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of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
Official Report
(Hansard)

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Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Eighth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
CUMMINGS, Glen	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
LOEWEN, John	Fort Whyte	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
MURRAY, Stuart	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	N.D.P.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack	Southdale	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Carman	P.C.
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
ROWAT, Leanne	Minnedosa	P.C.
SALE, Tim, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Wellington	N.D.P.
SCHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
SMITH, Scott, Hon.	Brandon West	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, December 2, 2004

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ADJOURNED DEBATE

(Eighth Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: As previously agreed, I am going to be calling Orders of the Day to resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg), and the honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has 10 minutes remaining.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I will not be too long. I appreciate the opportunity yesterday to be able to address the government with regard to the Throne Speech. Some might suggest that maybe I should be a little bit kinder this morning. After all, it is a new day, and let me say that the government, yes, has spent just over \$7 billion and there is good reason to give the government compliments where it has done well.

It was wonderful to see some of the work they did with the Health Links line. I think that is something that is long overdue, and the government took relatively quick action. It is a very good program, and I applaud the government at recognizing the value of it. Even the Minister of Immigration (Ms. Allan), Mr. Speaker. She did pump in some additional resources to the P & P. I do think that is a positive thing, so I think it is important to let it be known that I can give compliments for the government when it does do good things, but I would like to advise the government that it would be encouraging for us to see more good things and provide us the opportunity to be able to properly hold government accountable.

Mr. Speaker, having said that, given the compliments, I did want to also compliment the support staff for the Legislature.

I know Hansard has a challenge at times having to listen to all these speeches and put them into

words. To our Clerk and the staff of the Clerk's office, to pay tribute to, I think you have given really a credit to the whole argument of having elected Speakers. I think it has really made a significant difference. To acknowledge our pages, one in particular, Jennifer, who happens to be a constituent of mine, which is always encouraging to see young people. I trust, after experiencing the months inside the Chamber, come March that they will see that it is a wonderful thing, democracy, and we should do what we can to value it.

As I indicated to the member from Turtle Mountain or Carman, that I was going to keep this real brief. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me this chance to speak.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): It is my sincere pleasure to rise today, this morning, to offer a few comments on our quite remarkable Throne Speech.

Before I begin that, I would like to extend my very warm welcome to new members of this Chamber, the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen) and also the Member for Minto (Mr. Swan). I hope you will find that representing the public and holding public office is as big a thrill and a challenge and excitement as I have found it to be in the last year and a half. It is a very big honour, and congratulations to you both for your accomplishment in being here.

I think the theme that I would like to use for my comments to our Throne Speech is to address one of the myths that I am sure all of us encounter as elected officials, that being the myth that there is no difference between the different political parties. I am sure all of us have heard this sentiment from time to time, and it does not matter whom you elect, you end up with the same policies and the same decisions. You also hear sentiments that the elected officials that represent the public are all the same, and that government as a whole cannot make a difference and does not make a difference in people's lives.

My own view is that that is absolutely false, that it always has been. I think, right here in our home province of Manitoba, there is a wonderful opportunity to expose that myth to be the falsehood that it

actually is. I am going to use both my own riding of Wolseley and broader public policy in Manitoba to articulate my point.

The riding of Wolseley is very well known. It is a very proud community, and it is very vibrant community. It is also very diverse. Many people will be familiar with the Wolseley neighbourhood portion of the riding, but not everyone recognizes that the Wolseley riding also includes all of the West Broadway neighbourhood and a very large portion of the Spence and West End neighbourhoods as well.

These are three very different communities with very different interests, very different types of diversity, and different issues that each of them faces. It is my sincere pleasure and honour to represent all three of them here at the Legislature.

I want to begin in terms of my contrasting of different government policy by looking at the riding of Wolseley throughout the 1990s. Newspaper headlines like Murder's Half Acre or Gangside, a different take on a popular street, Langside in the West Broadway and Spence neighbourhoods, this was the image that was quite frequently portrayed of the inner city as a whole, and of this portion of my riding in particular.

I want to contrast the general neglect that occurred throughout the 1990s and sometimes the deliberate acts of cuts to social services, a complete lack of interest in affordable-housing issues that happened throughout the 1990s, which made that situation even worse.

Contrast that with the incredible revitalization that is now happening in the inner city and in the downtown as a whole. I want to, certainly, commend my predecessor, the MLA for Wolseley throughout the 1990s, the Honourable Jean Friesen, who, as Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs, brought in an exceptionally innovative and now award-winning program called Neighbourhoods Alive!.

Neighbourhoods Alive! did not just restore funding to distressed areas. Neighbourhoods Alive! took a different approach to how government can operate. Rather than government making all of the decisions internally and then imposing them as it thought best on the communities it was targeting, Neighbourhoods Alive! enables communities to make the decisions for themselves. It is a

fundamental shift away from business-as-usual. It is one of the reasons, one of the many reasons, why the Neighbourhoods Alive! program is the award-winning program that it is and now nationally recognized.

