we have to get a balance in high technology with basic care delivery, that we have to involve our communities more in prevention, in health promotion and in delivery of basic services close to their own community.

I heard the Leader of the Opposition say we've done nothing in health promotion. Why does he think we introduced the helmet law and the seat-belt law? Doesn't he see the connection between safer driving and cutting health care costs? Why does he think we have the Diabetes Education Program? Why does he think we've been trying to deal with drinking and driving? Why does he think we now have a smoke-free Legislature and government buildings? Doesn't he realize that those are the basic health promotion and lifestyle issues which, in the long run, are going to make a difference in terms of the loads on the health care system? No. All we hear, Madam Speaker, is a boring repetition of bed cuts, bed cuts, bed cuts.

There are many ways to deliver health care, and it's a question of careful cooperative planning with all the representatives of the health care system to find which things need to be done in a hospital, how long a patient needs to stay and what things can appropriately be done outside the health care system, or which care can appropriately be given in a home care mode. That's the type of health reform, keeping the integrity of free, universal, accessible Medicare, but with the services being delivered in the most effective way possible. — (Interjection) — Well, I hear members saying it's not going that way. I submit that they haven't been listening. — (Interjection) —

We welcome the ideas and the interest of the other party in terms of making things happen. We know, as a result, we can count on their cooperation when we come forward with the innovative approaches to health care.

Madam Speaker, maybe I should repeat the Brandon example because . . .

HON. H. PAWLEY: Yes, I think you should . . .

HON. M. SMITH: Yes, I think we should repeat the Brandon example, because what I wish to demonstrate is that the members opposite have one approach when they think of health care. They think of beds, doctors and hospitals. They don't realize that health care can be delivered in many different modes. In Brandon we, in fact, achieved that. We did deliver the health care in a different way, but they didn't choose to hear the results of that. They didn't choose to hear that we delivered the same service in a not-for-admission mode, that in fact we shortened the waiting list. They didn't hear that, Madam Speaker, because they didn't want to believe it.

Now, one of the issues that people may claim has nothing to do with the Province of Manitoba, so why are we talking about it, really I guess I don't have to deal with that argument because the Leader of the Opposition spent a good quarter of his speech dealing with the issue. The trade deal - what has that got to do with the Province of Manitoba? Is our government raising that issue just as a smoke screen? Are we trying to somehow get the discussion away from our agenda and the focus off the Province of Manitoba? — (Interjection) — Well, someone says, in their opinion, yes. That's because, Madam Speaker, they bought into the rhetoric of the trade deal.

They think because it's called free and because it seems to favour business that it must be good, and I understand why they think that. Because they think that, if you had a world that was full of prosperous businesses, some of them giving child care, some of them producing manufactured goods, somehow we'd have the best of all possible worlds and the virtuous would really benefit.

But, Madam Speaker, our interpretation of how the market system works and who gains and who loses is that, left unmanaged, left unbalanced by government programs and political balancing, there are very many losers, people who haven't got access to credit, people who perhaps haven't had the appropriate education, people who perhaps just have certain human frailties that make it difficult for them to survive in a straight competitive world. And I don't hear any talk of them, Madam Speaker. All I hear is what I really fear from the trade deal. Of course, there will be opportunities and markets which we must pursue, but there are other ways of going after them. What I hear is the insidious undercurrent. Yes, it'll reduce labour laws, it'll take out social programs that are wasteful. It will reduce taxes. Well, Madam Speaker, I would like all Manitobans to realize that, if that is the result of the trade deal, the very people who we have worked to give some security, some basic feeling of belonging in the Canadian society and in Manitoba, have a great deal to fear, because the initiative and the power to do something for those people may disappear because of this deal that's been negotiated.

There's a way to go after trade which is a negotiated way, item by item, and that is acceptable, but to tie ourselves so completely into the North American island, as it were, and forget the rest of the world and somehow call that free trade, I think it's just plain ridiculous, Madam Speaker, and I look forward to much more

detailed discussion of the different elements of that deal. It certainly, if one can argue short term, while we get cheaper goods than buying them from Ontario, but if you look at Canada as a whole, Madam Speaker, you may find in the interest of getting something a little cheaper from across the line, you're going to find a whole lot of people losing the basic protections they have in social programs, in labour laws, and in many of the programs that we have in Canada. It won't be an up-front attack, it'll be a subtle attack, just the basic idea that anything government does is wasteful, that anything the tax system does is somehow bad and inappropriate, that anything where government attempts to manage behaviour in the market place is somehow threatening. That I submit, Madam Speaker, is where the real threat of this trade deal and its implications, that's where the damage is going to come from.

Madam Speaker, in our Throne Speech, we spoke about many other issues that I didn't hear even being addressed by the Leader of the Opposition. We talked about the need for consumer protection. Now, I'm wondering if somehow in this great vision of business in the free market, where is the consumer? Where are the rights of the consumer? We have promised to put in some protection in the employment standards, Madam Speaker. A few years ago, we put in a Labour Relations Code that dealt with groups in the labour market and, after long consultation, we will be introducing an Employment Standards Code to set the minimum standards for people in the workforce.

