| ***Province*** | ***Législature*** | ***Session*** | ***Type de discours*** | ***Date du discours*** | ***Locuteur*** | ***Fonction du locuteur*** | ***Parti politique*** |
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| Manitoba | 29e | 4e  | Discours du trône | 9 mars 1972 | William John McKeag  | Lieutenant-gouverneur | NPD |

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba:

On the occasion of the opening of the fourth session of the 29th Legislature of Manitoba, I extend warm greetings to you.

We meet at a time when our democratic institutions are called upon and. expected to solve problems of social and economic inequities to a far greater extent than was ever the case in years gone by.

Increasing numbers of citizens have this expectation because of their undeniable desire for equality of economic opportunity and for a greater social equality of the human condition. My government concurs with the elemental justice of such desires and has endeavoured to make visible progress to these overriding objectives. In doing so many of its administrative personnel and policy advisors have been willing to dedicate time and energy to the practical limits of their energy and endurance.

In attempting to meet the great variety of human needs, over 300 legislative measures have been passed through the Legislative Assembly in a period of two years. Many of these measures were not only complex in detail but also embodied major reforms and novel con­cepts requiring time-consuming preparation of regulations and administration. It is with gratitude then that my government informs me that, with only three exceptions, all programs are proceeding well both administratively and in terms of better meeting social and economic need.

I am informed that our province's fiscal and economic situation is basically healthy and in terms relative to the past it is certainly so. Manitoba's public capital requirements have been large primarily because of the major Hydro developments on the lower Nelson River. Yet, my ministers inform me that the deadweight net debt of Manitoba expressed in per capita terms is much lower today than in most of the years of the 1960's.

This fact along with indications of a sound economic condition prompts my government to opt for a policy of selective economic growth. Experience in years gone by warns us that excessive preoccupation with growth can lead to a self-defeating policy of growth at any price. My government tells me it has caused an economic and industrial development study to be prepared which will be submitted for your consideration in due course. Among the terms of reference for this report that will provide us with economic guidelines for the seventies are the concepts of selectivity in growth and the problem of defining actual private risk capital in those cases where public sources have somehow directly or indirectly provided 100% of the capital requirements. My government expresses the desire that the report will be found interesting and useful by all present.

My government has informed me that the past year gave much evidence of the continuing and growing strength of the Manitoba economy. Preliminary estimates indicate that the annual gross income of our province last year exceeded $4 billion for the first time in its history. Total production for 1971, should represent an increase of about 10% over the revised 1970 figure, which would signify one of the largest increases in the past decade.

Encouraging developments have also taken place in the primary resource and manufacturing sectors of the economy. Housing construction has progressed at a pace significantly in advance of national totals. Retail trade also has achieved record levels ill recent months. Consumer prices furthermore have risen less than in the country as a whole - thereby augmenting the real incomes and purchasing power of Manitobans relative to residents of other regions of Canada.

Despite the promise implicit in these trends for an obvious acceleration in the development of the province in the years ahead, my government is aware that the realization of the potential of the province must in large part depend on the future course of the national economy as determined by the policies and programs of the Government of Canada.

In 1971, for example, the seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate in Canada did not fall below 6%. In these circumstances the government is able to point with some gratification to the fact that unemployment rates within Manitoba, while by no means satisfactory, have remained substantially below national levels.

Because no steps were taken to deal with this nation-wide problem until mid-autumn of last year, my government found it necessary - as it had in the previous year - to formulate independently certain provincial programs, including the acceleration of major capital works and assistance to local governments and community projects, to alleviate at least some of the consequences of winter unemployment. Subsequently, when the Government of Canada announced measures of its own to create employment opportunities, and sought provincial co-operation to effect these measures, my government immediately made known its willingness to modify provincial plans in order to complement the national programs.

There is sufficient evidence in recent experience to justify the conclusion that winter works programs can be effective in terms of employment creation, regional distribution of jobs and general social utility.

My ministers inform me, for example, that in addition to the net acceleration of public works construction of $30 million, approximately $9 million in approved projects are under way relating to the needs of municipalities; school and hospital repair, agricultural societies, senior citizen housing construction and home repair, and to remote community and Indian band groups. This local employment program is estimated to generate in excess of 12,000 man-months of employment.