* (10:10)

To give you an example of some of the organizations that are now able to function and able to thrive and participate and contribute to the revitalization of the inner city, these include Art City, inner city Aboriginal Neighbours, West Broadway Development Corporation, the Spence Neighbourhood Association, Mary Jane's Cooking School, Wolseley Family Place, the St. Matthew's-Maryland Community Ministry, Cornish Child Care, RAY, which is Resource Assistance for Youth, which was formerly known as Operation Go Home, House of Opportunities, the West Broadway Aboriginal Residents' Group, West Broadway Neighbourhood Housing Resource Centre and the West End Cultural Centre.

These, Mr. Speaker, are just some of the organizations that are now able to access funding from the Neighbourhoods Alive! program, who were not able to provide their very valuable services to inner city residents before, under previous government. We can see the remarkable changes. If you just take a walk through these neighbourhoods right now, you will see the revitalization right in front of your very eyes. You will see the homes that used to be burned-out shells being retrofitted and new families moving in. You will see the small apartment blocks which are being retrofitted and made available for low-income tenants.

You will see the beautification efforts of various urban green spaces being created, and you will see, perhaps most important of all, opportunities for local citizens to come together, to meet each other, to build community and make decisions about how they want to continue to improve their neighbourhood. Neighbourhoods Alive! is a key piece in all of that, and I would submit it is a fundamental example of the difference that government can make when it works with its citizens, rather than imposing decisions upon them.

I think another very stark contrast, which I also have personal experience with, is in the area of education. Prior to becoming a member of the

Legislative Assembly, I was working for the University of Manitoba as its recycling co-ordinator and also in charge of no small number of environmental education programs.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Throughout the 1990s, when I was a student and then also an employee of the university, there was a service, I guess you could call it, which staff at the university would offer to visiting dignitaries, and it was called the crumbling infrastructure tour.

It was not a tour that we were proud of, but it was something that we felt people needed to see, the incredible decay that was happening to the buildings where higher learning was supposed to be happening, the support beams and posts that would be swinging in the air were it not for the combination of textbooks, spare bricks and the occasional brace to hold them in place, the leaking ceilings, the outdated lab equipment, it was really quite a remarkable experience to see how far post-secondary education had fallen. Even more remarkable was the fact that tuition was skyrocketing throughout that entire period. So students, such as myself, in those days were having an incredibly difficult time meeting the demands of ever-increasing tuition, and also having that contrasted with the enormous decay that was happening right around them.

Look at the changes that have happened since the election of this NDP government in 1999. Tuition rates were cut by 10 percent and they have been maintained. They have been frozen at that rate ever since. We have invested over \$100 million in the infrastructure, not just of the University of Manitoba, but of all of the universities and colleges around the province. This money has been matched, and quite often exceeded, by very generous donations from community philanthropists and corporate donors as well, and the revitalization happening on these university campuses is there for all to see.

The enrolment numbers speak for themselves. Since we came to office, there are 13 000 more people going to school at post-secondary education institutions in our province than was the case beforehand. Well over a thousand of those are Aboriginal students, which I am very, very proud of and very happy to see as well.

Another area of stark contrast, I think, can be drawn in the area of the environment. Let us start

with energy, to begin with. We are all aware of the enormous negative impacts that previous hydro generating stations have brought upon the residents of the North. We are also aware that, in the past, the vast majority of those benefits came down to those of us who live here in the southern portion of the province. I want to draw out a very clear contrast, using the Wuskwatim Dam as an example, of just how dramatic a change new hydro is and how important it is to the future of our province.

The initial design for the Wuskwatim Dam would have caused a fair degree of flooding and that was no longer acceptable to anyone involved. So Manitoba Hydro went out and redesigned the concept for that dam, which greatly reduced the flooding, down to the point where there would be less than 1 square kilometre of flooding associated with the Wuskwatim Dam, if it chooses to go ahead. The additional benefits of this, of course, are that the local community once again is very much in charge of that process.

There will be a vote in January at NCN, Nelson House Cree Nation, and if those local residents in their vote decide to pursue the Wuskwatim Dam, then that would be their right, and if they vote and say otherwise, then that would be their choice. We have gone further and in a more progressive direction than anyone ever has in this province by signing a pre-project training agreement to the tune of approximately \$60 million is my understanding, so that if the local community decides that the project will happen, it will be local residents who are fully trained and able to operate much of the heavy equipment and have as many of the jobs as possible right there in their local community, as it should be.