Madam Speaker, we will also be introducing continuing programs in housing and in legislation to regulate the relationship between landlords and tenants. There has been a two-year cooperative review of the current relationships and identification of problems, and we are now ready to introduce a regime which should simplify, clarify and give greater balance in that area.

Madam Speaker, we are looking at problems in the housing field in the North of Manitoba. Now perhaps just a little elaboration of that initiative is relevant to what we have been saying about the market system. The housing program in the North was developed based on assumptions that were appropriate to how people lived in the South. The assumption was there that people would be employed; that they would basically earn a living wage over time; that they could pay for their house in a basic mortgage format; and that in fact designs of houses appropriate to the South would be appropriate in the North.

Now, Madam Speaker, for a multitude of reasons, that approach is not appropriate in the North. To begin with, the majority of people in many of the remote communities do not have access to paid employment. The cost of living is much higher than it is in the South. The lifestyle, in terms of climate, in terms of cooking methods, in terms of numbers of people in a family are significantly different, so that the policies and the practices appropriate to the South just wreak hardship on people in the North.

So do we say, well tough luck, they don't fit into the great market system. Let them move somewhere else, let them go down to Arizona or North Dakota or somewhere like that. They aren't our problem; they somehow aren't fitting into this great market system. Is that the approach that we want to have from the

other side, or should we address those problems and deal with the people's needs and see if we can't alter the way we deliver an economic problem in their benefit?

Madam Speaker, I suppose I shouldn't rise to issues relating to children, and yet I noted with great interest no recognition on the part of the Opposition of the enormous expansion of programs for children in this province since this government has been in power, the development of the child care program that is a leader in Canada, Madam Speaker, not only in numbers of spaces. Even in provinces where they let the market system go to town with child care, it simply is not able to develop enough child care spaces. Manitoba leads the country in numbers of spaces, in quality of care and a good program for both the parents and the children, but I hear no acknowledgement of that type of worthwhile program brought in by this government.

I hear no mention, Madam Speaker, except where there's an individual case where the Opposition takes off and suggests, because there is one problem, that a whole program is at fault, not one mention of child abuse and wife abuse, and the fact that this government has put in all the programs there are to deal with those issues. There was nothing done by the Opposition, Madam Speaker, nothing. Yet, because there are still problems undealt with, somehow we get the attitude opposite that because you can't do that and make it perfect without spending any money, that somehow it's all wrong.

I don't hear concern for those issues and those people, Madam Speaker. I don't hear recognition of the tremendous expanse of programs and of funding in the Child and Family Services. I only hear gloom and doom because there is now an openness in that system that brings difficulties to light - doom and gloom that somehow everything done is wrong. Well that's typical, Madam Speaker, of a shallow business-oriented group. Business has its role and it's an extremely important part of the Manitoba mosaic, but it does not deal with every issue, Madam Speaker. If there were not governments to work with community groups, with families to deal with these issues, who would deal with them, Madam Speaker? That's what taxes are for; that's what government programs are for. It's that narrow view that somehow the marketplace and trickle-down benefits are going to usher in the great new future that I find seriously wanting, Madam Speaker.

I didn't hear a single word about the role of government in promoting fairness in the economy. Women have been extremely interested in achieving greater equity in the society, in the economy, but they are not able to achieve that completely on their own, Madam Speaker. That is why they look to government to assist them in providing affirmative action programs, pay equity programs, training programs tailored to their needs and their responsibilities, a necessary child-care support program so that it is a real opportunity or a real option for a family to have both parents working.

We will be discussing the issue of Meech Lake and constitutional reform, Madam Speaker. Regardless of how we eventually come out on that issue in this House, for the first time women have had constitutional lawyers who have been able to look at the issues in the process and come up with a critique. I think they deserve to be heard, Madam Speaker, and I'm very proud that

our government will be holding hearings where we will have a chance to listen to their concerns, to their arguments, weigh what they have to say and then come to a decision.

Again, Madam Speaker, there are so many other issues relating to economic development technology, technology transfer, northern economic development, all the issues relating to the rural communities. I look forward to having our programs presented and debated as we proceed through this Session. But I'm very proud, Madam Speaker, to be a member of this government and to stand up strongly in support of the Speech from the Throne and in opposition to the amendment presented by the Leader of the Opposition.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie.

MR. E. CONNERY: I move, seconded by the Member for Minnedosa, that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

HON. J. COWAN: Madam Speaker, I think there's an agreement, because of the road conditions right now and the storm, to adjourn the House and allow the House to stand adjourned until normal sitting time tomorrow as many of the members have to travel some distance to get home this evening.

MADAM SPEAKER: Is that agreed? (Agreed)

The House is now adjourned and stands adjourned then until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow. (Tuesday)