Members of the Assembly are undoubtedly aware of the dissatisfaction with which my government views certain changes to the federal Income Tax Act implemented by the Government of Canada effective January 1 of this year. Nevertheless, my ministers are of the opinion that it is most important that fundamental uniformity be maintained in income taxation to avoid a "balkanizatlon" of the type which characterized the pre-war "tax jungle" era in this country. For this reason you will be asked to consider amendments to The Manitoba Income Tax Act necessary to ensure that it continues to parallel federal legislation and the legislation in other provinces.

The Legislative Assembly will also be asked to consider legislation under which a Manitoba succession duty and gift tax system would be implemented to replace federal taxes on estates and gifts which were removed at the end of 1971. Nine of the ten provinces have confirmed their intention to remain in this tax field. Manitoba has joined with five other provinces in accepting an offer by the federal government to administer and collect inheritance taxes. My ministers have informed me, therefore, that the succession duty legislation which will be presented to the House, along with the gift tax legislation designed to complement it, provides for the maintenance of equity in the provincial tax structure following the withdrawal of the federal legislation.

In 1972 the full impact of my government's program enacted last session to ease real property taxation at the municipal level goes into effect by means of a transfer of approximately $20 million. You will be asked to consider measures to increase substantially the amount of funds for phase two of the program in 1973. It is proposed that this be done through the instrumentality of an income tax credit or rebate arrangement. Justification for the tax shift lies in the fact that rising real property taxation poses particular burdens on our senior citizens, farm operators and others on relatively fixed income. Consequently a measure to provide most of the revenue needed to bring about the second part of this tax shift will be placed before you in due course.

During the past year the industrial relations climate of Manitoba has continued to be stable and marked by a high degree of co-operation between labour, management and government.

The conciliation services of the Department of Labour have been called upon in an increasing number of instances. In 97% of the disputes dealt with by the Department's conciliation officers, settlement was achieved without work stoppage.

Due to the combined efforts of labour, management and government the first multi-trade collective agreement was made covering eight trades and some 125 employers in the construction industry. This was an outstanding accomplishment not only for Manitoba but also for Canada as a whole.

The minimum wage rate was increased during the year to $1.65 per hour, one of the highest such rates in Canada. The Minimum Wage Board is now meeting to consider a further adjustment.

A Women's Bureau in the Department of Labour will be established to deal with the reality of the increasing number of women in our labour force.

In keeping with my government's announced intention to bring about more enlightened and fair labour-management procedures, you will be asked to give approval to a modern Labour Code dealing with Industrial Relations and Labour Standards.

You will also be presented with a measure for the upward revision in Workmen's Compensation benefits and also with other proposed amendments to The Workmen's Compensation Act.

It is realized that some concern has been expressed about the size of the civil service.

Accordingly it is interesting to note that Manitoba's ratio of civil servants to total population remains the third lowest among all the provinces of Canada - this despite the introduction of many new government programs to improve job opportunities and better the human condition. My ministers wish to recognize the service performed by personnel in all branches of government and its agencies many of whom have been called upon to carryon their duties beyond normal time requirements.

My government is deeply concerned with various problems in the field of rail transportation and has been successful in obtaining some reduction in freight costs to Manitobans. It will continue to co-operate with the other Prairie Provinces in making the case for freight rates and services that compare fairly with other regions of Canada.

After a particularly discouraging three years starting in 1968, the farm economy showed significant signs of improvement in 1971. This relative improvement, however, requires policies to sustain farm income. Accordingly it is the intention of my government to improve farm product marketing legislation to enable agricultural producers to strengthen their position in the market place. Members of the Assembly will have their attention drawn to the operations of the recently established Hog Marketing Board and will he interested to note that hog prices have shown marked improvement. Additional support will also be given to seeking out and developing expanded markets for agricultural products produced in Manitoba.

I am informed there has been strong response to the farm sewer and water program which was introduced last year. Increased use in 1972 is anticipated. The concept will be extended to include programming for village and town sewer and water supply. Your consideration of capital funds for this purpose will be required.

In the coming year, improved animal health facilities will result from the opening of a modern diagnostic, veterinary laboratory and feed-testing laboratory. Additional veterinary clinics will be built at strategic locations throughout rural Manitoba to improve local service to farmers. Additional grants will be provided to encourage expansion in basic sheep and cattle numbers and also to assist farmers who wish to become established in the production of manufacturing milk.

Persistent negotiations with the Canadian Dairy Commission have resulted in the province of Manitoba regaining for milk producers significant quantities of milk subsidy quotas virtually lost by default in 1968.

