

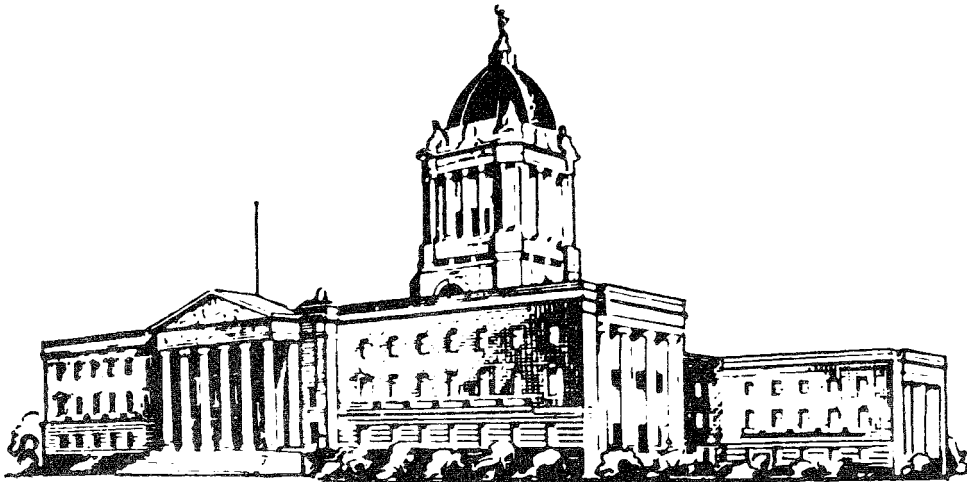


First Session — Thirty-Fourth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)

37 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fourth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	LIBERAL
ANGUS, John	St. Norbert	LIBERAL
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BURRELL, Parker	Swan River	PC
CARR, James	Fort Rouge	LIBERAL
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	LIBERAL
CHARLES, Gwen	Selkirk	LIBERAL
CHEEMA, Gulzar	Kildonan	LIBERAL
CHORNOPYSKI, William	Burrows	LIBERAL
CONNERY, Edward Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
COWAN, Jay	Churchill	NDP
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose du Lac	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNNEY, James Hon.	Arthur	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Emerson	PC
DRIEDGER, Herold, L.	Niakwa	LIBERAL
DUCHARME, Gerald, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	LIBERAL
ENNS, Harry	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Laurie	Fort Garry	LIBERAL
EVANS, Leonard	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen Hon.	Virden	PC
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	LIBERAL
GILLESHAMMER, Harold	Minnedosa	PC
GRAY, Avis	Elice	LIBERAL
HAMMOND, Gerrie	Kirkfield Park	PC
HARAPIAK, Harry	The Pas	NDP
HARPER, Elijah	Rupertsland	NDP
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HEMPHILL, Maureen	Logan	NDP
KOZAK, Richard, J.	Transcona	LIBERAL
LAMOUREUX, Kevin, M.	Inkster	LIBERAL
MALLOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANDRAKE, Ed	Assiniboia	LIBERAL
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
McCRAE, James Hon.	Brandon West	PC
MINENKO, Mark	Seven Oaks	LIBERAL
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
NEUFELD, Harold, Hon.	Rossmere	PC
OLESON, Charlotte Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ORCHARD, Donald Hon.	Pembina	PC
PANKRATZ, Helmut	La Verendrye	PC
PATTERSON, Allan	Radisson	LIBERAL
PENNER, Jack, Hon.	Rhineland	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren	Lac du Bonnet	PC
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Turtle Mountain	PC
ROCH, Gilles	Springfield	PC
ROSE, Bob	St. Vital	LIBERAL
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
TAYLOR, Harold	Wolseley	LIBERAL
URUSKI, Bill	Interlake	NDP
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	NDP
YEO, Iva	Sturgeon Creek	LIBERAL

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, July 27, 1988.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Janet Switzer, Howard Downs and many other aggrieved Manitoba homeowners calling on the Government to make legal counsel available at the Land Titles Office to assist the public in preparing and concluding real estate transactions. I might point out that no additional spending by the department would be necessary.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): I want to present to the House the Manitoba Oil and Gas Corporation as of December 31, 1987, as well as some additional information, a letter from the Manitoba Oil and Gas, payments made by the Government on behalf of Manitoba Oil and Gas, which would be helpful information. Also — and I am sure the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) would want this on the record — information which is a correction of material provided by him as Minister. I will be tabling them at the same time.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Senior Civil Servant shuffle

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): This Government has been in power for nearly three months and already a management style is emerging, one that is unwilling to make major staff decisions. There are those of course that result in a firing. We have an Acting Deputy Attorney-General, an Acting Deputy Minister of Health, an Acting Deputy Minister of Agriculture, an Acting Deputy Minister of Urban Affairs, an Acting Executive Director of the Manitoba Health Services Commission, and an Acting Chief Executive Officer of MPIC. My question is to the Acting Premier. When will these positions be permanently staffed, so that stability is returned to this Government's departments?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Deputy Premier): The pseudonym Acting, or Deputy in this case, I would like to inform the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) that we have some very capable people fulfilling these acting roles in these departments. In the area in which I am responsible, MPIC, I might indicate that I was very pleasantly surprised by the management style on the

abilities of Mr. Graham Lane who has now applied and received an appointment in Workers Compensation.

* (1335)

These positions will be filled with competent people, but we have no doubt at all on the competence of the people who are running those departments right now.

Membership Crown corp. & Govt. Boards

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Although one wonders, if they are so capable, why they are not made permanent heads of those departments.

A great instability also exists in our Crown corporations and Government boards. This Government has systematically replaced its Members with card-carrying Members of the Progressive Conservative Party, many of whom have been active politicians and many who do not have the business credentials the Premier has made reference to in the past. Would the Deputy Premier (Mr. Cummings) please explain if this reversal in policy of his Party is going to continue?

Hon. Glen Cummings: There are some very competent people out in Manitoba, some of whom happen to vote Conservative. There are also some very competent people on those boards who have never held a party card and have no intention of holding a party card. The criteria for going on boards in this Government will be their ability.

Mrs. Carstairs: With a supplementary question to the Deputy Premier (Mr. Cummings).

Will this Government continue to strip the boards of Crown corporations on no other grounds other than they were appointed by the previous Government?

Mr. Cummings: I think there is some misunderstanding about the criteria that we use. I point to the Telephone Board, the chairman of MPIC who we have recently appointed, competent people who are prepared to serve this province, who are prepared to advise this Government on the direction that our boards are going. I can tell the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) that one of the major boards for which I am responsible, the Municipal Board, has not been stripped. In fact, if she is asking me to hurry up and strip it, I wonder if that is what she is asking.

St. Boniface Hospital Strike - Contingency Plan

Mrs. Carstairs: My question is to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard).

Today the St. Boniface Hospital has restricted admissions because of a threatened work stoppage at

the hospital on August 8. Can the Minister of Health inform this House what plans have been made at hospitals other than St. Boniface to deal with the overload which will result as a result of this work stoppage, particularly in the emergency rooms of these other hospitals?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Any time a hospital faces the unfortunate circumstance of a strike and work stoppage, contingency plans are made by that hospital in cooperation with the other hospitals in the city with the utmost goal of assuring patient care, patient safety. I am informed by St. Boniface that those contingency plans are in place. They hope, however, that they will not have to be used and that a resolution to the threatened strike, the threatened withdrawal of service will be accomplished before the deadline.

Mrs. Carstairs: With a supplementary question to the same Minister.

The work stoppage at St. Boniface would not only place an additional strain on hospitals, it would indeed place an additional strain on the home care workers and support staff. Can the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) explain how home care is going to meet that need when in one region in Winnipeg alone, of three supervisors, one is on vacation and one is not available because there is a vacancy. How are they going to meet the needs of particular senior citizens who are going to require home care if this work stoppage occurs?

* (1340)

Mr. Orchard: I would hope the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) is not suggesting that one ought to cancel holiday plans for all staff because of the event of a threatened strike. One cannot have staff available every week of the year, by statute, by contract. Staff have the right to holidays. In the case where staff are taking holidays, there is within the management structure of home care, as well as other departments, people who fill those positions in carrying on the job of Government. That circumstance exists in home care.

Mrs. Carstairs: A supplementary question to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). At the present time there is a four- to five-week delay in providing home care service requests. How is the home care service going to deal with additional requests in many cases on the emergency level caused by this work stoppage at St. Boniface?

Mr. Orchard: I almost get from the tenor of the questions that the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) that she is hoping there is a strike at St. Boniface, and Manitobans are led to suffer from that strike.

What we are talking about is the potential of a strike for which contingency plans are being laid. That is not an unusual situation. Strikes have been threatened in the health care system and, in fact, have occurred in the health care system. Recently, the Health Sciences Centre went through a long and protracted withdrawal of services by one of their unions. The hospital was

able to operate, home care was able to operate, Manitobans received service.

There are delays, there have been delays in home care. The system has not been operating perfectly over the last number of years and the problems have been worsening in home care. That is why we have recently replaced a new director of home care to try to bring some order and focus to the home care program, which I might add to you was pointed out some two years ago when the previous administration was in power, that the home care program was financially out of control. This administration, this Minister are dealing to bring financial control and home care back to order and we are doing it rapidly.

Hazardous Waste Disposal - Flin Flon

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): My question is to the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Connery), and it concerns the use of Manitoba as a dumping ground for toxic or hazardous waste from the United States.

I would like to have the Minister of Environment tell this House, and indeed Manitobans, what action he has taken when the two cars from the Silicon Valley in California arrived in Manitoba for incineration in Manitoba, what action he has taken since they arrived last Friday in this province.

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Environment, Workplace and Health): I can assure you that this Government is very concerned about the environment in Manitoba. We are taking all the action that is necessary to ensure that the environment is protected. So you do not have to worry about anything that is happening in Manitoba. You will be informed of that information when it is appropriate.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely appalling that a Minister of the Environment (Mr. Connery) states to Manitobans that the department basically runs itself and then, when he is asked his first question on environment in this House, does not know where it is, what is going on, and has no answer for Manitobans. What action has the Minister taken in terms of the toxic waste from the Silicon Valley that is in the community of Flin Flon today?

Mr. Connery: There is no action being taken at this moment, Mr. Speaker, but -(Interjection)- you heard it. When action has been taken, you will be informed of it.

* (1345)

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, is the Minister saying there is no action necessary? Is the Minister saying there is no toxic waste that needs to be dealt with? Is the Minister showing this House and indeed Manitobans that we are going back to the '77-81 period when environment was a very, very low, if not a, priority at all in this province for a Tory Government?

Mr. Connery: Mr. Speaker, you can be assured that this Government is very concerned about the

environment. This department is the chairman of the Environment and the Economic Task Force, and we are going to make sure and ensure that the environment is looked after in Manitoba. As you know there is a round table about to be announced very shortly by the Premier (Mr. Premier) of this province to ensure that all aspects of the environment are discussed and dealt with adequately and properly in this Government.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Concordia, with a final supplementary.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, with the greatest respect to the Minister, a round table was recommended by the previous Government and approved nation-wide, and a chairpersonship for the committee talked about was initiated with the previous Minister. So if these are his accomplishments, he is not being very forthright with this House.

I would like to know what the Minister is doing. Does he believe that this does not provide an environmental threat for Manitobans, indeed for the people of Flin Flon? We do not want rhetoric in this House. We do not want a Minister who says you can put it on automatic pilot and let the department run itself. We want a Minister who is concerned about the environment, and he should be able to answer these questions in this House. My question is: What action is he going to take?

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Leader of the New Democratic Party knows as well as anyone who has been around here for the last couple of years that questions should not be repetitive. He also knows that there was no question implicit in his so-called first question and he abused the House rules.

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I saw very clearly that the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Connery) was rising in his seat to attempt to answer what he perceived to be a question. If the Honourable Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) did not hear a question, then perhaps he should consult with the Minister of Labour who was already about to get to his feet to respond to the question from the Leader of the NDP Opposition (Mr. Doer), in respect to a very serious environmental issue that threatens a community in his province. I would hope that the Government House Leader would not try to muzzle his own Members quite so quickly in this Session and would at least allow them the opportunity to be responsible, as the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) said he would make his Ministers responsible for actions such as this, and allow him the opportunity to answer.

* (1350)

We would certainly be pleased on this side, as I am certain all Members on this side and hopefully Members on the Government side, should be pleased to hear what the Minister has to say about this very serious, very urgent, and -(Interjection)- if he has anything to

say indeed.- (Interjection)- I am sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Government House Leader from his seat says, let the Leader of the N.D. Party ask the question. The Leader did ask the question. He asked: What action will the Minister take? If the Minister wants to stand on his feet and say he is not going to take any action, such as he did, then the Government House Leader should allow him that opportunity.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please.

As I am sure the Honourable Member for Churchill knows, he is not being relevant to the point of order. Beauchesne 363 says: "A Minister may decline to answer a question without stating the reason for his refusal . . . "

Mr. Cowan: On the point of order . . .

Mr. Speaker: On the same point of order?

Mr. Cowan: On the point of order, I believe the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Connery) was rising to his feet to answer the question. It is not a matter of a question not being asked, and it is not a matter of the Minister of the Environment not wishing to answer the question. He wanted to answer the question and he was cut off by the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae). That is the point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

The Honourable Government House Leader made the point that the Honourable Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) — and I believe I understood it and I heard it quite clearly — that there was no question in that preamble.

The Honourable Member for Concordia, on a point of order.

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker . . .

Mr. Speaker: On a point of order?

Mr. Doer: I will rephrase the question on my last supplementary.

Mr. Speaker, clearly this House did not hear any answer from the Minister of Environment (Mr. Connery), and it leads one to believe that he does not know what is going on in this department.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member have a question?

Mr. Doer: I would like the Minister to tell this House and indeed Manitobans, if he has not conducted any action to date, will the Minister commit himself today to bring in a cease order under the new Environment Act for the activity from the Hudson's Bay Mining and Smelting Corporation, in terms of using Manitoba as a toxic dump incinerator for their toxic waste from the United States?

Mr. Connery: Manitoba is not a dumping ground for waste. I can assure the Honourable Member that

Manitoba will make sure that our province is protected environmentally. They would have had the opportunity for months to have made sure that there was a round table and other factors in place to ensure the environment, and they did nothing.

This Government is taking action. We have already announced that a round table will be in place and environmental concerns will be established and considered. That will take place. It has been announced.

St. Boniface Hospital Strike - Contingency Plan

Mr. Allan Patterson (Radisson): My question is for the Honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Connery).

It appears from reports in the media that there is not only a possibility but some significant probability of a work stoppage at the St. Boniface General Hospital within the next two weeks. Although the parties have an agreement as to emergency staffing in the event of emergencies to look after essential services, will the Minister inform the House of steps that he and his department are taking to monitor the situation and of any contingency plans they have in the event of some disagreement between the parties as to this essential staffing and in the possible event of a prolonged work stoppage?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Labour): It was just yesterday that I was speaking to a Mr. Dewey Merrett from our department who is working on this conciliation concern. He advises me that progress is being made but, should a work stoppage occur, adequate steps have been taken to ensure that the responsibility of the hospital will be looked after so that the people of Manitoba will not suffer.

Eady Termination

Mr. Allan Patterson (Radisson): A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, in the event of this possible work stoppage at the St. Boniface Hospital now and with the possibility of any essential service work stoppages in the future as collective agreements expire, the possibility of other stoppages in other areas in the private sector and so on — it might not be in essential services but which might do economic harm both to the parties and to the economy of Manitoba generally — will the Minister inform the House why an experienced Deputy Minister of Labour, one who is familiar with the situation, was terminated now or last week?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Labour): As the Honourable Member should know, the Deputy Minister does not get involved in disputes and conciliations. We have a staff and a very competent staff that works to work through this process. These are going on on a continuous basis.

Mr. Speaker, I get letters coming across my desk on a regular routine asking for conciliators, and then we get a letter coming back saying the dispute has been resolved. We have a lot of serious disputes going on in the province right now and we are very concerned.

But these conciliators are working to resolve them and we have had a very high success rate in achieving conciliation.

While the Deputy Minister may be changed, nothing has changed in the departments. We have not melded the various departments into one. Environment is still an independent portfolio. The Workplace, Safety and Health is an independent portfolio, the Labour Department is independent, Workers Compensation is independent, the Civil Service is independent, each one with competent people running them. Nothing has changed to ensure the people of Manitoba are well served by our department.

Mr. Patterson: A second supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

I am well aware of the experience and professionalism and capabilities of the conciliation service in the department. I compliment them. Nevertheless, the department is under the direction of the Deputy Minister of the time.

My supplementary is: Given that the Deputy Minister of Labour was terminated, will the Minister inform the House why some experienced person, somebody experienced and knowledgeable in the field of industrial relations at some other level, say for example, Assistant Deputy Minister or director, was not promoted to the job?

* (1355)

Mr. Connery: As the Honourable Member well recognizes, it is the option of Government to make changes. It is the option of the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to make changes at the Deputy Minister level.

But I would wonder if the Honourable Member is saying that the Assistant Deputy Minister of Labour is not competent of doing his job — he is. The department is running well. As you know, the new Deputy Minister will be in place tomorrow in the department. This is a competent person who has a lot of administrative skills. We look forward to improving upon what is there.

We are not going to be sitting with the status quo that the previous Government was satisfied with, because I am not satisfied with the delivery of service to the people of Manitoba, to the workers of Manitoba, to the environment concerns of Manitoba and the concerns of labour. We will ensure that is going to be improved upon. That Member can be assured of that.

Foster care

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): We listened with interest and anticipation during the Throne Speech when it was mentioned that initiatives would be forthcoming regarding vulnerable Manitobans. Since children, and particularly children in care, are certainly our most vulnerable citizens, my question is for the Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson). Could the Minister tell this House what concrete steps her department is taking to ensure that adequate foster care rates are established wherein the current rates are abysmal?

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Community Services): I thank the Member for the question. Yes, I am aware of the problems with foster care.

I had a meeting with the foster care people in my office not long ago and they expressed very clearly to me their deep concern. I think we owe the foster parents of Manitoba a great deal of gratitude for the fine service which they have provided for children over the years. The very difficult subject of funding, of course, will be dealt with in the Budget and we are working on that. We are also working on — my staff is. In the event that the moratorium should take place, we will be prepared for that eventuality. Of course, we hope that does not happen. We hope that we can negotiate with them before that would take place.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary.

Will the Minister then permit the extensive use of motel rooms and family support staff, should this moratorium come into effect as you have mentioned?

Mrs. Oleson: We do not really think the use of motel rooms is an adequate way to take care of children in crisis. Sometimes it is absolutely — that is the only answer but, no, it is not our ideal situation. My staff is looking at several different ways of addressing this and we have had offers from some agencies, some people, who will help us out. We are looking at all possible ways to solve the problem. The Child and Family Service agencies are also actively looking for ways. We know that there is a shortage of foster parent homes now and it will be a very difficult situation if the moratorium should happen to come to place. My staff is working on that continually, and I am being updated on just the progress they are making.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary.

The Minister mentioned a meeting that she had with the Foster Parents' Association some two weeks ago. Could the Minister perhaps tell this House why, in that meeting with the Foster Parents' Association, she gave no assurances to those association representatives of what she would be forthcoming with regarding foster care rates and, in fact, her response to the association was a no response.

Mrs. Oleson: Mr. Speaker, the reason that I was unable to — and I was just as frustrated about it as they were — is that I am under, of course as anyone else, the constraints of not discussing specific budget items before the Budget is tabled. That was the constraint I was under.

Land Titles Office - Delay

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney-General): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Question Period, the Honourable Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) raised the matter of delays at the Land Titles Office in Winnipeg. I would like to give a further reply to that matter and call attention to the fact that I do believe it would have been unintentional, but the Honourable Member has left information on the record which would lead people to the wrong impression about the backlog at the Land Titles Office. As I told the Honourable Member yesterday, I would look into his question and come back with an answer, which I am here to do now.

* (1400)

The Honourable Member suggested that people have to wait for 43 days at the Land Titles Office, and I suggested that he might have been referring to a worst case date. I am here today to confirm that indeed is the worst case date, and that the actual working or effective date that was being examined yesterday was not posted. By the end of July, on August 2, the Land Titles Office will meet current target dates of 38 days for transfers and 18 days for mortgages. We are currently two and five days ahead, respectively and, with overtime Friday, Saturday and Monday of this week, will improve on these dates. So what the Honourable Member brought forward was totally incorrect. In fact, we are ahead of the targets that we laid down, we are ahead of the targets that have been accepted with glee by many interested parties in this city.

As of the end of the day yesterday, the waiting time for transfers was 36 days, as opposed to the 42 on June 17 and as opposed to the 38 days we expect for the end of July. We are already two days ahead. With regard to mortgages, it is at 13 days. So we are ahead of schedule there by five days.

I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, that I do appreciate the Honourable Member bringing the matter forward, but I do wish he would get his facts straight because, when he does that, he is insulting those hard-working

Hazardous Waste Disposal - Flin Flon

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): I am sure that Manitobans were flabbergasted by the response of the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Connery) when he acknowledged that he did not know that carloads of toxic waste were being brought into this province and that workers' and their families' lives in Flin Flon may be endangered by the incineration of toxic waste. I think his response indicated that he did not know. I do not think Manitobans are surprised that a department that is run on auto pilot or a Deputy Minister who says that he breathes air like everyone else so he is qualified for the job have any faith in this Minister or this Minister's handling of that department.

My specific question to the Minister is: Can the Minister tell this House and the people of Flin Flon whether the transportation of those goods and the handling of those goods was carried out in accordance with the new Dangerous Goods And Transportation Act and the new Environment Act? Can the Minister inform this House whether all of the placarding, all of the elements that are required under that Act were followed in this case to protect workers?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Environment, Workplace Safety and Health): I can assure the Honourable Member that tomorrow I will have for him the full and absolute full details of that question.

Mr. Storie: My supplementary question is to the Minister of the Environment, the new Minister of Labour (Mr. Connery).

The people of Flin Flon and the steelworkers and the health and safety committee that have been working on this issue are not satisfied with that answer. Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister is: Will he have the detailed analysis of the goods that have been transported to Flin Flon, and will he have staff meet with representatives of the steelworkers and the employees of HBM&S to give them the information about what this good is and to ensure that the transportation and disposal of waste in Manitoba is a matter of serious effort by the department and that lives and the threat that people see right now does not reoccur?

Mr. Connery: Mr. Speaker, had the Members known of this earlier, why did they wait until Question Period to bring this to our attention? If they had something, it should have been within their responsibility to bring it. I told the Member that the full information would be tabled in this House and it will be tabled in this House.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Minister.

I spoke last night to confirm the details with the representative of the United Steelworkers in Flin Flon . . .

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member have a question?

Mr. Storie: I did bring it to the attention of this House. Mr. Speaker, the attack of the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Connery) on myself does not relieve him of the fact that he should know that his department is there to protect workers, that workers should not have to be environmental enforcement officers.

Mr. Speaker, my question is: Will the Minister now, with me, go to Flin Flon, explain to the working people in Flin Flon, the steelworkers at the Flin Flon Trades Association, what that toxic waste contains, what danger there lies in incinerating it in Flin Flon so that people can live and work in Flin Flon in safety?

Mr. Connery: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is more interested in politics than he is concerned about the workers in Manitoba.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Connery) should know full well that it is unparliamentary to impute motives in this House. He may be suffering extreme discomfort at his own ignorance of the situation.- (Interjection)- I am not imputing motives; I am stating fact. He may in fact wish to deflect attention away from that ignorance. He can do so in a regular parliamentary fashion if he has the wits enough to do that, but he should not use unparliamentary language and I would request that he apologize to the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) and to all Members of this House to the satisfaction of that Member under the Rules of this House.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Government House Leader, on the same point of order.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, on the question of imputation of motives, the Honourable House Leader for the New Democratic Party might do well to rebuke the Member sitting directly behind him when we are talking about imputation of motives. If the motives of the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) need any explanation, why was it, if he knew this morning about this matter, that he did not approach the Minister immediately?

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Flin Flon, on the same point of order.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, the Attorney-General is now attempting to continue the tactics of the Minister of the Department of the Environment (Mr. Connery). Mr. Speaker, I indicated that I had contacted the representative from the steelworkers last night. I will indicate further . . .

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would like to thank all Honourable Members for their input. I will review Hansard; I will peruse Hansard. I did not hear what the Honourable Member had said. So I will peruse Hansard and I will report back to this House.

Constitutional Accord Hearings

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Deputy Premier (Glen Cummings).

The Throne Speech makes reference to the Government's intentions to hold public hearings on the 1987 Constitutional Accord. Since the Prime Minister made a mockery of the parliamentary hearings, Manitobans will welcome the opportunity to speak their minds. Now the Deputy Premier (Mr. Cummings) is likely aware of very important Manitoba groups such as women's organizations, Native associations, ethnic leaders, rural municipalities, Leaders of the New Democratic Party and their grassroots, even the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, the Triple-E Senate, many Members of whom sit on the opposite side, not to mention constitutional experts and many, many other Manitobans who have expressed grave concerns.

Will the Deputy Premier give assurances to this House that the Government will allow itself to be persuaded by the force of these arguments or will the hearings be only an empty charade?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Deputy Premier): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Member opposite, and assure all Manitobans, that there will be no charades coming from this Government, and I would remind him and remind Manitobans that it was the Members on this side, some of whom are still here, who fought so hard to have that type of an opportunity for Manitobans when there is constitutional change.

Mr. Carr: A supplementary to the Deputy Premier, Mr. Speaker. I am glad to hear that open Government lives and is alive and well on this side of the House, and we will keep in mind that no charades will come from you.

When will the Government introduce the resolution and what time frame for public hearings does the Deputy Premier have in mind?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, those dates have not yet been set. When the Premier returns to the chair beside me, I am sure that he will be quite prepared to enter into discussions with the Opposition as to dates some time in the future so the people of this province have an opportunity to discuss all the ramifications of this motion.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge, with a final supplementary.

* (1410)

Mr. Carr: Mr. Speaker, a question to the Deputy Premier.

I hope that the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) will be coming back with the blank cheque signed so we on this side of the House can have a good look at just what the cost is here.

Does the Government intend to establish a special committee to study the Constitution or will the Government use one of the standing committees of this House?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, that can very well be a very good subject for discussion between all three Parties of this House. That is open Government.

Minnedosa Court House

Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Driedger).

One of the most prominent buildings in our community is the Minnedosa Court House. It has been allowed to fall into a state of disrepair and major work is required. This has been documented in the local papers and across the province. It has also been raised by the legal community. It is a problem that must be addressed and I would ask that the Honourable Minister give us an update on the situation.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Government Services. Order, please. Mr. Minister.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Government Services): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Member for Minnedosa for the question that he raised.

I would like to indicate that the Court House in Minnedosa has been a very underutilized building, and it has basically deteriorated to the point where it is almost unusable. I would like to answer the Member to indicate that we will be doing extensive work on the roof of the house just to make it more stable. We are in consultation with the Attorney-General's Department in terms of seeing whether we can get a more proper use out of the building. As soon as we have an understanding with the Attorney-General's Department, we will be making a report. Thank you.

Port of Churchill - Grain Shipments

Mr. Bill Uruski (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the Minister of Highways and Transportation Services (Mr. Driedger) regarding the

An Honourable Member: The Selkirk bridge.

Mr. Uruski: . . . Port of Churchill.

The Selkirk bridge — they obviously do not have even enough money to put proper signs so people could use that bridge. Those are the politics they are playing with the Selkirk bridge.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order, order.
The Honourable Member.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Highways and Transportation Services (Mr. Driedger): In view of his lack of inaction in making sure that the Port of Churchill is fully utilized and in view of the record shipments of grain sales made by the Canadian Wheat Board, can the Minister indicate today what action he has taken since yesterday to make sure that the Port of Churchill is fully utilized to ship western Canadian grain.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): I am not sure whether the Member understood or was here when the question was raised. The same question was raised yesterday as to what course of action we had taken as a Government regarding the Port of Churchill and moving the grain through there, so I will take the liberty of repeating part of the answer that I made yesterday.

I myself had the occasion to go down to the Port of Churchill where concern was expressed regarding the movement of grain through the Port of Churchill. Subsequent to that, I had a meeting with the federal Minister of Transport, Benoit Bouchard, and the Minister responsible for the Wheat Board, Mr. Mayer, and expressed our concerns about the potential lack of grain movement through the Port of Churchill. This happened last Wednesday. Subsequent to that, our Premier (Mr. Premier) is at the present time raising the issue with the Prime Minister right at this particular moment. So when the Member for the Interlake (Mr. Uruski) indicates there has been a lack of action, I would want to go back in history to see the kind of action that has taken place by the previous administration.

Mr. Uruski: In view of the fact that the Port of Churchill is less than 10 percent full of grain today and normally ships would be docking to load at Churchill at the present time, can the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Driedger) assure this House that there will be an announcement tomorrow that there will be grain in Churchill this week? Will the Premier (Mr. Filmon) come back from Ottawa and say that there will be grain in Churchill this week and the Port of Churchill will be utilized or will it be mothballed, as has been suggested

by Members of Parliament from their Party who are retiring and whose job is protected for seven to ten years like the Member for Lisgar.

Mr. Driedger: First of all, I do not intend to make statements on behalf of my Premier (Mr. Filmon). He will come and indicate when he wants to make a statement regarding what happened with his discussions with the Prime Minister.

I can only indicate that, in my discussions with the federal Minister of Transport, he assured me that fair consideration would be given and I accept that at this stage of the game. If it is not forthcoming shortly, we will be reviewing it again with them and finding out what the status is.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for the Interlake, with a final supplementary.

Mr. Uruski: Can the Minister indicate whether he has had direct discussions with commissioners of the Canadian Wheat Board regarding this issue or has he just sent his Premier (Mr. Filmon) off to do the discussions in Ottawa? Can he indicate whether he has had direct discussions with members of the Canadian Wheat Board regarding the use of that port?

Mr. Driedger: I do not know how much higher a person could go than speaking with the federal Minister of Transportation and the Minister responsible for the Wheat Board. I can talk with all the staff, it does not make any difference. It was my impression that, by talking to the federal Ministers, we had reached the top in terms of those discussions.

Rafferty-Alameda Project - Environmental Impact

Mr. Harold Taylor (Wolseley): My question is to the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Connery). I guess it will be one of the last times I can address him like that.

Presently the Government of Saskatchewan is undertaking a massive dam and reservoir project on the Souris River near Estevan, otherwise known as the Rafferty-Alameda project. Considerable doubts have been expressed about the soundness of the project, especially on its potentially huge negative impact on the environment, i.e., the inter-basin water transfer. Even more alarming, no environmental impact study has been conducted to assess the possible damage to Manitoba. Will the Environment Minister authorize an impact study to research possible consequences of the Saskatchewan Souris River project on Manitoba?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Environment): The Honourable Member should know that the Alameda-Rafferty Dam projects in the southeast corner of Saskatchewan impact initially on North Dakota. Unfortunately, he is not aware of that, and the decisions for what is happening is between Canada and the U.S. and Saskatchewan as that water goes into North Dakota. If we get involved with the International Water Agreement of 1959 when it comes back into Manitoba, we think the impact of the dams on the Alameda and

Rafferty will have significant good implications to Manitoba, as we will have water on a more continuous basis. The Members should know that there are ongoing discussions all the time with Canada, with the federal department and with the North Dakotans, and he knows that the flow of water into Manitoba is regulated out of North Dakota.

So the discussions as far as the volume of water has to come in discussions with the International Water Agreement. He should know that. We think initially our concerns are, as the dam is being filled, that we will have a reduction in the flow of water. Once the dams are filled we will see a continuous flow over a longer period of time, and we think this will have significant good environmental impacts on Manitoba.

In the interim — if the Member would sit down until I am finished then he can get back up.

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

* (1420)

NON-POLITICAL STATEMENT

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation): I would like leave to make a non-political statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member have leave?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I would like to advise Members of the House today is the first day of Spotlight '88 which takes place from July 27 through July 31. The five-day festival organized by Women in the Arts is the result of four-and-a-half years of planning arising from the Focus on Women Conference held in 1983. The festival is an ambitious undertaking featuring more than 30 artists who work in dance, environmental arts, fine crafts, literature, media, music, theatre and the visual arts.

It is the first international festival of Women in the Arts to take place in Canada. Highlighting the festival are new works in several fields, including premier performances in dance and theatre. A major component of Spotlight '88 is the International Film Festival. Exhibitions at galleries throughout Winnipeg are also being featured. There are also workshops, panel discussions, lectures, a free stage and special programming for children. This festival focuses on the extensive contribution made by women to the arts. It is not, however, a festival just for women. As I have pointed out, there are many activities that all can enjoy.

I would therefore like to encourage all Members to take part in the events over the next five days. For your information, events will be held throughout the downtown area, the Exchange District, and St. Boniface. On behalf of the Government of Manitoba, I would also like to congratulate the festival organizers for their dedicated efforts in mounting Spotlight '88 and extend best wishes for the festival's success.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): I rise on a matter of privilege and I will follow my comments with a substantive motion, as required by our Rules. There are two counts of breach of my privilege both by the same Member, the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger), in which I believe aspersions have been cast upon me as a Member of this House. Both occurred yesterday in this House, and this is the first opportunity that I have had to raise them.

I believe this to be a matter of privilege, Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the paragraph on page 76 of our Rules, Orders and Forms of Proceeding, which states, "Libels upon Members and aspersions upon them in relation to Parliament and interference of any kind with their official duties are breaches of the privileges of the Members."

The first is on the subject of the Churchill Development Board, and the Saskatchewan withdrawal of funding. The Minister stated to this House yesterday, and I quote, "Once again I find it amazing how the Member for Dauphin, who was responsible for many years for the Port of Churchill, never indicated to this House that Saskatchewan withdrew their funding for the Port of Churchill Development Board two years ago."

That is simply not true. In Hansard, April 30, 1987, page 1493, the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) asked me a question on this specific topic regarding the withdrawal of funding of Saskatchewan for the Churchill Development Board, and I in paraphrasing this answer to the House, said, ". . . and now we see the main beneficiaries, a Government of Saskatchewan in this case, not looking after their producers, and cutting back completely the support for the Churchill Development Board, which they have provided for the last 15 years. That is a shameful act. We cannot continue to allow that kind of thing to happen. We will be making our views known to the Government of Saskatchewan in the strongest terms immediately." I went on with additional comments on that answer.