There is an urgent requirement for governments to deal effectively with the dynamics of a society which, in undergoing constant and exhilarated change, causes major problems in providing services to people. My government must be able to foresee altered circumstances and future needs in human resources development in Manitoba and to plan for them.

Accordingly my government proposes to deal with social problems through the recently created Cabinet Committee on Health, Education and Social Policy. This committee will incorporate an inter-departmental and multi-disciplinary approach to social policy so that the Manitoba government may join other jurisdictions that are trying to deal more effectively with the problems of rising costs in health services delivery.

The escalation of costs and the repeated indications in 1971 that the Government of Canada intends to limit its financial support for existing programs of health care adds to the timeliness of presenting a Policy Paper on Health Care Trends.

Le gouvernement recommande l'allocation de fonds supplémentaires afin de renforcer les services traitant l'alcoholisme et afin d'initier des programmes traitant le problème de la drogue. Vous serez appelés à approuver certains changements dans les programmes et services administrés par le Ministère de la Santé et du Développement social en ce qui concerne la réforme pénale et le domaine des corrections à la suite de négociations courantes avec le Ministère du Solliciteur General du Canada.

You will be asked to consider amendments to The Hospitals Act and to The Health Services Act providing for a board of appeal with regard to medical staff courtesy privileges at hospitals and for the Medical Review Committee to obtain improved access to information on matters under its investigation.

Education costs and the need for innovation in education in order to allow for the maximum recognition of the differences in the learning process for differing personalities are matters which are receiving intensive analysis and planning on the part of my government.

You will be asked to authorize considerable revision and expansion of the Student Aid and Bursary Program. The changes are in keeping with the government's policy to make post-secondary education more accessible to all Manitobans. There will be steadily increasing emphasis on vocational training and the technologies. Four new regional secondary schools at Dauphin, Selkirk and Winnipeg now provide an impressively wide scope for academic and vocational program selection.

I am informed that the Department of Colleges and Universities Affairs will introduce new programs of training to meet more adequately the medical and dental needs of the residents of northern Manitoba. The requirements of children of native descent who have particular problems of adjustment in learning is a challenge which my government is attempting to meet through adapted instructional material, the hiring of native teacher aides and specialized courses of training for teachers.

During the Session you will also be asked to consider further developments of innovative summer education programs. In order to meet the ever expanding demand for summer employment, my government will introduce a major Student Employment Program on a scale exceeding any similar program in the past.

My ministers inform me that changes in recent years in the regulations relating to Mothers' and Dependents' Allowances and the upgrading of the definition of senior citizens' needs have led to sharply increased expenditures for these programs for people. There are recent indications, however, that the rate of growth of social allowance payments has now levelled off.

My ministers inform me also that the number of persons who are in other categories of social welfare has shown a relatively constant pattern with the rest of Canada. Nevertheless because of the desire to have facts replace impressions and to have a more precise definition of the concept of reciprocal obligation of the individual and society, my government is propos­ing to appoint a person with experience and reputation in systematic, scientific inquiry to investigate all major aspects of welfare policy and Canada Assistance Plan regulations.

My government will ask you to consider legislation to permit, under specified conditions, substitution of prescription drugs by a licensed pharmacist in an effort to lower the cost.

With the coming into force of The Legal Aid Services Act, a more comprehensive legal aid plan will be made available to the people of Manitoba, with special attention being given to providing legal aid to needy persons on civil matters.

Further amendments will be proposed relative to The Jury Act, the effect of which will be to increase the fees paid to jurors, and also to remove from the substantial list of persons who are exempt from jury duty those for whom there is no justification for continued exemption.

My ministers inform me they are pleased with the extent to which consumer protection legislation, designed to correct imbalances in buyer-seller, borrower-lender and landlord-tenant transactions, has begun to benefit the public.

Manitoba has joined most other provinces in adopting a procedure whereby a single Securities Commission acts as 'principal jurisdiction' to co-ordinate the requirements of all participating regulatory agencies - an encouraging example of what can be achieved through inter-provincial co-operation. Within Manitoba, primary distribution of securities to investors continued at a high level, with an increase of 13% recorded in 1971 in the clearances of securities.

Pursuant to the policy which was announced last year concerning the desire of the government that our people may continue to enjoy the beauty and serenity of the natural landscape and environment, the Legislature will be asked to adopt a new Clean Environment Act which will reflect those announced policy changes.