Clearly, Hansard, the record of this House, shows that I brought this matter to the attention of Members, contrary to what the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger) said in this House yesterday.

The second count in which I believe my privileges have been breached in this House relates to the following statement by the same Minister yesterday. He said in this House, "I would like to also indicate at this time, that up to the point where we have construction now — this is dealing with Highway 75 — there were no further plans as to the twinning of Highway 75. There was not even a survey or design or functional program, or nothing done."

That is what he said. I want to point out a record of this House, a document that was tabled in this House in the spring of 1987 dealing with the Department of Highways and Transportation, Highways Construction Program, and it clearly shows on page 6, Highway 75, south of PR 305, south of PR 205, 15.3 kilometers,

utility revisions. That was in the new project scheduled for '87-88. That was worth — (Interjection) — I remind the Members of the unequivocal statement made by the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) yesterday, when he stated that there was not even a survey, or design, or functional program or nothing done. — (Interjection) — Three hundred and eighty thousand dollars!

In the carry-over program in that same document, a document of this House, Highway 75 is mentioned no less than three times: 17.1 kilometers for acquisition of right-of-way between 429 and 305, worth some \$300,000 in the Budget that year. Highway 75, south of PR 305, south of PR 205, acquisition of right-of-way for some \$605,000, 13 kilometers — and that does have something to do with it. And Highway 75, south of PR 210, south of PR 305, base and concrete pavement, signing and landscaping for some \$1.85 million, for a total of \$3.135 million. Those dollar figures were not in the document that was tabled, but the outline of the program was in the document table. But I bring that to the Member's attention.

In addition, this, our Government, in the Budget and Estimates that were tabled in this House and defeated by that Government that was in Opposition, had two other projects on Highway 75 that were approved by the Cabinet of our former Government in this Province of Manitoba: Highway 75 south of PR 305, south of PR 205, grade and additional lanes, \$2.625 million; structures — three, \$750,000; and in addition to that, a functional study and location, \$200,000, north of Morris to south of Morris. Clearly, we have an unequivocal statement by the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) which says that there were no further plans as to the twinning of 75. "There was not even a survey or design or functional program, or nothing done." That is what he said to this House.

I believe that these are two blatant, prima facie cases of aspersions being cast upon me as a Member of this House, with that untrue information which was raised and put on the record of this House yesterday. Therefore, I move, seconded by the Member for Interlake (Mr. Uruski), that this House ask the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) for his complete and unequivocal retraction and apology, in view of the aspersions he cast on me yesterday as a Member of this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger), on the matter of privilege raised by the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman). I will accept limited and strictly relevant debate.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I was going to reply to the statement that was made on a matter of privilege.

Based on the comments that were made by the Member for Dauphin, (Mr. Plohman), I would like to indicate, No. 1, on the first item — he has two matters that he is dealing with — I would like to indicate that, if the Member made that statement as he read from the Hansard, I will apologize and withdraw the

comments that I made that he — maybe I was not in the House at the time, but if it is on the record, then I withdraw those remarks.

On the second portion of it, where the Member feels that he has been affronted by comments that I made yesterday about the Highway 75 not proceeding further, I think possibly that the Member misunderstood what I was indicating. First of all, one item, the Budget was never approved for any further extension. There was no further work designated. That Budget was defeated, and the comment that I made was basically that, past the point of the present contract that is in place, which is namely the south end of 205 on Highway 75, the functional study is the one that we will be initiating in our Budget, because there was no Budget being approved. I have no intentions of withdrawing any comments that were made on that aspect of it because there is no further activity stated, past the point that is being done right now.

* (1430)

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): In fine parliamentary fashion, the two Honourable Members have — the first has raised his grievance and the second has made his apology. I believe that it was large and liberal enough to satisfy the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) and I am very pleased with the way that part of the discussion went.

On the second aspect, I do suggest that we have here a dispute on the facts, and it really does not amount to a point of order or a question of privilege.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank all Honourable Members. A matter of privilege is a very, very serious business. I will take it under advisement and I will report back to the House.

MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I would like to move a motion under Rule No. 27. The motion reads:

WHEREAS the Port of Churchill is Canada's only northern seaport and a valuable asset to Manitoba prairie farmers in the entire country; and

WHEREAS there have been indications by the Canadian Wheat Board that either no grain, or very limited grain shipments will be made out of Churchill this year; and

WHEREAS if this were to happen it would create severe hardship for Churchill residents, their families, the business community and other communities along the bay line, such as Gillam; and

WHEREAS grain that could be shipped through Churchill is being diverted to other points at greater expense to prairie farmers; and

WHEREAS the shipping season at Churchill normally begins by the end of July and considerable lead time is required to ship grain out of any port, including Churchill; and

WHEREAS the Conservative Government has failed to impress upon their counterparts in the federal Government the importance of the Port of Churchill and the need for continued shipments through Churchill this year; and

WHEREAS this Legislature has, in the past, put aside partisan differences to support the Port of Churchill; and

WHEREAS there is an immediate requirement for a strong united and proactive defence of the Port of Churchill if we are to salvage this year's shipping season

THEREFORE, I move, seconded by the Member for Dauphin, that under Rule 27 that the ordinary business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, and to urge the Government to immediately lead an all-Party delegation comprised of representatives of each of the Parties in the Legislature, and representatives of other interested groups, to lobby the federal Government and its agencies to immediately commence grain shipments through the Port of Churchill.

MOTION presented.

Mr. Speaker: I believe I should mention to the House, especially for the benefit of new Members, that the five minutes which a sponsor of the motion and a spokesman for each of the other two Parties which will shortly be given is for the purpose of addressing the urgency of debating this issue today. It is not for debating the main issue.

Before determining whether the motion meets the requirements of our Rule 27, the Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) has five minutes to state his case for urgency of debate on this matter. A spokesperson for each of the other Parties will also have five minutes to state the position of their Party on this matter.

Mr. Cowan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your instruction. I do intend to discuss the relevancy of this motion in respect to its urgency and, in doing so, intend to put the situation into the appropriate context so the question of urgency can be dealt with from an informed perspective.

We have now reached a critical stage in this year's shipping season for the Port of Churchill. Just this morning, we heard media reports during which the Canadian Wheat Board once again dashed any hope that the shipping season at the Port of Churchill would commence in the near future. Once again, the Canadian Wheat Board, an agency of the federal Government, indicated that there would be very limited grain shipped to Churchill, if any grain at all. Beyond that, there are serious concerns and growing apprehensions that there may not even be a shipping season at all for Churchill this year.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): There might not be any grain grown at all either.

Mr. Cowan: The Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) says from his seat that there might not be any grain grown

at all. He should know that the Port of Churchill works off of last year's grain shipments almost exclusively. So that is the same argument that we are hearing from the Canadian Wheat Board, and it is an argument that does not hold true when they say it and it does not hold true when the Member for Arthur says it. I think at least he should be forthright enough to very clearly indicate that he supports this resolution and does not vote against it on the basis of fallacious arguments by the Canadian Wheat Board and lame excuses by the federal Government.

All this is happening at a time when grain that could be shipped through the Port of Churchill is being diverted to other ports. That shameful situation alone cannot be allowed to continue. The Port of Churchill, Canada's only northern seaport, is a valuable asset not only to northern Manitoba and to Manitoba in its entirety and to prairie farmers in the catchment area but to the country as a whole.

The grain that is shipped from the Port of Churchill can be shipped from the Churchill catchment area at a much less costly rate than it can be shipped through other ports. That represents significant savings to those farmers who need that sort of assistance at a time when they are facing all sorts of other serious financial constraints due to weather conditions and other circumstances beyond their control.

If Members opposite truly have the interests of the farmer at heart, and I believe they do, and if Members on this side truly have the interests of farmers at heart, and I believe they do, they will look beyond the Port of Churchill in this resolution and look to the effect that it has on the entire farming community in the prairie provinces.

It is a highly efficient port. The fact is that if there is not a shipping season this year, given the excuses that we have heard from the Canadian Wheat Board and just a few moments ago from the Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey), it is unlikely that there will be a season next year because Churchill does operate almost exclusively off of last year's grain, and the impact of the drought is not going to be felt in that regard until next year. So what we are talking about is not a situation that will go away today or will go away -(Interjection)- The Deputy Premier (Mr. Cummings) asked, "What about last year's drought?" He should know that, in the Churchill catchment area, the drought circumstances have been far less devastating than they have been in any of the other areas that are currently suffering drought conditions. There is a carryover of barley available to be shipped out of the Port of Churchill. There was a record level of grain shipments last year. All those facts point to the -(Interjection)- If the Members do not want me to deal with their lame excuses and their poor defences of the Canadian Wheat Board and the federal Government, then let them not make them from their seat but let them speak to the facts.

* (1440)

Mr. Speaker, it is, in fact, urgent. There is an urgent need for this discussion; it is self-obvious. If there is

any question as to whether or not the matter is of extreme public importance and if you do not want to rely upon my assessment of the situation, one would need only to review the remarks of the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger) this morning when he learned of the remarks of the Canadian Wheat Board, at which time he indicated extreme concern, if not alarm.

We are fast approaching the point of no return for this shipping season for the Port of Churchill. Once that happens, no amount of lobbying will resurrect this year's shipping season. Considerable lead time is required to ensure a successful shipping season for any port, not just the Port of Churchill but for any port. The port itself is no exception. We must act now. Already the effects are being felt in Churchill, in Gillam and all along the bay line. Workers have not been called back. Normal activities by CNR which would usually precede a shipping season have not begun. So there is an extreme urgency and a need for this Legislature to set aside partisan differences and to call upon the Government to lead an all-Party delegation to Ottawa to lobby the federal Government to ensure that they understand fully well the importance of Churchill to this province, to this Legislature, to each and every one of us, and to the country as a whole.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, as a junior Member of the three House Leaders, I hesitate to give advice to people who have much greater experience than I. I was surprised, however, to see the Honourable House Leader for the New Democratic Party move this motion. When I read our rule book and when I read Beauchesne, the precedent on this kind of issue seems very clear. So having such respect for the ability, experience and knowledge of the House Leader for the New Democratic Party, I went to his positions when he was Government House Leader on debates of this sort.

The issue before us is not the importance of the Port of Churchill. On that issue, Members of my caucus concur with many of the concerns which the Honourable Member has raised. The issue before us now is whether or not timely opportunity exists to debate this matter. I note that, on many occasions during his tenure as Government House Leader, the Honourable Member rose to speak against setting aside routine business on the grounds that the Throne or Budget Debates, as well as Estimates, afforded Members such an opportunity. On the occasions when they did allow debate, the Honourable Member still spoke against it. I would also like to point out that, were it not for this motion, we would already be continuing debate on the response to the Throne Speech and the Honourable Member could be given leave to speak first. On that basis, he would have 40 minutes to speak, not 10.

However, I do have an additional alternative to offer the Member. Our critic for Northern Affairs, the Honourable Member for Niakwa (Mr. Driedger) has submitted a Private Member's Resolution which we believe addresses the concern that the Honourable Member has. As the Honourable Member for Churchill

(Mr. Cowan) is aware, such a resolution, in addition to providing for debate, would also allow for a vote and, if successful, a decision. We would, of course, require leave to have such a resolution move forward on the Order Paper but, should that be forthcoming, this matter could be dealt with on Thursday next.

I would like to note also that the Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan), while commenting on my Leader's offer of Question Period as an additional forum for raising urgent matters to public attention, when he did that, he stated that she had, and I quote: "She made a blunder that will haunt her for years." My only response to that is he must be feeling the ghosts of such a blunder for he made precisely the same reference on Wednesday, May 28, 1986.

In conclusion, we feel that ample opportunity exists to debate this matter.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, if I were the Member representing the constituency of Churchill, I dare say I would feel the same concerns as the Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) has expressed. Indeed, I think I can speak for all the Members of our caucus and say that we share in that concern.

The day after the election on April 27, Mr. Speaker, I attended the funeral of one Cecil Smith, former Conservative MP for Churchill. I remember being in Ottawa during his term of office and it seems like he never got up to speak but, whether it was Question Period, Private Members' Hour or whatever the Bill was, Interim Supply, or we could be talking about railroad crossings and lights and bells, but Cecil Smith would always want to talk about the Port of Churchill. So I can understand the Honourable Member for Churchill's (Mr. Cowan) concern.

However, I have to say that he is a little off the track again in the sense that we were talking about the urgency here. There are a number of opportunities available to him and to his colleagues. It surprises me a little bit. For example, today we did have a Question Period. The matter of the Port of Churchill was placed last on the agenda of the New Democratic Party and that was the last question asked today by the New Democrats. In fact, the Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) did not raise the question at all and he had the opportunity during Question Period.

I wonder what would satisfy the Members of the New Democratic Party. We have a Premier (Mr. Filmon) of this province, the highest elected official in this province, at this very time in Ottawa speaking about this very issue to the Prime Minister of Canada. How much higher can you go? I think we have an unfortunate and poorly timed expression of a lack of support for federal-provincial relations in this rather important matter.

Yesterday, the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) said in this House, Mr. Speaker, that Manitobans are tired of begging for action on the Port of Churchill. I ask you: Who has been in charge of this province for the last six years? This matter is not a brand-new matter. It is urgent every year. Where were Honourable Members opposite for the last six years

on this very issue? -(Interjection)- a question put by the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) himself.

I can refer you, Mr. Speaker, as the Honourable Opposition House Leader has done, to some precedent in this regard. Previously, last Friday, when a matter regarding in-vitro fertilization was raised, I cited some precedents for the Chair and for the Chair's consideration, but I would also like to refer Honourable Members to Beauséne's Citation No. 285, which makes the point that the matter being raised must be within the administrative responsibility of the Government. But for heaven's sake, our Government is doing what it can. Our Premier (Mr. Filmon) is in Ottawa today and our Premier is addressing this very issue. I do not know how much more responsive the Government of Manitoba can be to this issue.

So, as I said, I would refer you, Mr. Speaker, to my comments on Friday with regard to the previous application and to the precedent set by Mr. Speaker Walding and by Madam Speaker Phillips in the past regarding this issue.

There was one other matter I wanted to make and that is that, if you look at what the Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) is putting forward, I think, if we are all going to be honest with each other, we have to recognize that what we have got, if you take out a few words from what he is putting forward, we have nothing more than a thinly disguised Private Member's Resolution.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

I would like to thank Honourable House Leaders for their wisdom. In order for debate to proceed on a matter of urgent public importance, the Speaker must receive prior notice of the proposed motion. I did receive such notice from the Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan). Under our Rules and Practices, the subject matter requiring urgent consideration must be so pressing that the public interest will suffer if it is not given immediate attention. There must be no other reasonable opportunities to raise the matter. The Honourable Member will, I believe, have numerous opportunities during the Throne and Budget Speech Debates and during the consideration of departmental Estimates to raise this matter.

I do appreciate the Honourable Member's concern about this particular subject, but I must inform him that, in my view, the conditions governing a matter of urgent public importance have not been met. Therefore, I must rule his motion out of order as a matter of urgent public importance.

Mr. Cowan: Mr. Speaker, with the greatest of respect, I challenge your ruling.

Mr. Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been challenged. Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained? All those in favour, please say Yea; all those opposed, please say Nay.

In my opinion, the Yeas have it, and the ruling of the Chair is sustained.

* (1450)

Mr. Cowan: Yeas and Nays.

Mr. Speaker: Call in the Members.

The question before the House is: Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?

* (1500)

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

YEAS

Alcock, Angus, Burrell, Carr, Carstairs, Charles, Cheema, Chornopyski, Connery, Cummings, Derkach, Downey, Driedger (Emerson), Driedger (Niakwa), Ducharme, Edwards, Enns, Ernst, Evans (Fort Garry), Gaudry, Gilleshammer, Gray, Hammond, Helwer, Kozak, Lamoureux, Mandrake, Manness, McCrae, Minenko, Mitchelson, Neufeld, Oleson, Orchard, Pankratz, Patterson, Penner, Praznik, Roch, Rose, Taylor, Yeo.

NAYS

Ashton, Cowan, Doer, Evans (Brandon East), Hemphill, Maloway, Plohman, Storie, Uruski.

Mr. Clerk, William Remnant: Yeas 42; Nays 9.

Mr. Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been sustained.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik), standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Community Services, who has 17 minutes remaining.

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Community Services): It is always rather unfortunate, when one is in the middle in the full flight of one's speech, to be interrupted by the clock. So I will try and get back in the swing of things and continue with the address that I was making yesterday.

When the hour became six o'clock yesterday, I was in a discussion on the Welcome Home Program and had mentioned that our concern, as a Government, for the safety of people and individuals who had been perhaps moved a little too quickly into the community in that program and how it is one of our priorities to make sure that those people are safe and leading good and enriched lives in their present circumstances.

* (1510)

By saying that I think they were moved too quickly into the community in the Welcome Home Program, I am not saying that we are going to halt moving people out of institutions. That is not the intention. As I said, I believe yesterday, this Government feels that it would be appropriate to pause and take a look at what facilities we have, what programs we have in place, and what

we could do to improve those to make sure that those people are being well taken care of, an evaluation of the program. We realize that community supports must be put in place so that there is safety and quality of life, and those needs are being met.

But we must also consider and improve the quality of life for the people who are still in institutions in this province and, of course, we still have residents of institutions. Some people may choose that is the best place for their family and we do have to respect their choices. We cannot tell people where their children are to be and we must respect the opinions of parents and guardians.

Another one of my top priorities is the provision of improved Child and Family Services. Again, in this area, we have issues of broad-ranging concern. They are very complex and we must approach them with the needs of children foremost in our minds, and that is what this Government is doing. The needs and the importance and the care of the children are the primary concern when we are addressing the issues and the problems which we have inherited, and we must develop an effective plan to operate the system better.

There are great funding concerns in this area. They have been brought to my attention on several occasions by people in the field, by people who are concerned, through various agencies, and that has to be a top priority. The area affecting children and family structure has to be one of the top priorities in society, and to neglect this issue would be to neglect the very foundation and the future of our society.

This Government knows, and it was raised in Question Period today, we know the importance of foster parents in this whole picture of child welfare and child protection and we do recognize the valuable contribution that foster parents have made to society. People all across Manitoba and other provinces who take into their homes children for their protection and nurture, we commend them for the work they have done over the years.

On a personal note, I have members of my family, my brother and his wife who do not live in this province — they once did — and when they were living in this province, they did a lot of foster care. They are still continuing that practice in their province, and there are many children who have gone through their home and who come back to see them periodically. I know that they find it hard to part with those children when they leave. Even though they know they are going to be in an adopted home, those children become part of their lives, part of their family, and I know that they, like many others, are providing that kind of care.

With regard to the rates for foster care, that problem did not arrive just recently. It did not arrive two and one-half or so months ago, just after the election. That problem has been festering for some time. There has not been an increase in foster care rates for some time and we agree that they are low. We know there is urgency in the matter. The foster parents are saying they cannot tolerate this.

One of the problems, I guess, is that over the last few years there has been a great escalation in children

in care and some of the problems of children in care are far more acute than they have been, say, a few years ago. The children that are in care are victims of abuse, children who need very special attention and a great deal of care. There are disabled children. There is a wide range of special needs that these children have.

We know that there is urgency in the matter of addressing this but, as I had to say to the foster parents organization who came to my office, we cannot really, as a Government, in one Budget which we have put together to address the needs of this year, we cannot be realistically expected to catch up for seven years of neglect. I know that is hard for the foster parents to hear. I know that they did not want that answer and I did not want to give that to them, but that is the type of thing we are faced with. We are still looking at those rates and seeing if there is some way that we can help them. Of course, until the Budget comes down next week or the week after, whichever it is, I am not at liberty to talk about exactly the funding levels for that care.

Another area, of course, of concern in my portfolio of Community Services is the provision of day care in Manitoba. The key words to a successful day care program are quality, affordability and accessibility. Those are our Government's goals for day care in this province. We intend to increase the options in day care delivery to meet the changing needs of families in both urban and rural areas.

In the short term, we will, in cooperation with the federal Government, increase the number of day care spaces available to Manitobans. We will negotiate with the federal Government to obtain the maximum benefit for this province from the major increases in support which the federal Minister announced just recently in Ottawa. It seems to be that somebody somewhere along the line got the idea and has perpetuated the myth that, unless we were giving out a program and a plan almost before the announcement was made, we would somehow lose out on money. I am here to tell you today that is not the case.

The agreement between the federal Government and the province has to be negotiated. All the provinces are in the same situation. No one has signed an agreement. In fact, the legislation, if it is printed now — the ink must still be wet because the last time I got an update on it, it was still being printed. After we get a copy of the legislation and know the parameters with which we are working, then we will work towards negotiations. It seems unfortunate that people seem to perpetuate these myths that somehow Manitoba would not be getting its share if we do not grab it and scream and yell today. We will negotiate, we will get our fair share for Manitoba, and we will put in as many day care spaces as we possibly can with that. It was a generous response from the federal Government when they increased by \$1 billion their initial announcement for funding for that system.

We also want to look at other ways of delivering day care in the province. We are interested particularly in workplace day care. It would be a system which would allow more togetherness for families if they had an

access to day care in the place where either parent worked, and so we feel that is one good way to go.

We also have to look at the rural scene, partly because of the economics of the farm areas. There are many women who find themselves having to work extremely hard on some of the farm duties in seeding time, in harvest and, more particularly, where perhaps the farm operation had hired someone before, the wife finds that she is driving the grain truck and doing all these chores. It is very difficult on an irregular basis to get the kind of day care they need. People in my constituency and other rural areas have mentioned that to me as a problem, and so I think that is one thing, I know that is one thing we will be looking at, for instance, with our task force to see if we can find some practical way of delivering this kind of service they need. Of course it is a little more difficult when it is seasonal and the hours are rather flexible.

* (1520)

But I think we should be able to help them. We should be able to come up with a reasonable way to do this. When we are interested in high-quality and accessible day care, as we all are, then we will put our minds to it and come up with a solution. I will be announcing the make-up and the mandate of the task force on day care as soon as possible. Some areas that we may want to review are the qualifications of workers and the quality of their training. The special needs of disabled children should be looked at, ensuring clear responsibilities for reporting child abuse situations.

It will be an important opportunity for people to express their views on how the system is working, how we can improve it, and how it should be expanded in an orderly way, taking advantage of all the dollars we have which are always scarce. For any program like this, we could always do with more money. That is the bottom line of every program. No matter what you put into it, it could always be more.

But we recognize the importance of a good day care system in enabling also the economic equality of women. That is one of the major things that can help women to be in the work force and have a stable place for their children to be while they are engaged in their line of work.

This leads me to another topic of interest to me as the Minister responsible for the Status of Women. The economic equality of women is an important issue to the members of my Party. The Government's Women's Directorate will pursue its mandate of developing a coordinated strategy to assist women to overcome longstanding barriers to equality. Across the areas of service within my ministerial portfolio, the needs of women in our society are a frequent and common theme. They seem to fit in with the two other portfolios of which I am Minister. They do sort of have a common theme with them that we can look at together.

I am particularly, of course, interested in one particular community service for women, and that is in assisting victims of family violence. I am actively involved along with the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) in seeing that the new and larger facility for Osborne House

becomes a reality. I am hoping that very shortly we can make some announcements on that acquisition of a building. I know that they are working on it. They will soon be coming forward with a suggestion of exactly what facility.

We are committed to initiatives of this type. Family violence is not something that we eagerly want to provide a service for, but it is a service that must be provided, unfortunately, because it is a reality.

I am afraid in the time that is limited to me I am going to have to probably cut short a very important department that is under my jurisdiction, and that is the Department of Employment Services and Economic Security. I think perhaps I should say that lest that department or anyone interested in it, and I am sure everyone is, feels that I am ignoring it. I think perhaps I will have to leave the discussions of that particular department to my Budget Speech.

I guess what happened was I got so carried away in talking about my constituency and various other things yesterday that I did not pay particular attention to my notes and I kind of wandered and got off my timing. I will say that it is a great privilege to address this House as the Member for Gladstone and as a Minister for the first time. It is quite a challenging and, I must say, a rewarding experience. It is a nice experience too to look forward to voting for a Throne Speech.

When we were in Opposition it always seemed that we had to take a sort of negative tone. That is the very essence, I guess, of Opposition — that you oppose. Now it is a great privilege to me to be able to say that I will support the Throne Speech as put forward by, read by the Lieutenant-Governor in this House last week. I look forward to the opportunity of speaking on the Budget. Thank you very much.

Mr. Bill Uruski (Interlake): I want to thank you for this opportunity of taking part in this debate on the first Throne Speech of the minority Government in the Province of Manitoba.

I want first of all to congratulate you on your election to the highest office in this Assembly, and I also want to thank you for the kind words that you expressed to myself and my wife during the election campaign on Portage Avenue when we met. I think it was in the early part of April that we met. I appreciated your friendship, and I look forward to your diligent and resourceful advice that you will provide all Members.

I welcome all the new Members in this Chamber. I know that there will be some difficult moments, some growing pains and some frustrations for all of us as we, over the next period of time, try to make our mark on behalf of our constituents and the people of Manitoba, in general, to make sure, as all Members do, that I think our role in this Assembly is to improve the quality of life for all our citizens regardless of the political stripe that we may represent as Members.

To all these new Members, I look forward in working with them in a constructive way. Sometimes some Members may not see it as so constructive. However, that is the nature and the format of the Legislature,

but I certainly look forward to all their company. I want to say to my friends on the Government side, I want to wish all the Ministers well in their portfolios, knowing already that they are on the slippery slope and will be on the verge of moving out within the next 12 months or so, maybe even sooner than that.

* (1530)

I think the beginning was there already today. The Minister of Environment just showed Manitobans and Members of this Assembly how incompetent a group the Conservative caucus is, how they have been in office — I sat in this Assembly, and I have sat in this Assembly now for 19 years. For the last six years, the Conservative Party sat on this side and bullied and brought what I would call the Conservative arrogance into this Chamber and said: "We will govern, get out of the way." It took a non-confidence motion and a defeat by one of my own colleagues, who I considered a colleague, which I guess today I do not consider a colleague. Just in a few short months, that same bunch is just showing Manitobans how incompetent they are. Today, the Minister of Environment (Connery) did not even know that there are chemicals being stored in the community of Flin Flon for incineration. He did not even know his department. It is obvious that that department will be downgraded, will be left to run on pilot, and that will be the basis of the kind of governing we have in this province.

The second example, the Government had an opportunity today to co-opt all Members of the Legislature to deal with a matter of urgent public importance and that deals with what I believe all Members in this Assembly would want to share, and that is the strategic nature of the Port of Churchill, not only to our province but to our country, and to say that the loss of a shipping season in the Port of Churchill may spell disaster for that port. Today, the Government and the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Driedger) told us that the Premiers in Ottawa were discussing this. I will be expecting, and I am sure Members of the House will be expecting tomorrow, that there will be a statement from the Premier (Mr. Filmon) saying that there will be a full shipping season out of the Port of Churchill and that grain will be moving. Ships should be in the Port of Churchill today. They should be there already getting ready to load. There is, by my calculations, about 400,000 bushels of barley. Grain should be heading up for the Port of Churchill.

Nothing is happening. This group, if there is no action taken — and they could have had all Members of the Assembly going to Ottawa lobbying the federal Government, lobbying the Canadian Wheat Board, even lobbying their Senators if that is what they so desire, to make sure that there is grain shipped out of the Port of Churchill, but that will rest on their shoulders, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

My colleagues on the right, they should have seen that because time is of the essence on this one. We lose it for a week and you are going to lose the bulk of the shipping season out of Churchill. That will rest on all our shoulders to say that we did not do all we could have to air this problem and to get together in

this Assembly to make sure that we do all we can to continue what is the life blood of Churchill, but is also a very strategic port in our nation which is within the Province of Manitoba.

The Throne Speech that was presented by the Government — and before I go into the Throne Speech, I want to congratulate the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) on his moving the Throne Speech, the newly elected Member. I have had occasion to meet with him in his capacity as assistant to the federal Minister of Health, and I expect that our cordial relationship that we have enjoyed in the past will continue in the future. It may not be so cordial on policy issues, but as individuals I am sure that we will all enjoy your company.

As well, to the newly elected Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer), and that is you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to congratulate you on your contribution to the Speech from the Throne, in seconding that speech, and I wish you well in your tenure as Member serving that part of our province in what I would consider the central mid-west, the Minnedosa region. We are pleased to be acquainted with you.

The Throne Speech really has very little vision and foresight. I want to deal with one of my favourite issues and that is the whole issue of rural life in our province. There are a number of issues that were touched on in the Throne Speech which show the lack of leadership, the lack of vision by the Conservatives when it comes to the question of dealing with rural Manitoba. It is kind of funny that the Conservative Party, having the kind of support that they do from rural Manitoba, in fact take rural Manitoba for granted. They take the farming community and the rural communities for granted because of the historic support that they have had. There is virtually nothing in the Throne Speech that is of a positive nature for the farming communities in rural Manitoba.

Where is the new agreement on sewer and water for rural Manitoba when there is a pressing need? There are more than \$70 million worth of requests from rural communities to the Water Services Board, no mention of an enhanced sewer and water program for rural Manitoba.

I am sure many of those constituencies and those communities represented by Conservative Members are crying for assistance because of the drought and the need for improved water facilities for those communities. We hear nothing, nothing in the Throne Speech. What we hear, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what do we hear? We say, a checkoff, a checkoff for farm legislation. I will be, as one Member, very interested in seeing the kind of legislation that will come forward. I will be. And I want to say to my honourable friend, the Member for Rhineland, Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner), who in fact lead the farm organization and the proposals there, I want to tell him, if the legislation parallels the legislation that his group proposed, I think they will be doing a disservice to the farmers of this province.

I believe that they have to recognize the diversity of rural Manitoba and the diversity of opinion in the farm

community. There is diversity. One cannot make the case, as has been made by Members on their side, that somehow Manitoba is like Quebec and why do we not have an organization like the Province of Quebec?

The fact of the matter is the Province of Quebec and the farming community there has one main thrust and one main direction — that they are maybe not in total unanimity, but they are in the majority in unanimity — and that is to work towards supply management, to greater stability within their province, and self-sufficiency.

There may be differences of opinion, but clearly that is not the case in terms of agricultural politics, and I say agricultural politics in the kind of sense to the agricultural community in our province. So clearly I will be one that will be looking with interest at the legislation that they will be bringing in.

The other area that the Conservative Government raised in the Throne Speech is the area of tripartite stabilization, as somehow being a new thrust on behalf of the Government of this province to the farm community, saying we will provide stability to the farmers of Manitoba by bringing in tripartite stabilization. What a crock! What a crock, and I say that this item has been discussed at federal-provincial meetings for more than a decade and there has been no unanimity in this country to join tripartite.

They made the statement in the speech that hogs and sheep and beef will all be in tripartite. Where have they been? The Hog Agreement was signed in 1985. Manitoba is part and parcel of national tripartite in hogs and signed it, and that is not an issue.

* (1540)

Now we are talking about sheep. Sheep! There has not been that kind of unanimity in the sheep industry and we were working with sheep producers. I hope that there will be unanimity and we can join. But there has been no disagreement, as kind of hinted in the Throne Speech, that somehow now with this new Government there will be a new direction into tripartite. Nonsense. Total nonsense!

When it comes to beef, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have said it to the reporters, that I will give the new Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) a pat on the back if there will be agreement to join the tripartite stabilization. In fact I will be asking him, when are we phasing out of the provincial plan? When are we into national tripartite? But I venture to say, before the end of this Session, there will be no national movement into beef tripartite.

Just as nice statements have been made at the federal-provincial meeting in Toronto saying all is rosy. Just as soon as those statements were made, you can rest assured that the Minister from Quebec and the Minister from Alberta were at each other's throat, contradicting one another and pointing fingers at one another. Who is subsidizing their agriculture and their beef industry more?

That is really the issue. It is a battle between the bottom-loading subsidies of Alberta, through the Crow offset and a number of other subsidies, and the Province

of Quebec who want to hand it right over the table on the top-loading. That is really the issue. To say now that we will abandon the feedlot industry in this province or at least say since the feedlot industry did not want to participate . . .

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): You did not leave us one.

Mr. Uruski: The Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) says there is not a feedlot industry. The Member can rest assured that, as quickly as markets change, the feedlot industry will be in business.

It is the cow-calf industry that is the sole heart of the cattle industry in this province and without that industry — (Interjection) — Well, we will see what kind of growth, to the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger), and changes that they will make by their policies.

But I venture to say, and I say to them and I hope I am proven wrong — I want to tell my honourable friends I hope I am proven wrong — that there may be some new-found agreement at the national level to bring in a so-called level playing field but I do not believe that will occur.

That is really the essence of agricultural policy emanating from the Government in this first Session. Where are they, in terms of dealing with the farm community who are experiencing the severe drought that they are in this year, in their riding?

An Honourable Member: They have signed an agreement.

Mr. Uruski: Yes, they have signed an agreement to deal with drought payments and some assistance to the farming community from the federal Government. I applaud them for that. I think it is a step in the right direction. But that assistance will not help many in the farm community who have been, I guess one could put it to you, carrying on by a string. They have just been surviving over the last three or four years and they are just able to hang on another year. This year may be the crunch.

If anything should happen this year — what should have happened in the Throne Speech in the Government — is that there should have been a recognition that again the monetary policy of this Government, of the national Government, is wrong-headed.

Interest rates are on the rise again. Mortgage rates are hitting the 12 percent range right now. In fact, the Premier of Saskatchewan, who was also doubling as Agricultural Minister this spring, made the statement saying why do we not all get together and talk about this crisis in the farm community because we are losing farmers.

I guess I was too early in some of my suggestions in this whole area. All lending institutions, both public and private, will take losses as a result of the huge farm debt that farmers face.

Is it so difficult, without the media, to call a national conference, consult with farm leaders, consult with the

farmers, call all the bankers in, and say: All right, what is the bottom line? What kind of losses are we prepared to sustain? Because we will all sustain them; we will all take our losses. You will have write-offs in MACC. FCC has written hundreds of millions of dollars off, the banking industry will write them off.

What we should be saying, and I am glad that Grant Devine has said it this spring: Let us meet, let us pull all our resources together and let us say, all right, if we have to, because we will write off some farm debt, what is the element, what are the criteria for saving farm units? And let us not get rid of the next 20 or 30 percent of our farm community, because all we will be doing as soon as the turnaround starts occurring, and there is evidence of that because of the world marketing grain, what we will be doing is we will be starting all over again.