Concurrently with the rapid industrial development of northern Manitoba, particularly in our mining industry, the government is concerned to ensure that it is carried on so that it maximizes the safety of employees engaged in the hazardous occupations which are an inevitable feature of such development activity. Legislation which is intended to create a climate where - by there will be greater industry - wide concern for the safety of these employees will be introduced. As a Significant step to this objective the government has arranged for full time mine-safety inspectors in the north.

My government has previously obtained the authorization by legislation to establish Crown corporations for the purpose of permitting the public to venture into the task of development of their own resources. At this session of the Legislature there will be the opportunity for a Legislative Committee to consider interim reports from the two public corporations already operational and to seek further information.

My government has been very conscious of the need for intensive efforts to provide more job opportunities and better access to economic resources for those of our fellow citizens living in isolated communities and in reserve communities. Progress to this objective, although very modest in relation to the real requirements, is very encouraging in relation to all the past years of this province. My ministers tell me that the funds made available to the Communities Economic Development Fund and the Revolving Loan Fund for Co-operatives are being administered by boards of directors that include for the first time representatives from isolated and reserve communities. It is my government's earnest hope that such participation in decision-making, combined with both provincial and federal financing through special ARDA IIIB and other programs, will result in increased economic opportunity and a corresponding decrease in welfare payments. Consequently it is my government's policy that these communities and their co-operatives must have more meaningful economic access to the natural resource crops of lake and forest as a recognized means of earning a living for their families.

My government is committed to advance policies which will make possible greater economic activity and participation by Canadians in the relatively high risk but necessary and desirable investment in Canadian economic development. To this end there must be a reliance on and mutual confidence in both private and public initiatives and enterprise. Accordingly, my government recommends that the dogmatic attitudes of the past be left behind.

Indications are that 1972 will be a busy year in highway construction. Funds will be allocated to enable the Department to construct and improve more mileage of roads than in many previous years. Due to the accelerating of our construction program and because of the introduction last year of pre-tendering arrangements, contracts for a large part of the 1972-73 program are already awarded.

Of the total construction funds made available, about 25% will be expended in the frontier, mineral and timber resource areas of our province.

It is expected that the major road link between Lynn Lake, Leaf Rapids and Thompson will soon be largely completed and that the residents of Lynn Lake will have road access within approximately 15 months after more than 15 years of anticipation.

My government informs me that highway planning and construction in the central and southern areas of the province are proceeding at normal pace. Because of the greatly increased size of our construction program and notwithstanding the increased expenditures in the north, there will still be the same level of highway works in the south and central regions as in most previous years. For example, a required dust free road link in the central part of the province from Lake Winnipeg across the Lake Manitoba Narrows through Ste. Rose, Dauphin, Grandview and Roblin to the western boundary of the province of Manitoba is planned for completion by year's end.

The Manitoba Public Automibile Insurance Plan, integrated with motor vehicle registrations, was implemented on November 1, 1971. I am informed that the Motor Vehicle Branch was heavily involved in the development and the integrated implementation of the Public Automobile Insurance Plan. As with any undertaking of this magnitude and complexity, administrative problems and difficulties were encountered. Now that the plan is launched into its first full year of operation, further refinements to the system will be made. Accordingly my ministers wish to share the confidence that, by its second year of operation, all systems relating to Autopac, including the vehicle registration and computer service, will be functioning A-O. K. My government is gratified to note that during the last 12-month period, Manitoba was not among the eight provinces in which widespread increases in car insurance premiums were brought into effect.

The expansion of energy consumption reflects the economic growth of the province. It is significant that the continued expansion of demand is mainly in the industrial and commercial fields which now consume two-thirds of the electrical energy generated in the province.

Work has commenced on the project to regulate the Nelson River for power purposes by increasing and controlling the outflow of Lake Winnipeg. Dredging operations will start in the early summer and the control structure, together with a power plant of approximately 170,000 kilowatts, at the point where the Nelson River enters Cross Lake, will be completed in 1974 and 1975 respectively.

It is expected that a decision will soon be made relative to proceeding with the next million kilowatt hydro plant on the Nelson River, downstream from Kettle Rapids at Long Spruce. Accordingly it follows that a subsequential decision may be required on the means whereby water from the Churchill River will be diverted to the Nelson River, within the limits previously defined.

A continuous program of power development is foreseen in which four major hydro plants will be built during the next 15 years. In doing so steps will be taken to provide maximum local and regional employment both in the building and the equipping of these plants.