What we will be doing is we will start a new generation of farmers. We will start getting into debt again and buying land and we will be back into that vicious cycle all over again. We are really missing an opportunity to really concretely put aside the partisan politics in this country and really deal with the rural economy in a positive way.

What also could have been done, and I ask the Government to consider that, is that in areas and especially areas in southern Manitoba where the drought is the severest — the legislation is on the books — is to even consider a pending resolution on the question of farmers who are in financial difficulty and look at and consider a selective moratorium. They should look at that very seriously. — (Interjection) — Oh, the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Driedger) says, how do you apply it.

They had all the answers when they were on this side. They wanted to govern, they wanted everybody out of their way. Surely, you have the mental capacity and the advice there that can deal with that, and that is not a hard one to answer. The Act is there. The Act is stronger — and he knows that — than the federal legislation. But those meetings should be held with the farm community and that kind of a rapport can be held because you will be caught again. And you are caught! Interest rates are rising at a very, very inopportune time for the farming community in terms of mortgages and short-term borrowing because of the interest rate presently being held. I tell my honourable friends opposite the cognizance of that because you will do the farming community a disservice if you do not act.

As well, I want to say to my honourable friends opposite, is I was responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation prior to the election, and I know the Deputy Premier — I think the Deputy Premier now who is responsible for that corporation is in fact smiling because of the changes that were made by this Government and he will want to be taking some credit for having a positive financial picture within a short period of time. But it is that group that will have to be very careful not only on the Autopac side but on the general insurance side in terms of the service provided Manitobans.

Let them not be too hasty in trying to say that the inefficiencies in the general insurance side should be

gotten rid of by selling off the general insurance arm. It is really not the general insurance arm that has been the difficulty. It has been the venture of that corporation. In fact, three-quarters of the losses sustained by that corporation, the ventures into reinsurance, that caused the financial difficulties in that corporation, not the general insurance portfolio per se, the service to Manitobans.

* (1550)

I want to say to my honourable friends, we are responsible for a portion of those losses but, for those Members opposite, for the Government of the Day, to say that somehow all those problems are our fault, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is nonsense. In fact, I ask the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) that, since he is doing an accounting review of MPIC as part of their analysis, he better do the analysis and the review of the deal made by his colleague, the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) when he was Minister responsible for MPIC. That same company that we had to show a \$3.5 million loss this year was as a result of a deal in reinsurance signed by his colleague. That same company that gave him \$3,000 in election contributions, that same company that gave the Honourable Member for Lakeside over \$3,000 gave the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of this province a contribution, gave several Members of their Party who are now not sitting in this House contributions. That better be part of that review that he is doing on accounting, because those losses going back to 1980 are showing up in the 1987 statement. So the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) better instruct those auditors that they had better make sure that they comment on that report because otherwise clearly it will be a whitewash.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): You do not instruct the auditors.

Mr. Uruski: The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) says you do not instruct auditors. You tell the auditors that you want a specific overview of that transaction, and I am asking the Minister of Finance to make sure that is part of their mandate because clearly the boondoggle created by his colleague is one that they are going to have to account for. They are now in Government and they will have to explain why they went into that deal. They had better not, just for philosophical reasons, get rid of the general insurance portfolio and the jobs, not only the jobs in Brandon and in Winnipeg and the service to many Manitoba industries because there are many industries and many homeowners in this province who, in 1975, came to the Government and said, we cannot get insurance, nobody will touch us. We did provide a service. We went into competition and that situation does exist today. Now the competitive market may be somewhat accelerated but, clearly, there is a stabilizing role that that corporation can play for Manitobans. So do not let your hang-ups get ahead of you on this one and make any rash decisions on behalf of Manitobans.

We in this Party campaigned to the people of Manitoba that we would be a Government and a Party of fairness to all Manitobans. Our Members will be, and are, presenting a number of major pieces of

legislation and resolutions to be debated in this Assembly to show that there is a clear distinction of philosophical approach to the affairs of this province between the Conservative Party and the New Democratic Party and the Liberals. It is clear in the last number of days that the Liberal Party does not seem to have much philosophical difference from the Conservatives. They tend to be very much a part of the same pair of pants, as one would put it in the countryside — the same pair of pants, only a different pocket.

Only time will tell as to whether there is a difference on a number of issues which cut across political lines. The Liberals could have created debate. It would not have brought down the Government. They as well wanted to raise those issues. Churchill was one of them. The Leader of the Liberal Party, who was in this House by herself, did the same thing before. I will say, and she will call me to order, that her philosophical approach on economic matters is aligned, if not to the right, of some of the Conservatives Members. I would categorize her as a Campbell Liberal, a very conservative Liberal on economic matters.

There may be some social matters where she has a positive approach and I think we can see eye to eye on some of those approaches. Clearly, on economic matters, she would be a Campbell Liberal that I would describe. In essence, that makes no difference between the Liberals and the Conservatives in this Legislature, no difference.

Clearly, the difficulty for them now in this Assembly is what happens in the federal election? How soon will it be held? Will there be a Liberal federal Government? If there is, do they see their chances of being elected as Government in Manitoba evaporating very quickly, because the tendencies of the Canadian populace have been that, if there is a federal Government of one stripe, chances are that a provincial Government of the same stripe does not get elected or those chances are very slim.

An Honourable Member: You will never have to worry about that, Bill.

Mr. Uruski: All my colleagues from f

An Honourable Member: Try Fort Garry.

Mr. Uruski: Fort Garry, because it was Springfield before, but now it is Fort Garry. He ran in Springfield the last time. In 1986, the Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Evans) ran in Springfield. Right? Yes, that is right. He ran in Springfield and says we now never have to worry about it.

I think this federal election will be a toss-up. I think it is wide open. I believe that, notwithstanding the outcome in Manitoba, the results of that federal election are wide open game; it is a toss-up. Clearly, the kind of what I would call false or blustering confidence that is exuded by some of the Conservatives on the Government side does not exist when they go, or the bravado that they show does not exist when they get back into their caucus rooms and they start sweating.

In fact, the Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard), who is now the Minister of Health — and I have got to tell you a story. During the election campaign, and I have to say this firstly, I want to thank the people of Interlake profoundly for having shown the confidence that they have shown me over the last 19 years, notwithstanding the massive push by the Conservative Party to unseat me.

In 1986, they had 2,000 members in my Riding and that is what they got in the 1986 election, 2,000 votes. No one else voted for them; that is what they had. The Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. Johnston), he is no longer here, my friend Frank, smiling Frank, said, "Billy, we are going to get you." That is the kind of comment — and I do like Frank. The former Member for Sturgeon Creek, Frank Johnston, came to the Interlake because their candidate allegedly was sick. He could not go on the platform. He went on the platform once, and I have to say to my Liberal friends that their Liberal candidate did an excellent job for a new Member of no experience, did an excellent job. That is Sigurdson, a good friend of mine. He and I are very good friends. We have worked for the community of Riverton for a number of years and did very well.

The Conservative candidate, although very popular, bombed out. So what happened? He got sick, and I think he truly was. I believe he truly was, notwithstanding that half of his people left one of the meetings. In fact, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) attended that meeting. He could not stand the kind of responses that their candidate made during the debate. It really was embarrassing. The Member for Rhineland, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) left the meeting. The Deputy Premier (Mr. Cummings) is shaking his head. He left the meeting. Half of their supporters left the meeting. It was an all-candidates meeting sponsored by KAP. It was in the community of Fisher Branch, in his home town, where he does not live now, but it was in his home town.

* (1600)

The next day, there was an all-candidates debate in the high school. Who showed up? The Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. Johnston) showed up to be the candidate for the Conservative Party. So I was running against the Member for Sturgeon Creek. In the evening there was an all-candidates debate in Arborg sponsored by the Kinsmen club. Who showed up? The Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard). Now I was running against the Member for Pembina. It was funny. It really was funny to have the Member for Pembina having not very much to say when he was confronted by constituents in my area about his activity on the whole question of Saudi Arabia and the Telephone System.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair.)

For the first time that I have ever been in this Chamber, the Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) was dumbstruck, he was dumbfounded. He did not have very much to say. I had to run against several Conservative Members during this election, and I want to thank the people from the Interlake for showing their support for myself. Boys, I think you will have to be

there again. The Deputy Premier (Mr. Cummings) says this much.

I want to tell you that your Leader (Mr. Filmon) won by less than I did. His is even closer. If mine was this far, and I am showing a four-inch spread, then his is half of mine because that is what he won by. I have been here before. I want to tell my honourable friends I have been here before and, as you can see, I am enjoying it. You have a difficulty, you had one more seat and you are coming on to that side with one less seat. I want to tell you that it will not be very long.

You can rest assured that it will not be very long. There is no doubt about it, so you can in fact make sure that your running shoes are on all the time. Mr. Speaker, you are here. Sir, I will say this, and in fact your riding is one of those that you do not want an election too quickly, do you? I do not think so. I am sure that the Boissevain area is one that may be tending to lean to the Liberal Party and is . . .

An Honourable Member: What is wrong with that?

Mr. Uruski: No, I have not said anything. I want to say to my honourable friends, I am going to enjoy my role as an Opposition Member. I am having a great time. I can see the wrinkles on my friends showing up very quickly. Some of them are turning an ashen grey. They have not been out in the sunlight. I can tell you, gentlemen and ladies on that side — except the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), he is well-tanned. I believe that the Member for Lakeside who is a very good friend of mine, and the Member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) who I consider a good friend, they had better have -(Interjection)- those are from my own region. I look after my region first, to the Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Pankratz).

Those Members better have a quiet talk with their Premier (Mr. Filmon) because it is very clear that one region of this province which is represented by Conservative Members has been left out. I believe that is an affront to the good people of the Interlake. I believe that the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), with his vast experience, and the new Member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) are both Members who clearly could represent the Interlake region within the Government. I know they are there as Members and they will serve their constituents well, but to have Members elected from a region and not have some representation in the Executive Council is an affront to the people of the Interlake. I know that the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) did his level best. In fact, when the announcement came of the Cabinet, I believe quite frankly that the Member for Lakeside was going to be the Speaker. I really did, and I thought he has more seniority than I have. He is a senior Member in this House. It may be a way of saying, all right, I am on my way out of politics and I will spend a number of years as Speaker of this Chamber. I would have been one who would have said okay, somebody from the Interlake, a Speaker.

We had Val Bachynski there in the Fifties as Speaker. Here is another Speaker in the Legislature there. I say that the Government of the Day is walking very much a tightrope. I think they recognize it. You can tell on

their faces, notwithstanding the bravado. Their Throne Speech is one of very shallowness and no foresight for the future. I hope that their Budget and their Estimates will reflect a change in attitude both towards the farming community and Manitobans in terms of the services that they deserve and desire. Thank you very much.

Mr. Allan Patterson (Radisson): First of all, I would like to congratulate you on your election to your high office. I and most of us on this side of the floor have not had the opportunity and the pleasure to know you previously, but we look forward to it, and I understand from those who have been here before that you are a very capable and ethical, hard-working, intelligent choice for the particular job.

I should also like to extend my congratulations to the Deputy Speaker (Mr. Minenko), a colleague from Seven Oaks.

First of all, I would like to thank my constituents who have placed their confidence and trust in me.

Secondly, I would like to extend my thanks for the support of my wife and for the many members of my campaign team. Without them, victory would not have been possible.

As well, I would like to extend my thanks to the many veterans in the House who so graciously extended their expressions of good will to all of us newcomers.

It will not come as a surprise to Members of the House to say that many of us here are surprised at being here. Not all of us, we did have a few seats in mind that we figured were winnable.

I have heard many politicians in the years I have been involved in politics at the constituency level say that, if you are not having fun out of it, you should not be in politics. Now the last 20 years the Liberal Party in Manitoba has been fairly lean — tough times. But we have also had some fun. I have often said to my colleagues at the university over the past several years that I am a member of that endangered species, the prairie Liberal. Well, no longer. Here we are. During all those years, up until recent times, it was tough but, a few years ago, starting in 1984, we were given a ray of hope with the election of our current Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs), the office of Leader of the Liberal Party. A great deal of our success rightfully belongs to her.

Now I look back on the election, and I find that it was fun. We started out in my constituency with the objective of continuing to build on a rather meager 1986 base. However, things went fairly well and, on election day morning, my feeling was that win, lose or draw, we had had some fun. I must tell you that it is great to win and it sure beats losing.

* (1610)

However, once over the shock and winning by the number of seats that we eventually did get, we got into the House here and started to get familiar with some of the routine, the nuts and bolts, but things really came home to me last week at the opening. I was struck very forcefully with the solemnity of the ceremony,

of the ritual, the utter beauty of this Chamber here, and indeed of the whole building. This brings out in me, and I am sure the other new Members here, a realization of the duty and responsibility that we have to our people, the citizens of Manitoba. So I personally, and I speak for all Members of my caucus and I am sure for all Members of this House, that I am dedicated to carry out this responsibility, to serve my constituents and all Manitobans. I recall on election night, the euphoria of our celebration at the Holiday Inn, one of my advisers, a very knowledgeable and sophisticated one during the campaign, who took me aside and he had a little bit of a fatherly chat. He pointed out to me and he said, "Okay, now you are elected, that is great, but remember now you have to look after your people."

This reminds me, if I may come out with a bit of an anecdote, the day that the former Member from St. Boniface (Mr. Desjardins) resigned, back in the early part of the year, I was fortunate in catching an interview on the way home from the university he was having with Information Radio on the CBC. He was just talking about his experiences and so on. He was reminiscing, but unfortunately, there was a note of sadness in his voice of what he was saying. For him, I felt that the fun had gone out of it. He did express the view of the change over the many years he had been in the House, and recalled that he was a very capable, conscientious Member of this House who served his constituents and all of Manitoba well. He pointed out that there was a change over the years to some personal attacks and viciousness in the House, sort of an us versus them mentality. He mentioned that, in the old days, the Members kept their differences, battled them out in this House, and that was the end of it. There was a feeling of mutual respect, and comradery outside.

So I look forward to serving, along with all Members, to the best of my ability. The general objective of this House is good. It is just the well-being of Manitoba and its citizens and of Canada. However, we do differ on means to that particular end amongst our three Parties. I should point out that no person or no Party has any stranglehold on truth or on reality. The House is the mechanism or the process of resolving conflict amongst competing means. It has always been my personal philosophy that one can fight hard and clean within the rules of any sport or any endeavour. For example, in boxing, under the Marquis of Queensbury rules, it is forbidden to hit below the belt. I feel that if, for instance, in a fight someone wins via deliberate low blow, an undetected low blow, that individual has fooled no one but him or herself.

I would like to digress just for a moment, Mr. Speaker. I will not say it is trivial. I would not bring it up, but it is a matter that has been bothering me in the three months that I have been coming into this House. This is a beautiful building. If one looks from Portage Avenue and The Bay up Memorial Boulevard with this building at the end of that lovely vista, what is one struck by? Cars parked in front of the steps in that area at the top of the first flight of steps between the two urns.

Now I understand and one can see the faded yellow lines there that, at one time, parking was forbidden in that area. To be perfectly honest, it looks like heck, if

I may coin an expression, to see these cars parked along there. It just spoils the whole appearance of this beautiful building. The Security people inform me that at one time it was forbidden but over comparatively recent years the rules have been loosened. I think, first of all, to allow couriers to come in and park and deliver their messages, and also I guess again in comparatively recent years, the Hansard employees who were afraid to go out to their parking spots at the side or the back of the Legislature late at night because of the unfortunate reputation that this particular area has had in recent years, in the late hours of the evening or the early hours of the morning. Mr. Speaker, if he were here I would address this to the Honourable First Minister (Mr. Filmon).

In my view, there can be absolutely no reason why cars should be parked in that particular area. If some people have problems such as I have mentioned, there can be other means of resolving them. The couriers can be allowed to park at the sides, the side entrance or the back entrance of the building. If the Hansard employees have problems at night, pay to let them take cabs home, or pay an extra Security person to escort them to their cars wherever they are. But for goodness' sake, Mr. Speaker, and through you to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon), clean it up. I would think that the First Minister does not even have to discuss this in Cabinet or in the House. I would say he could use the privilege and power of his office with the stroke of a pen to say, "there shall be no parking."

To return to matters of more substance, I would like to point out that I am not a native Manitoban. I am a transplanted Ontario boy. However, I have lived here in Winnipeg and in Manitoba most of my adult life. My wife is a Westerner and Winnipeg is now and has been for many years my home. I have known of many changes in Manitoba since my arrival here on Monday, July 4, 1949. A very significant date in my life is when I arrived here on that particular date, and never would I have dreamed that I would be here now or at any other time.

There have been many changes in Manitoba over those almost 40 years. At that time the pavement in Manitoba was Winnipeg to Emerson, Winnipeg to Kenora, Winnipeg to Gimli and Winnipeg to Brandon — that was it. The Trans-Canada Highway was just commencing construction west of Brandon. In Saskatchewan, it hadn't even started.

I look back with nostalgia but no desire to return to them. I might mention that the work I was in at the time, I was travelling, and my territory was Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Ontario down to Thunder Bay. Very few of the country towns had running water or sewers and the country hotels, their outdoor plumbing was indoors, but nevertheless it was outdoor plumbing. In the mornings just outside the door in the hallway was a little pitcher of hot water to shave and so on. I got quite a kick out of travelling around the Prairies in those days. At any rate, it was quite a change for a poor dumb Ontario boy.

I was very impressed with the Prairies. I had never seen them. In the geography books in my days in elementary school would be these pictures of the wideness of the Prairies with the telephone poles

extending into the distance, a few grain elevators and, lo and behold, when I come out here and actually saw it, it really is impressive. There is a grandeur to the Prairies in themselves. Every bit as grand as those of the Rockies and other areas of the country.

One's conception of distance changes very rapidly coming to western Canada from southwestern Ontario, the most densely populated part of Canada. There was very little rural electrification in those days. Farms still had the coal oil lamps or sometimes wind-chargers and other means of producing electricity. It was just during the Fifties that the electrification of the rural areas really got under way.

I would like to turn now to mentioning something in my constituency, its history and a description. Radisson is comparatively new, 30 years as a matter of fact. It was formed in 1958. I am the fifth incumbent and, I am very proud to say, the first Liberal to hold that particular seat.

In the early 1950s, there was a great big constituency of St. Boniface out of which the present Radisson and others were carved. This St. Boniface, I was surprised to find in looking at the maps extended south past St. Norbert, west past Kenaston Boulevard, and east to Plessis Road. It was flanked by La Verendrye in the south, Springfield in the east and Kildonan-Transcona on the north. Kildonan-Transcona at that time included all of Transcona and then ran on a narrow slice northwest from Transcona to Keewatin Street.

* (1620)

Radisson was formed in 1958, and Radisson, Fort Garry and St. Vital were formed largely from this large constituency, in geographic terms, of St. Boniface. At that time, Transcona was removed from Springfield-Transcona and included in Radisson, and Kildonan and Seven Oaks were formed from the remainder of Transcona-Springfield.

In 1968, the riding of Transcona was formed, and also Riel, from the southern part of Radisson. In 1978, Niakwa was formed from part of Radisson and the southern part of Riel, and the western part of Transcona and part of Rossmere were added to Radisson creating our present boundaries.

Radisson is a mixed constituency. It contains a good bit of industry and both old and new housing developments. It is not a typical constituency, in that it consists of two halves, most of Windsor Park, and western Transcona. These two halves are separated by a mile or so of what we might call the No Man's Land of Symington Yards. Geographically, it looks pretty well like East and West Pakistan. Now my reference to the Symington Yards is not in a derogatory sense. I also have the Transcona Shops and the Transcona Yards in my constituency.

I am very proud of this since I happen to have been brought on the CNR. My father had 47 years of service with the CNR when he retired in 1946. I would like to say that he was very fortunate to have had his career on the railway in the golden age of steam. In my days as a student in high school and university, I also worked

on the railway during the summertime on the extra gangs that were fixing up the track during the summer. As a nostalgic railroader, last month, my wife and I took our holiday trip to Ontario by VIA Rail and went down to Toronto, and back on the Canadian.

Along with such large industrial organizations as the CN Yards and Shops, we have Flyer Industries, Burns Meats, and the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. Radisson also contains a number of small businesses in a wide variety of retail trade. Very surprisingly during the election campaign, my riding president and I, in our door knocking one day, were surprised to find that we also have a sheep farm on the northern fringe of the riding.

Now this is perfectly all right with me also, because I happen to be an Aggie. I am not a farm boy, but I am a graduate of the Ontario Agricultural College, and very pleased to be here with two other Aggies. The Member from Pembina (Mr. Orchard), he is a graduate from Manitoba Agricultural College, and my colleague from Fort Garry (Mr. Evans), who is a graduate from Saskatchewan Agricultural College. So it was a very pleasant day for me last weekend when the three of us, the Member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), the Member for Fort Garry and myself, accompanied the Member from St. Vital (Mr. Rose) who was officially representing our Leader to the Agricultural Fair at Arborg.

I have never been at Arborg before. I had been up as far as Riverton and Hecla, of course -(Interjection)- It is. I was very very impressed with it; it is great. With the deterioration and the phasing out of so many small towns in the Prairies, it is just a delight to see the odd one like Arborg. It is flourishing, and vibrant and alive. It was a very pleasant day. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) was also there, and the Member for the Interlake (Mr. Uruski).

Now my constituency was hard hit by the shutdown of two very major industries, organizations, companies, Swift's and Canada Packers, and also the decline of the Union Stockyards. While these packing plants were in need of replacement due to age, the reasons for their shutdown are various and complex, but the payroll tax and the lack of economic support programs likely played a significant part in making the decisions.

I should like now to address some of the matters in the Throne Speech. Mon comté comprend un nombre important de Franco-Manitobains, surtout concentrés dans le quartier du Parc Windsor. Nous y retrouvons une forte présence d'institutions franco-manitobaines, les écoles francophones, le Club Richelieu, les Chevaliers de Colomb, et deux paroisses catholiques francophones. Je m'engage à servir mes commettants francophones dans leur propre langue.

(Translation)

My constituency includes a significant number of Francophones concentrated in particular in Windsor Park. There is a strong presence of Franco-Manitoban institutions, Francophone schools, the Richelieu Club, the Knights of Columbus, and two Francophone Catholic parishes. I am committed to serving my Francophone

constituents in their own language. In fact, during my election campaign, I myself was the only one of the three candidates to provide information in both languages.

Now I happen to be a WASP, though I am not a rich one from the establishment. I do support the extension of their proper rights to Francophone Manitobans. I realize that we have two official languages, but also we are a multicultural society. I give full recognition to the many cultures that make Manitoba the vibrant economy that it is.

When I was in high school in Ontario, a WASP bastion in those particular days, more years ago than I care to remember, French was required. I took French all through high school. French was required for senior matriculation in Ontario at that time. It was required for university entrance, as I think it was here in Manitoba as well. I cannot understand why, not all that many years ago, French was dropped as a requirement for university entrance. I would like to see its return.

On the matter of labour, I was pleased with the Minister's remarks the other day that the Government is working towards improvement in the labour and management atmosphere, and better relationships amongst the Parties. I cannot understand why the Government feels concern about labour and management relationships, because the previous Government is or was so closely allied with the Manitoba Federation of Labour. Now I am here, personally, and I think I speak for my caucus and my Party, to dispel a myth or conventional wisdom that the New Democratic Party tries to promote, that it is the only political Party that has the interest of the ordinary workingman and woman at heart and will do something about it. Now this is not to say that everything that workers want they should or can get, and it applies also to the other side, the management and employers. But the labour movement should realize that profit is not a dirty word. We had another free enterprise society, indeed the task force and labour relations that was established by the administration of the Prime Minister Pearson in the late 1960s, pointed out that Canada is what they called either a mixed enterprise or modified capitalism economy. There is a place for the state in certain areas.

* (1630)

As I say, the workers should realize that profit is needed in the private enterprise part of our economy. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, employers and management should realize that workers have entirely legitimate and necessary needs and that, in the union movement, workers generally are not out to get something for nothing.

I must give credit where credit is due. The past administrations of the New Democratic Party, since the Schreyer administration came in the late Sixties, has brought in much progressive labour legislation. So I would say to my colleague, the Minister of Labour (Mr. Connery), do not throw out the baby with the bathwater, and avoid any wild ideological swings.

In Winnipeg here, the industrialization community is a sort of closed and tight community made up of the

practitioners on the part of the two main Parties, the labour lawyers who are involved and, of course, the Government people in the Department of Labour. In Winnipeg here, our cadre of labour lawyers are second to none in Canada. It is a small one of roughly 15 or so. The practitioners, the players on both the union and management sides, are professionals and they are pragmatic realists and do not get taken in by the rhetoric from both sides. They know the rules of the game. Each one knows what the other is doing and they know that they are going to resolve conflict in the end, we had hoped by peaceful means, short of the ultimate sanction of the work stoppage.

I use this term, work stoppage, Mr. Speaker, and I pointed this out to my caucus, that rather than use the word "strike," which has the implication that everything is to blame on the particular union involved, a strike is really a decision of the two parties. When a strike takes place, it is a decision of the two parties. It is every bit as much a decision of managements to take a strike as it is the unions to go on strike.

In the current impasse at the St. Boniface Hospital, it could be said that there is no problem. We should not worry about a work stoppage. It could be stopped or cut off by management giving the workers what they are asking for. Also, it could equally well be stopped by workers giving up their requests. So the two parties should move to some compromised position that is agreeable to both and thus the work stoppage is avoided but, inevitably, at times they do take place.

The Civil Service, I would like to point out, was not mentioned in the Throne Speech. I have a concern over the years with the politicization of the Civil Service that really got started under the first New Democratic Party administration. Prior to that, Manitoba had a very capable professional Civil Service and unfortunately, as I say, it has been politicized. I would hope in rectifying this that the Government of the Day does not proceed too far in the other direction.

I alluded to this this morning in Question Period in respect to the appointment of the new Deputy Minister of Labour. This is, in no way, to cast any aspersions on the particular individual who was appointed. He is a career civil servant and has done very well in his previous post.

However, there are throughout the Civil Service, in the Department of Labour particularly but in other departments as well, civil servants with a good deal of experience and knowledge who are well regarded in this industrial relations community to which I referred who might have been or could have been promoted to that particular job and who would do it well. I think my honourable colleague, the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer), having been at one time a respected member of that community, would agree with some of these statements that I have made.

With Workers Compensation, Mr. Speaker, it is well known that there are serious problems to be addressed. I commend the Minister (Mr. Connery) in his statement the other day of consultation and discussion with us in his efforts to solve the serious problems at the Workers Compensation Board. I would only say, do not do it on the backs of the injured workers.

I would also like to commend the Minister on his remarks the other day on developing new areas of apprenticeship with the cooperation of the business community. Finally, I would like to compliment the Government on its opening of an office in Ottawa. We feel this is good, because the federal Tories did not seem to be able to deliver for Manitoba.

I was going to close, but let me backtrack one moment with something overlooked.

Je suis fier d'être un membre d'une Assemblée législative présidée par un orateur bilingue et je le félicite. Cependant, j'étais déçu lors de la présentation du discours d'ouverture de constater qu'il n'y avait aucune mention des programmes ou de politiques pour promouvoir les services en français et l'épanouissement de la culture franco-manitobaine. Au Manitoba il y a d'énormes progrès à faire dans ce domaine, à savoir dans le domaine de l'éducation, la fonction publique, l'administration de la justice et dans d'autres secteurs.

(Translation)

I am proud to be a member of a Legislative Assembly presided over by a bilingual Speaker, and I congratulate him. However, I was disappointed at the time of the Speech from the Throne that there was no mention of programs or policies to promote services in the French language and the development of Franco-Manitoban culture. In Manitoba, there is enormous progress to be made in this area and particularly in the area of education, the Civil Service, the administration of justice and in other sectors.

Finally, again let me express my thanks and my utter pride in being in this Chamber. I am sure, through you, Mr. Speaker, this whole House, that I will do my utmost to be of service to the citizens of Manitoba.

Hon. Jack Penner (Minister of Natural Resources): It is certainly a privilege and an honour to rise in this House and address this Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

Let me congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your appointment to the Chair for I know you will do an excellent job of seeing that this Legislature is run in an orderly fashion.

I would like to also, at this time, thank the Premier (Mr. Filmon) for the confidence that he has placed in me and the opportunity that he has given me to serve in his Cabinet. As a newly elected Member of the Legislature, I look forward to sharing with you and the rest of my colleagues the new experience for me of governing.

Let me also say that I look forward with anticipation, as do the rest of Manitobans, to the new direction and sound policies and fiscal responsibility that you, the Premier of Manitoba, have indicated. I have been given the honour by way of the largest majority ever given an elected Member in Rhineland to represent the people of that southern part of Manitoba. I feel humbled by the confidence that they have placed in me.

Rhineland, for those of you who do not know, lies just west of the Red River and extends to three miles

west of the town of Winkler, and runs 18 miles deep, north of the U.S. border, in a straight east-west line. In addition to that, there is a six-mile square area extending from St. Jean to the town of Morris and six miles east of Morris to Ste. Elizabeth. That block is certainly an area that we represent and represent well.

* (1640)

Within these boundaries of the constituency of Rhineland are the towns of St. Jean and Letellier and Gretna and Plum Coulee, Altona and Winkler and the villages of Rosenfeld and Ste. Elizabeth and Horndean and St. Joseph and Rosetown, Neuhorst — yes, even Halbstadt, believe it or not — Sommerfeld, Gnadenfeld, New Bercthal, Gnadenenthal, Blumenfeld, Haskett, Chortitz, Reinfeld, Reinland, Schoenwiese, Osterwick, Rosengart, Schanzenfeld and Blumenort.

I indicate and name those towns and villages because you need to recognize that a constituency such as Rhineland and the people who reside in that constituency reside in those kinds of villages and towns. Where we were once considered an agriculture or an agriculturally oriented constituency, we are now largely dependant on industries and industries that are dependant on agriculture in our area.

I should say before I proceed that the harvest in our area has started. I had a neighbour who came to me last night and he said, I just finished combining my wheat. He said, I did not recover the seed that I put in the ground this spring, less than four bushels an acre. I had the pleasure, believe it or not, of making six rounds on a swather last night when I got home. The barley is not as tall as this speaker. It is almost virtually impossible to cut. The harvest will not be a pleasant one this year.

The discussions I heard in this Chamber just a little while ago from the Member opposite referring to the transportation of grain through the Port of Churchill is just the start of the agricultural discussion that we are going to hear in this Chamber many, many times over in the coming months and the proceeding year because the economic impact of the agricultural dilemma that is created this year by the short crop that southern Manitoba is experiencing will be a large one. It will have a far-reaching impact on many areas outside of my constituency.

The towns and villages within my riding will certainly feel that impact first, but the cities and the very people who work in those cities will also feel the impact of that short crop. They will not feel it now but they will feel it next year and the year after. I wonder, Sir, whether we are going to have next year the same discussion again on the Port of Churchill and other areas, such as maybe the Great Lakes area and Vancouver this same time of year, the transportation and the jobs dependant on the transportation of grain out of Manitoba and other western provinces that are experiencing similar economic impacts and hardships because of the short crop.

I want to say to you that the people in southern Manitoba, and especially from my constituency, were very, very pleased when the Minister of Agriculture (Mr.

Findlay) indicated to them that they would have a tripartite stabilization program for beans this year. It is something that the bean growers of southern Manitoba had long sought after. They need that kind of stability in their industry and the kind of assurances that the tripartite stabilization plan will lend them to stay in business over the long haul.

As I indicated before, where my riding was once considered agriculturally oriented, and still is, but people resided mostly on farms numerous years ago, they now live in the many, many villages and towns that exist in my riding and live in, yes, an urban setting of one form or another. And that has led to a change in attitude, a change in direction and a change in the very planning for the future in my part of the province.

The infrastructures required to service the increased industrial activities that have been generated by the industrious people who live in my constituency is causing a severe economic impact on the towns and villages of my ridings. The previous Government ignored the pleas and concerns expressed many, many times by my predecessor, Mr. Arnold Brown who, after 15 years of dedicated service, retired from public service. We all know him as a man of dedication, a man capable and a man of true devotion to the service of his community, his country, his province and his constituency, and we thank him for the many years he served as MLA for Rhineland.

Some Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

My constituency, as well as others in this province, have witnessed the extent of Government neglect, especially in our part of the province, and the problems associated with such neglect are further compounded by the severity of weather conditions in 1988.

I want to spend just a few minutes of your time indicating the very diverse nature of agriculture in my constituency, and the needs to service that very diverse agriculture sector and the industries that have been built around it.

We have, within our constituency, large farms that produce such things as potatoes, sugar beets and many, many other crops such as lentils and yes, dill — and we are the only constituency in the Province of Manitoba that has actually built an industry around dill and is processing and extracting oil from the dill plant which has become a very lucrative industry. But these industries have begged for many, many years and these farmers have begged for many, many years to recognize the importance of agriculture and the industry, and the employment opportunities created in my part of the province. But during the 20 years that the NDP were in Government, I do not think that I have seen more than probably 15 miles of hard surface road constructed in my constituency. Many of the roads were reconstructed and were constructed and started during the Conservative administration years, and many of them still need to be finished, after the last six years, still need to be finished. I am very pleased that the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger) has indicated that he is going to pay some attention to my constituency this time around.

* (1650)

This year will be remembered by my constituents, as well as many Manitobans, as the year of the dust storms and forest fires and water shortages. Yes, we have got some people in our area hauling water, up to 20 miles now. I suggest to any of my colleagues, or Members of this Legislature who live in urban centres and just have to open a tap, to picture yourself getting behind the steering wheel of a three-tonne truck with a 1,000-gallon tank on it and drive 20 miles on Sunday morning. Yes, just after you went to shower, and the shower went dry, drive 20 miles to pick up a tank of water, or order it in and pay \$40 for a thousand gallons of water — and that is what is going on.

There is today a desperate need to recognize that rural Manitoba is in serious condition as far as water is concerned. The dust storms that we had this last spring certainly will cause an economic dilemma for some of the municipalities that we have within this province, as well as the budgets of some of the departments, and especially mine, in this province in dealing with the results of those dust storms.

There is a desperate need for integrated soil and water strategies in this province, not only for my constituency but for all of Manitoba. The need to look at an overall conservation strategy was recognized by our Premier (Mr. Filmon) in the Throne Speech.