The Manitoba Telephone System forecasts the installation of 21,000 telephones in the next fiscal year. Long distance traffic is expected to increase by 11% to approximately 21 million calls. Telephone System assets now exceed $300 million.

The program to improve and expand both local and long distance communications in northern Manitoba will be continued. Negotiations are being conducted with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for the provision of network television to 13 remote communities during the period of 1972 to 1975.

The rural party line upgrading program is being continued. A survey is being conducted among a sample group of customers to test various proposals for extended area service that would reduce the number of long-distance toll charges between many rural communities.

In making the tax credit transfer through municipalities which reduces several millions of dollars of school costs for tenants and owners that occupy residential properties, my government expresses the belief that our municipal level of government which serves democracy so well continues to face difficult real property tax pressures.

The province will take another step closer to assuming a full role as a municipal tax-payer by increasing the amount of grants in lieu of taxes that may be paid for provincially owned properties in anyone municipality. The increase has come about already with respect to the area of Unicity. The government of Manitoba notes that the new City of Winnipeg organizational concept is attracting widespread interest and study in Canada. Proposals for additional ways and means of co-operation in solving urban problems and future planning needs will be discussed with appropriate representatives of the City of Winnipeg and placed before you for your consideration in due course.

My government wishes to express appreciation to all persons in the Government of Canada and its agencies, to those in the administration of this province, and those at the local advisory committee level who have made it possible for the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation to construct more housing for senior citizens and low income families in the years of 1970 and 1971 than in the entire decade of the 1960's.

Attendance at provincial parks and recreational areas increased by 15% over 1970 to a record total of 3, 060, 000 visitors. In order to meet the rapidly increasing usage of our park and recreational areas, major additions to the facilities provided were made through the Accelerated Winter Works Program. The number of tourists arriving in Manitoba also exceeded the record achieved in 1970.

A program of encouraging Manitobans to travel within Manitoba which was instituted last year will be continued.

You will be asked to consider ways of improving the recreational potential of the Winnipeg Floodway to determine the ways in which this channel may somehow be made more useful to the people of Greater Winnipeg.

The proceeds from the Manitoba lottery have been assigned to amateur sports, recreation and cultural activities. Recommendations will be made with respect to the allocation of these funds.

The fact that talented citizens of all ages may find outlets for their creative endeavours in the new cultural facilities hopefully justifies in large part the increased demand for funds required to pay for these facilities. It is my government's objective, therefore, that there be more real opportunity for the maximum number of people of all ages, education and income levels to enjoy cultural programs which they are involved in financing. Furthermore, it is my government's desire that these opportunities make possible the best and most creative use of leisure according to the varied skills and interests of differing individuals and families which make up the colourful mosaic of our open and pluralistic community.

Dans le domaine des Affaires culturelles, notre gouvernement tient à encourager l'extension des services culturels par toutes les régions de la province. Nous nous proposons d'agir par l'entremise de la Fondation Heritage Manitoba afin de préserver notre riche patrimoine, c'est-à-dire, édifices et sites historiques, artéfacts, et districts entiers. Nous devons recevoir cet été de nouvelles recommandations qui découleront d'une étude qui se fait présentement sur les services des bibliothèques de la province. Nous avons établi une politique l'an dernier qui vise à préserver l’héritage des diverses communautés de la province. Le premier souci de notre gouvernement, comme celui de tout bon citoyen, est de s'appliquer par des efforts continus à l'amélioration de la qualité de vie et de la joie de vivre de tous les manitobains.

My government informs me that two important public buildings, that is, the Brandon office building and the agricultural service building in Winnipeg will be completed and ready for occupancy in 1972.

As well, the construction of a new public building at 405 Broadway will begin shortly, providing space for Land Titles Offices and for the needs of the administration of justice.

I am informed that the province of Manitoba and the mayors and councils of the cities of Winnipeg and Brandon have made mutually satisfactory arrangements for the construction of a major convention centre and agricultural exhibition facilities. The construction, which is already under way, will continue through to 1974.

The public accounts for the past fiscal year and the estimates of revenue and expenditure for the fiscal year commencing April 1, 1972 will be presented to you for your consideration.

The programs outlined today have received the scrutiny of my government and are recommended as being in the interest of our fellow Manitobans. We look forward with confidence to your application of intelligence and energy in facing the many complex problems of contemporary society.

In leaving you I pray that Divine Providence and the tolerance of reason may guide you in your deliberations.

Que Dieu bénisse notre pays. God bless our Queen.