Agriculture is, and probably will be for some time, one of the main engines that drives the economic framework in our constituency as well as large areas of this province. We, in this province, are largely dependent on the ability to maintain the productivity of our soils. The severe wind erosion we experienced this spring will not only have an adverse economic effect on the municipalities and the towns and the villages and the provinces and the budgets of those provinces, but will have an economic effect which simply cannot be valued on an ongoing basis to the farm community, as well as the industries that depend on the production of those farm products for their processing.

When we lose our soil, we lose our ability to produce food, not only for ourselves but for our future generations. We lose, in addition to our soil, our ability to produce trade goods or the very basic needs, the very basic commodities that we use to process and export. These industries that derive their product from the land, or need the derivative of the land to use as a processing ingredient are dependent on the soil and the ability to produce. Not only do they provide job opportunities for the towns and villages and the cities of this province, but they provide us and this country as the basis and the main ingredient to enhance our ability to service our debt and our balance of payments.

Industries such as CSP Foods in Altona provide large numbers of jobs to my constituency. They are an economic generator which generates some \$50 million worth of business in our town, and there are many, many other industries that need agriculture to survive, industries such as our seed-processing plants that are located in St. Jean and Plum Coulee and other areas.

When I talk about St. Jean and Plum Coulee, I have to think of the diversity of the people who live in my

constituency. Those of you who know St. Jean will realize that it is basically a French-speaking community. So is St. Joseph and so is Letellier. Plum Coulee is basically a German-speaking community.

The Town of Altona has the diversity of people living within its bounds that are as diverse as any other area in this province. Some of these people have lived in my riding or their families have lived and resided in my riding since Manitoba was settled. I will say more about that later.

We have other industries that are dependent on agriculture for their very survival, and I mentioned before dill, but there are others. There are other commodities that are virtually new commodities to Manitoba that are produced in my constituency. They are the menards and the caraways, and some of you might recognize those because they are the essentials of the spices that you use in probably your kitchen almost everyday. Those are new crops to Manitoba, as are lentils and peas, as are beans, and they have lent a new diversity to Manitoba.

The success of a diversified agricultural base is dependent on our ability to produce and market our agricultural commodities with our trading partners in the world in as free a fashion as possible. I do not think there is any argument in this Chamber on that. Diversification and trade are the key to our ability to survive and expand. If I may digress for just a minute, I would like to also illustrate that many of the industries which are not dependent on agriculture or Government funding are located in my constituency. This area of the province could, I suppose, be used as a model for western diversification. What can be done with diversification? For we enjoy in our ridings industries such as D.W. Friesen and Sons, Printers and Publishers, one of the largest printing and publishing firms in this province. No, not only in this province, Mr. Speaker, but in all of Canada. It has grown from a small family industry. The grandfather of the people that run the D.W. Friesen firm now started as a one-person operation for he saw the need within our town for a newspaper and he provided our town and our community with a newspaper service. Out of this grew this printing firm. They now employ some 400 people in our town and supply the economic backbone to Altona.

We have within the borders of our constituency another large industry. Again it was started by a local family for they saw a need and they needed to supply and provide jobs for their families. The industry is called Triple E Canada Ltd. It is one of the largest if not the largest manufacturers of recreational vehicles in this country employing some 400 people within the Town of Winkler, plus owning numerous operations in other parts of Canada. It was local initiative and the need to supply jobs for their families that have started these industries.

* (1700)

When I talk about the people that reside within my constituency and the diversity of those people and the people that have been there a long time and the early or the late arrivals, some of these immigrants, people

that we call immigrants that have lately come to our constituency, and we have many of them, some of them come without education and some of them come with education, but they all bring with them one thing and that is the ability to work. They have a desire to work and they have a desire to improve themselves. These are the people that bring with them some expertise that we have not got in this province nor have we got it in this country and they bring it with them. They create the industries that are prevalent in our riding, and one of them is Lode-King. It was started by one of these immigrants that needed a job and could not find one but he had a trade. He could not read nor could he write but he had a trade. We are now today looking at an industry that is one of the largest trailer industry manufacturers and manufacturers of grain bins in southern Manitoba.

Monarch Machinery employs large numbers of people in the Town of Winkler. But there is one industry that I think is somewhat unique and it is hidden away in one of these small villages that I talked about before, and the village's name is Blumenfeld. I am sure none of you have ever heard of Friesteel Industries, have you?

Friesteel Industries employs some 30 people in that village of Blumenfeld, providing employment to those farmers that do not have large enough operations to be able to support families on their farms. They provide that economic backbone to that small village. It is roughly about a \$3 million industry and it manufactures plastics. It exports to Arabia, to Japan, to Sweden and to Norway and the United States and many, many other countries in the world and we in Manitoba do not even know it exists. It was started by somebody that needed a job, that could not survive on the farm. He started a little shop on his farm and is now looking at expanding that industry substantially.

But one of the biggest impediments to those job creation activities that we have seen in our riding are now and have been impeded by a tax that was put on by the former administration — an employee tax. We are taxing the very people that create the employment and it simply must be stopped. This very industry has indicated that if things do not change they will have to move. I think there are many other industries in this province that are in a similar economic position. That is why I think I have received probably one of the largest majorities that a Member in our constituency has ever received because the people wanted a change. They wanted an economic change in Government and they have it.

These industries that I have just described are not dependent on agriculture and they provide a large economic base for my constituency as well as providing economic activity for the Province of Manitoba.

Our ability to conserve what we have, to conserve the soil and the water and many other areas will be the key to the survival of our population, Mr. Speaker. Saving our soils from wind erosion and our water from depletion are the challenges before us today. Drought-proofing and water retention will be my major concern for all of Manitoba in the future and our ability to put in place structures to store water that will have the

ability to supply the towns and villages that now have shortages.

There are areas in this province where the need for water will become an even more important factor for diversification for we have the climate and the soil that can be utilized to diversify. We can have projects on the Tri-Lakes area, projects on the Souris River basin, projects on rivers such as the Rat River, the Dauphin Lake, the Pembina escarpment, the Duck Mountains, Swan Valley and many other areas in this province where efforts to retain water could be very, very successful not only to raise grain and special crops but to raise feed for our livestock, and our livestock is a very important aspect of our agricultural mosaic.

But not only will we provide water and feed and grains for that very basic need to diversify, but we will provide the habitat that our waterfowl need and require, the habitat that our fur-bearing animals require; and we will increase, by activating some of the projects on the escarpments and the run-off areas in our province, our water quality.

All the escarpment area of Manitoba, I believe, would lend itself to some form of reforestation if we were serious about it in this province. If our previous Government had taken a good, hard look and believed in what they were saying, they would have started some of these initiatives.

* (1710)

Eventually, better quality of water in our lakes and our rivers will supply us with a very basic component that we will need to attract industries to our province. There are many, many other possibilities that hold promise for our province, but I believe there is none as great as the development of a conservation strategy and a resource-based economy on sustainable industry development in areas of Manitoba that need an economic boost. It must be done on an environmentally-safe basis and it can be done. Our forest industry must be developed in a sustainable manner that will ensure the longevity — yes, the very existence and survival of our forests.

I want to talk a little bit about the forest industry. The current value of our industry is some \$220 million. It is a large industry. It can be increased substantially with some initiatives that need to be taken.

Seventy percent of that forest industry is exported annually, and again it depends on a free trade deal to sustain that level of exports. Seventy percent of the \$154 million worth of lumber that we export out of our province every year is exported to the United States. It provides jobs to some 4,000 people in this province and again we are somewhat dependent on the free movement of lumber across our borders.

The fishing industry needs to be developed in a sustainable manner not only for ourselves and the industries that have been built around it and will be built around it and we can increase those.

The current market value of the fishing industry in this province is roughly about \$36 million annually. We have roughly about 3,700 people employed in that

industry, and many of our northern and Native people rely heavily on that industry for an income. Sixty-five percent of the production of our fishing industry is exported to the United States and, if the Americans proceed with the protectionist attitude that is prevalent today, let me say to you that we will not be able to export fish to the United States if they apply the tariffs that they are threatening to apply. We need a free trade environment to keep on moving and expanding that very industry.

We have many other areas that can lead us to the management of our resources to maintain our forests, our lakes, our streams, our rivers, our wildlife and fur bearing industries upon which our northern communities are so dependent. Ideas such as these that have just been expressed are common to the spirit of the Brundtland Report, our common future as well as the report of the environment and the economy by the Canadian Environment Ministers in 1987.

This is the basis upon which the round table will be established. The establishment of the round table and possibly the Sustainable Development Centre in Winnipeg, as mentioned in the Throne Speech is only the beginning, only the beginning of a process which will enhance the quality of life for all Manitobans and ensure our natural resources for future generations. Sustainable development in an environmentally sound basis will eventually require global cooperation and understanding by all nations.

If I might digress again for a moment, it is a grave concern of mine to witness other nations of the world. Other nations of the world attempt to implement initiatives like the labelling of fur garments. The anti-fur lobby, ignores Native Canadians affected by their actions, and continue with little concern for the cultural and economic damage they will cause to our fur industry. We all saw the damage that was caused to the seal industry on the east coast by similar actions taken by those that have simply no regard or feeling or understanding of that very industry.

We met — and when I say we, the Ministers of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) from across this country — on June 25 to consider this very serious threat to our industry. We met on June 25 and the following communique resulted from that meeting. I would like to read this into the record:

“Provincial and Territorial Ministers from across Canada have strongly reaffirmed their support for the fur trade at a special meeting in Winnipeg today. The meeting was co-hosted by the Honourable Jack Penner, Manitoba Minister of Natural Resources, and the Honourable Minister of Renewable Resources from the Northwest Territories, Mr. Titus Allelui (phonetic).

“The Wildlife Ministers noted that this issue has brought Canadians together in expressing support for this historically important Canadian industry.

“The economic, cultural and historical importance of Canada’s fur trade was recently recognized by Parliamentarians from all political Parties in an emergency debate in the House of Commons. This debate, together with effective representation by the

Government of Canada, the Fur Institute of Canada and Aboriginal organizations were key factors in influencing the United Kingdom’s decision to withdraw their proposed fur labelling regulation. All Ministers present welcomed the United Kingdom’s decision on this matter.

* (1720)

“The Ministers noted that the withdrawal of the U.K. regulation did not end — did not end — the threat to the Canadian fur trade.”

I would like to, Mr. Speaker, with your permission just finish reading and then sum up if you would allow me to.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member have leave? (Agreed)

Mr. Penner: “In this regard, Ministers agreed to:

“Endorse in principle the Fur Institute of Canada’s proposed guidelines for trapping standards. The scheduled implementation of this policy will be dealt with at a wildlife Ministers’ meeting this fall.

“To continue ongoing furbearer inventory and management programs.

“To develop, with the assistance of the Fur Institute of Canada and Indigenous Survival International, a long-term strategy to address fur industry issues.

“Continue to expand and enhance trapper education programs.

“Expand research and development efforts into improved trapping methods.

“The Ministers of wildlife call upon all Canadians, the United Kingdom and other interested nations to join with them in supporting Canada’s efforts in maintaining and promoting the fur industry.”

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that we all have much to be thankful for. The challenges of my portfolio as Minister of Natural Resources are going to be immense and I look forward with great anticipation to work with my colleagues toward the implementation of a program of resource conservation strategy which will lead toward the development of a sustainable industry that can be used as tools of employment in regions of Manitoba, a strategy based on soil conservation, water development, rural development and diversification. There are many components that can be used to achieve these goals.

There is one component that I have not talked about which I would like to just spend one minute speaking about, and that is our human resource, our human resource, without which we have no future. We need to educate our young. We need to train them to be innovative and resourceful and productive and conservationist with an eye toward resource development based on environmentally sound principles with which we will ensure our future. Thank you.

Mr. John Plohma (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to follow my successor in the Department of

Natural Resources (Mr. Penner). I felt that many of the things that the Minister of Natural Resources was saying in his orientation towards conservation of our soil and water and other valuable resources were very much the same sentiments that I had in the Department of Natural Resources. It is peculiar I guess in one respect that when new Governments come into power in a particular jurisdiction, very often they believe that they have to deal with issues that have somehow never been looked at or considered by previous administrations and that they are really inventing solutions to problems all over again when in fact these problems have been around for years and years and years and successive administrations have attempted to deal with those and have made progress, significant progress in many instances, but have not accomplished everything that needs to be done in a particular area.

I thought, Mr. Speaker, that I should at the beginning of my remarks extend my congratulations to you too as everyone in the House is doing. I am sure that you are getting tired of that. I think we overdo that a little bit sometime with the accolades and so on that we put forward to the Speaker, that we heap upon the Speaker, but it is traditional. Certainly I believe that it is important and you occupy a very important office. I want to wish you the best in a very difficult job I believe.

I never felt when I was elected in 1981 that I would be sitting in this kind of a position right now in this House. I always believed that Dauphin, being a swing seat up to that point in time in 1981, that the chance of me ever being in Opposition, especially in a second Opposition Party, were very very remote indeed. The fact that if the Government went, that I would probably go, made me feel that I would probably never have this opportunity which is really a tremendous opportunity to sit on the other side of the House to make sure, just as the Opposition attempted to do when we were in Government, that they are doing the best job for Manitobans. It is a very unique position, very much of a change for me having been acting as Minister of Natural Resources, and before that Highways and Transportation, and Government Services. I very much enjoyed that opportunity to serve the people of my constituency. I think that we accomplished a great deal during that period of time.

In the past seven years we have made a great deal of progress in the Dauphin constituency, in the Parkland, and throughout Manitoba that I had a very small part in undertaking. In my constituency I can tell you that whether it be in education, health care, in highways, natural resources issues, whatever they may be, many different disciplines and all geographic areas of the constituency, we made progress. We accomplished a great deal. What is so gratifying about the election on April 26 it may seem that I should hang my head and cry and be sad about the results because so many of my colleagues had gone down to defeat.

(Deputy Speaker, Mark Minenko, in the Chair.)

What is most gratifying is the personal support and the appreciation that the people of the Dauphin constituency showed for the work that we accomplished together. It made me feel much more positive about

the election. I think the electorate gets cynical about politicians and sometimes politicians also share some cynicism about the electorate because they are not certain that they really understand the efforts that they are undertaking on behalf of the constituents of the electorate, but I had my faith restored in that the people of the Dauphin constituency truly recognized that together we made a great deal of progress and we accomplished a great deal. I hope that we can do that in Opposition as well as in Government and I intend to do my best in that regard. Seven years is quite a long time, but I still sit in awe when I see other people in this House who have been here for over 20 years and 19 years, like two of my colleagues and the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) over 20 years. It truly is a remarkable amount of service in this area. It is a very difficult job, a very difficult career.

Many of the new people — and I want to congratulate them on their victory and in joining us in this Legislature — will find that the uncertainty makes it very difficult on families. I found that because you really cannot plan, you do not really know what you are going to be doing in a few years down the line; you do not know what kind of finances are going to be there. So if you are not financially independent and secure, you have a very difficult time of it. We certainly are not, from that respect, highly paid in the Manitoba Legislature. So it makes it difficult, and there are a lot of sacrifices for families as well as the MLAs as they go about their work.

I am proud to represent the constituency of Dauphin. Canada's National Ukrainian Festival will take place this weekend in Dauphin, and that is a tremendous celebration of Ukrainian culture in this province. I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as you sit in the Chair and will be coming to Dauphin this weekend, that you truly, in your work and your Ukrainian heritage, recognize and appreciate the tremendous role that the Ukrainian Festival plays in the celebration of Ukrainian culture in this province and that many of us in this Legislature share in that celebration and appreciation of our multicultural society. I am very proud of the work that the people have done in Dauphin to continue to stage that festival year after year for some 23 years.

This year it is particularly significant because they are celebrating the Millennium of Christianity in the Ukraine — 1,000 years since Christianity came to the Ukraine.

Christianity is very important for the Ukrainian community. As a matter of fact, it led many Ukrainians to leave the Ukraine to come to a free country such as Canada to find a new land so that they indeed could raise their children in the religion that they chose. I think that is a tremendous testament to the people of the Ukraine, and we can recognize and appreciate the tremendous amount of contributions that they have made to our society since they came to Canada many years ago.

Dauphin has some major issues and I want to talk about a number of issues that relate to the Dauphin constituency. I also want to raise some issues that are more provincial in nature. One of those we had an opportunity to discuss today and we threw that opportunity away, and that deals with the Port of

Churchill and the crisis facing that port. I think it is critical, very important. It saddened me a great deal that we as a Legislature did not take a united approach on that issue.

* (1730)

Looking at the Dauphin constituency, there are some major issues that we have been attempting to deal with. One is the Lake Dauphin. Lake Dauphin is a lake that has been deteriorating for many years because of the agricultural practices in the surrounding area. Many of the things that the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) talked about, the practices that have occurred over those years have caused a deterioration in the quality of the lake, certainly, and in water quantity in that area through soil erosion and siltation in the lake. The fishing has gone down over the last number of years, over a 30-year period, to a point where there is very little industry left. It desperately needs some attention and solutions. There have been a number of studies done, and I believe that the Minister shares my concerns that there is no need for additional studies on Lake Dauphin. What is needed now is action to reverse the deterioration of that lake.

I was Minister of National Resources for six to seven months, and during that time we made considerable progress in developing a consensus that would see an advisory committee set up at the local level to oversee and determine priorities and oversee projects and programs that should be undertaken on Lake Dauphin. I think we were very close to establishing that committee and to determining priorities and working together. However, intervention of the election on April 26 stopped that progress. I will be urging and demanding of the Minister that he continue that effort. I know the people of the Dauphin constituency will do so as well.

In addition to that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have other important issues facing the Dauphin constituency, one being the need for a water treatment plant in the community of Dauphin, in the Town of Dauphin itself. Especially in the spring, the water deteriorates. It is actually about the colour of coke. I have found it undrinkable and certainly it looks like when you run the bath water that you should be getting out of the water instead of getting into it after spending a day on the tractor on the farm. As a matter of fact, the water is almost black. I found that more and more people are becoming aware that Dauphinites do not have to put up with that forever. They want a solution to that problem.

We had a solution at hand and, regrettably, this Government has lost the initiative on that issue. I hope it can be restored. I am hopeful that the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) will return tomorrow and say that he has secured an agreement such as the one that was already in place. It just needed to be signed when the election occurred, and that was one dealing with our water and sewer infrastructure, some \$60 million — \$30 million from federal and provincial sources. That would have resulted in a water treatment plant for Dauphin, but the Western Diversification Fund which the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) referred to, the great need for diversification of our industry, the Western

Diversification Fund has rejected water and sewer projects as being of a diversification nature.

I think that they are wrong in that. There is no single development that could be more important to attract industry in Dauphin than a water treatment plant so that there could be a clean, healthy, pure water supply for the people of that area and for any industry locating there. That has been known for years and we have been working on that problem. We have not solved that problem but it is one that we must address and it will make a difference insofar as industry is concerned. I only hope that the federal Government will start to treat Manitoba fairly when it comes to the Western Diversification Program and not put all of their money into other western provinces like they have been doing up to this point in time.

There is another area that needs some special attention and it relates to the Western Diversification Fund as well. That is the wafer plant in the Parkland region. Again, substantial progress was made in developing a wafer board plant that would see in excess of a \$100 million investment, some 200 to 400 jobs both in the forest and also in other industries that would be developed surrounding that wafer board plant. Progress was made but I do not know where that is. I have not heard too much about it in the last few months.

I guess one of the reasons is because there is some second guessing about using the Western Diversification Fund for any development that might be in competition with the development that already exists in another province in this country. I think that is very unfortunate because we have strengths.

One of our basic strengths is our timber resource, our forests, and now we are not going to get federal assistance to assist us in developing those resources because they say, well, it has already taken place in Quebec or other areas of the country. I think that is most unfair. It is because of federal assistance that many of those industries were developed in other areas of the country over the years.

Manitoba has not historically received its fair share, and I think it is time that we, as a Legislature, take a united approach, not only on issues in this House, as the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) first raised, and I applaud him for that but also in making representation to Ottawa. We need to take a united front, just as we have to do on the Port of Churchill, because eastern powers, the political powers that be in Ottawa, are such that they give very little attention to what is happening in Manitoba because we are a very small province, but in addition to that we fragment our positions. We send mixed messages to Ottawa, and this Opposition gave us very little support, progressive support, on issues.

The Liberals now regained new strength in this province, have an opportunity to draw that kind of consensus as well with the Conservatives and the New Democrats, but over the period of years the Conservatives did not provide the kind of support that the Government needed. We saw an example of that today on the issue of Churchill. We have to take a

strong, united voice if we are going to make any impression at all in Ottawa. We are a very small voice, even as it is, politically in Ottawa, but it is much smaller if we are sending mixed messages and fragmenting our approach. We have to learn if we are ever to get results for our people in this province, then we are going to have to work together in a very strong way to get results.

Now I want you use that as a springboard to discuss the Port of Churchill. Over the last number of years — I feel very strongly about this, genuinely strongly about this — because I had an opportunity for four years of working very closely in this area. Not as the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) said, as the Minister responsible for Churchill, because the provincial Minister is not responsible for Churchill, but as the Minister responsible for Transportation in this province, Churchill, even though a federal responsibility, became an area that we decided to become very aggressive on, because we could see that it was not receiving the kind of attention by the federal Government that was required to ensure fairness and to ensure efficiencies in the transportation system and a major role in that transportation system. It deserves a major role. It is not charity that we are asking for. It is just a recognition of the major role that port can play legitimately as the low-cost port for some 25 percent of the grain that is produced in western Canada for export. That is all we are asking for.

* (1740)

It is the shortest distance port to many destinations. It is the lowest cost port in terms of the transportation costs.— (Interjection)- The Minister for Highways and Transportation (Driedger) said who has got these figures? He should read the IBI reports that were undertaken, commissioned only two years ago by Canada and Manitoba together. They were released and they showed clearly that the Port of Churchill was the low-cost port, some 14 to \$20 per tonne over the St. Lawrence, and yet there are anti-Churchill lobbyists who continue to try to diffuse the picture, to mix it up, so that the people do not get the true message and do not act in a united way. That is what is most unfortunate.

This Party here and their federal counterparts have been masters at doing this over the years — a mixed message — and today what we saw was the Liberals joining with the Conservatives and sending another mixed message to Ottawa that has set us back considerably in our efforts to get fairness and to get results for the Port of Churchill. Not only for the people of Churchill and the people along the bay line and the economic activity generated by the port, but also for the farmers, generally the grain producers, and many of them in the catchment area know full well that it is the low cost port. But that is not being generated, that is not being spread, the word that that is the case through all parts of our country, because of the mixed messages from so many different sources.

The grain companies are the strongest in their opposition. The CNR is the strongest because of the cost of the rail line, and they do not want to be a part

of that. But let us remember that capital investments are undertaken by Government for economic and social development in many areas of this country. In eastern Canada, huge capital investments on the St. Lawrence seaway, and that is not charged against the farmers for the cost of sending their grain through the St. Lawrence seaway.

Why should those costs be placed on the backs of the farmers when it comes to upgrading the rail line and developing the facilities of the Port of Churchill? Why should that be placed and why should that be counted against the cost of moving grain through that port?

I say there are two ways they are dealing with it. Let us look at how we dealt with it as a Government. What did we do about it? I feel very proud about what we did with it, and I want to show that the list of what we did demonstrates clearly that we are facing a huge problem, a very difficult problem, one with enormous powers against us. That is why we have to stick together in a united voice.

Over the period of time I had the opportunity to work with a group of excellent staff, and I want to tell the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) he has staff second to none. They are dedicated towards expanding and enhancing the Port of Churchill. There is no doubt, and if he follows their advice and he sets them loose, he cannot go wrong. But he has to be aggressive in working with them because they want to do it and they are enthusiastic. Do not dampen that enthusiasm; it is there. They see the kind of underhanded work that is going on in Transport Canada, in Ports Canada, in the Wheat Board and other federal agencies to undermine their efforts at the Port of Churchill, Manitoba's efforts.

I have never seen in my life a greater example, an eye-opener of federal decisions, federal bureaucrats working against the west, not understanding Manitoba's needs, as I have seen in my involvement in the Port of Churchill, nothing like it. I am a firm believer that those bureaucrats and that Government, the Conservative Government in Ottawa need a real eye-opener, and that is why we have to be very aggressive to get this thing changed.

That Government in Ottawa needs to take charge. The first thing they have to do is make an unequivocal statement that Churchill is part of the port system, of the grain handling system of this country, and will remain so. They have to make that strong statement so that those federal agencies that need direction get the message. And that has not happened.

There isn't much of a question. They leave it ambiguous. They will not make that statement. The Member for Virden (Mr. Findlay) asks, is there any question? They will not make that statement because they are afraid that the St. Lawrence interests and those in the Montreal and eastern Canada will not go for that; they will not support them. So they are tiptoeing, they are trying to have it both ways and to be on both sides of the issue.

One of the greatest accomplishments that we accomplished during our time was the issue of

insurance. Now that made a substantial difference, but again it was downplayed by the Wheat Board and other interests — CNR and other federal agencies. The fact is we had the support of the Canadian Coast Guard, the Ice Forecasting Centre through Environment Canada. We had the support of a number of the underwriters from Canada and the London underwriters who toured from Frobisher Bay to Churchill flew over there in the middle of September, had their cameras ready looking for icebergs — there was no sign of ice anywhere and yet they had these huge ice premiums that they had been putting on ships hauling into Churchill for so many years.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair.)

They saw the folly of their ways. We did not have to say too much more. We made a formal presentation in Churchill and then we followed up with another visit with them. We soon had a new Churchill clause that reduced the additional premiums that were placed on ships coming in. With the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) working closely together, we accomplished a great deal — some 200 to 300 percent reduction in additional premiums for ships coming into Churchill. That was a major initiative, an area that no other provincial Government had ever dared enter into. It got results insofar as the insurance rates. It took away one of the major impediments to the use of that port.

We, as part of the subagreement, had some 1,500 to 2,000 rail cars renovated, rehabilitated at the Transcona Yards. Now, you look at the fairness of the situation! CN is using those boxcars to haul grain to the Lakehead when we, as Manitoba taxpayers, contributed to renovating and rehabilitating those boxcars for use on the Churchill line. Then they go ahead and lobby against Churchill and will not in any way assist with the process to have major shipments going through Churchill this year. That is the kind of thing we are working with here.

We attempted at the time to also develop a new car, a new hopper car articulated. Again we had opposition from federal bureaucrats and Transport Canada and CN for development of that car which would have been able to take the uneven surfaces of the Churchill line much better than any other hopper car, but again we had to deal with opposition that was, I would say, quite clearly cooked up against us to undermine the tremendous advantage that car would have, and we lost that car for now. That is unfortunate.

We made substantial progress on rail stabilization as part of our agreement. We also have a new tug at Churchill as a result of that agreement. We have dredging of the berths to make them deeper to accommodate larger ships. We have a new transmission line. We have several studies done by IBI Consulting that show that it is feasible to lengthen the shipping season out of Churchill, that it is economically feasible to do that; that indeed, in cost comparisons with other ports, Churchill proved that Churchill is the low-cost port, that there is a tremendous opportunity for tourism development in the area.

The role of Churchill in tourism is rather extensive with some additional expenditures and developments.

There is a major role for Churchill as a resupply centre. It is already a major resupply centre. That could grow by at least 50 to another 100 percent as they foresee in those studies, but that is not happening. As a matter of fact, right now, because there are no freight trains — except for one per week — hauling grain to Churchill, they are behind in the freight that is to be dropped off at Churchill for redistribution to other centres in the Northwest Territories — two weeks behind schedule right now. That is because there are no trains of any nature other than the passenger trains and one freight train per week going up to Churchill.

* (1750)

So we have made substantial progress. We have visited with the ambassadors of a number of countries, with the Soviet Union the Soviet Ambassador, with the Indonesian Ambassador, with the Egyptian Ambassador. We have met with trade representatives, during the time that I was Minister, from France, England, Italy and the Soviet Union to try to promote the port and get them to utilize the port.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mark Minenko, in the Chair.)

We wrote letters to 17 embassies of traditional customers of grain from the Port of Churchill. We worked with them to try to get them to take a more positive view of Churchill despite what their advice was from many Canadian sources which was negative towards Churchill. We tried to combat that by meeting directly with those consuming countries. We met several times with the President of CN, with the Wheat Board, with Esmond Jarvis, with other provinces, with the federal Ministers. We met with shipping interests, with the Canadian Steamship Company and Paul Martin Jr., President. We met with the president of Federal Navigation, another company that operates the M.V. Arctic. We met with the people from the Port of Sydney Development Board to develop a potential shuttle service from Churchill to Sydney which has not yet taken form. We met, of course, and worked closely with the Port Churchill Development Board that we now see Conservative Governments again sending mixed messages from western Canada in support of the federal Government's ambiguous position towards Churchill, a laissez-faire attitude towards Churchill. At best, they are undermining the Churchill port by pulling out their funding in support for the Port Churchill Development Board. That sends a very bad signal to Ottawa when Saskatchewan and Alberta do that. That is what we tried to tell them.

Again, I believe political decisions that work against their own best interest, especially Saskatchewan which has many of the producers, most of the producers that enjoy the benefits of Churchill. They are not representing the interest of their people when they pull out from the Churchill Development Board.

We worked with business and labour, the Hudson Bay Route Association. We worked with WESTAC, the Western Transportation Advisory Council, which the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) is a Member of. It involves the four western provinces and a number of other shipping interests and labour

ports, carriers, all coming together to look and to solve the problems associated with transportation in western Canada. We had a special Churchill forum at WESTAC which had not been done for many years previously to focus attention on Churchill. I think all of this resulted in unprecedented awareness and we were prepared to stand up for Churchill and that we would demand results. We did have successful seasons. As a matter of fact in 1986 and 1987, Churchill had profitable operating seasons, not nearly what they could have been. Especially when the locks were down at the Welland Canal in the St. Lawrence, rain could have been diverted through Churchill, additional ships ordered and they refused to do that even at the time of crisis.

We do not believe that we should be dependant on the Mississippi which is high and dry right now and other American ports when there is a crisis or a problem that develops in the St. Lawrence Seaway. We should have our own alternate port.

It is in Canada's interest that they make this unequivocal statement that Churchill shall be a part of our grain handling system and one of our major Canadian ports into the future. That is something that is lacking from that Government and that is something the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) for Manitoba, our regional Minister, and we see the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik), who used to work for the Minister of Health, had an opportunity to give him that kind of advice, to demand that he say that and he obviously was not successful even if he wanted to do that. That is most unfortunate. He is in a position to do something about it and we are waiting for him to make the kind of statement.

You notice the silence from the federal Members of Parliament in the Conservative Party. I have not heard a thing, even from the rural Members of Parliament, Brian White in Dauphin and the other areas in support of Churchill during this time of crisis when we see that the possibility that there will be no shipping season there at all. I can tell you, if there is none this year, there will not be one next year because their arguments about drought which are erroneous because there is barley in greater amounts than normal in the granaries across western Canada. As it is, the Wheat Board says, according to their own statistics, according to the Wheat Board statistics -(Interjection)- There is. There is barley for shipment to Churchill and they are not hauling it there. Clearly we are facing a possibility that, because of the excuse of drought being used, that next year — since Churchill traditionally uses last year's crop for shipments, that excuse will be used even more effectively next year.

So we may end up with no season two years in a row, and if that is the case, I think that would have a devastating effect on the workforce in Churchill, on the infrastructure of Churchill, and the chances of reopening it then would be slim. As a matter of fact, a closure this year could in fact mean a permanent closure. That is why we believe that issue is so critical and must be dealt with by all Parties in this Legislature.

I want to tell the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) something that he does

not seem to be aware of. He said that there is only 3 percent of Canada's export grain goes to Churchill. That is not true.

That was true in the early Seventies, when about 20 million tonnes of grain were exported by Canada. Six hundred thousand tonnes was about 3 percent, but when we are at 30 million tonnes of grain, we have less than 2 percent of Canada's export grain, when it used to be three percent.

Even if Churchill had received its same share as it received in the early Seventies we would be at 900,000 tonnes this past year — nearly a million. I will tell you, the infrastructure and the workforce there are quite capable of handling two million tonnes a year through that port. That was borne out by the IBI studies. So the Minister of Highways and Transportation does not seem to be aware of the facts when it comes about discussing those issues. He does not seem to be aware of the very important studies that were completed, and that give him this information.

I want to say to this House that the worst scenario possible is being followed by the federal Government at the present time. That is, low through-put through that port, because the start-up costs are the same, the costs of maintaining the rail line are the same as they would be with a huge season through that port. The cost of keeping those workers there, doing less work, would be very close to the same, with a large season.

The economic spin-offs and benefits for the communities along the way, and the benefits to the producers would be so much greater if there was a large season as opposed to a small season. So we see the worst-case scenario to slow tortuous death that the federal Government is imposing on Churchill, and we collectively, as a Legislature, cannot let that happen.

We have to stand up together on that issue, and we are going to be questioning. First we are going to be watching very closely what the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) says. We are going to be questioning very strongly, if he does not come back with the kind of results that the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) seems to feel that he is going to. "Let us leave it in the Premier's hands." He had better come back with a commitment for 600,000 tonnes minimum through that port.

An Honourable Member: You did not always get that

Mr. Plohman: Let us see -(Interjection)- Oh, now they are hedging. Now they are hedging and saying, maybe we will not get that. We know they will not get that. That is why we wanted that emergency debate. That is why we wanted an all-Party delegation to go to Ottawa. Because we wanted to get those kinds of results. They will not get those results, we know that. We will watch that closely.

I want to very briefly deal with a few other issues. I see that it is almost six o'clock. How much time do I have remaining in my remarks?

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member has six minutes.

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Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, I would like to call it six o'clock and have that opportunity tomorrow to finish my speech then. If there is a will to call it six o'clock, I would appreciate that.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock?

Agreed? (Agreed)

The Honourable Government House Leader.

* (1800)

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): It is the will of the House to call it six o'clock. I just

would like to make the comment and inform Honourable Members that in addition to the information I imparted yesterday about the agreement that Monday would be observed as a holiday, by agreement of the House Leaders, Tuesday evening will be treated as a Monday. In other words, we will sit from eight o'clock until ten o'clock on Tuesday evening.

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 6 p.m., I am interrupting proceedings according to the Rules. When this motion is again before the House, the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) will have six minutes remaining.

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