Additionally, that local community is going to have the option to become a full partner in owning the hydro dam and earning the profits and benefits that come from its operations, for as long as the river shall run, as the phrase goes. We can see here the stark contrast between how large-scale projects were pursued in the past, which had far less consideration for environmental or social impacts than today, whereas today we see a local community fully in control of the process. We see a hydro project going before the Clean Environment Commission for the first time in our province's history. Also for the first time, the amount of money being provided by the province for intervenor groups wishing to bring in outside experts to give testimony at that Clean

Environment Commission total \$900,000 to provide a strong review and critique of the proposal, and many good suggestions came out of that process. It also took almost a year, I believe it was 347 days in total for that Clean Environment process from start to finish, which is quite remarkable. But we are very proud of the thoroughness of that review and very heartened by the success of the process so far.

So, in all of that, I think we can see that all of us in Manitoba will benefit from the clean hydro power, with almost no flooding at all, and enormous climate change benefits coming to us. The Conawapa Dam, should that project proceed, would be very similar in terms of very little flooding, and what flooding would occur as a result of the Conawapa Dam would be contained entirely within the banks of the river. That is not because of any special policy that we have passed. It just happens that there is an awful lot of water heading downhill at a very steep rate in a deep river canyon, but a remarkable opportunity for all Manitobans to investigate this opportunity and perhaps pursue it.

I do not think we can lose sight of the fact that in Toronto every single year up to a thousand people die of smog-related illnesses. So this is not just about Manitoba's economic future, this is also about the health of our fellow citizens. It is also about taking a very strong stance against climate change and doing as much as Manitoba possibly can to counteract a process that is now well underway. We are, in fact, seeing the results of those impacts in northern communities in a very dramatic way.

Wind power, of course, has been very topical in the last while, with Manitoba becoming a Canadian leader in wind power. We will have the single largest wind farm in the country developed just southwest of Carman, in the wonderful community of St. Leon. This will be a dramatic shift for Manitoba Hydro, and I want to compliment and commend Manitoba Hydro for branching out and diversifying its energy grid to include these different types of energy which will, should there be a drought like we had in past years, be quite a different capacity for us to generate our own power because we will not be entirely dependent on water-based power; we will also have wind.

* (10:20)

I should mention in closing on the energy front, Manitoba is clearly Canada's national leader on the

installation of geothermal or heat pumps, as they are popularly known. Manitoba has up to one-third of all new geothermal installations occurring right here in our province. We are also taking very aggressive stances towards improved conservation. Manitoba Hydro and its partner organizations are to be entirely commended on that, as are local communities in the North and our own government.

All of us working together are bringing some dramatic changes, which again, going back to my original theme of the difference that government can make, none of this was happening under the previous administration. I would argue none of this would have happened had that administration continued. The difference that it has made, and the difference that it will make for the Manitobans directly involved and for all of us will be really quite remarkable and something I am going to be very proud to have been a part of.

I think it also bears note that Manitoba is making some very significant changes and directions under our government's leadership in the area of health. The particular area that I would like to highlight here is our new emphasis on the Ministry of Healthy Living. Throughout the 1990s, this was not accomplished. In the new Cabinet that was formed after the 2003 election under our Premier's (Mr. Doer) leadership, we now have a Ministry of Healthy Living, which I am very, very proud of.

For so long health care has been a top priority of Canadians and, for a significant amount of that time, Canadians have been calling on governments to be more proactive in the prevention of illnesses in the first place, to look at the determinants of health. A local organization in my riding, Klinik, spelled with a "k" has done some remarkable work on this on multiple projects, and it has been a very strong advocate. I want to thank the staff and volunteers at Klinik for all of their advice to me to make me fully aware of just the enormous value and benefit to all of us if we can look at the root causes of our illnesses and take dramatic strides to prevent illness from happening in the first place.

I was very happy that the Member for Carman (Mr. Rocan) happens to be in the Chamber at the moment, because one dramatic example of government making a difference is in large part his leadership and the leadership of all three parties working together to bring in a province-wide

smoking ban. This has been implemented. We are fully committed to its enforcement, and Manitobans deserve to have clean air same as anyone else. Whether you are a worker or a patron in a business or an indoor facility, the provincewide indoor smoking ban is something all of us can be very proud of and, once again, I would suggest, is an example of government making difference in making a positive improvement in people's lives.

I also want to bring in and commend our Premier (Mr. Doer) on creating the Department of Water Stewardship. I want to bring this in under the context of health and health promotion, because, of course, if we do not have clean water, if we do not have sustainable ecosystems to support the life that exists in our province, then we have missed a very key component in our efforts to promote good health and to prevent illness in the first place.

Our Minister of Water Stewardship (Mr. Ashton), the first Minister of Water Stewardship in the history of our province, indeed, the first Minister of Water Stewardship in the history of our country, is doing a commendable job of addressing multiple issues related to water health with the creation of water stewardship boards for Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba, hence public commitment in statement to reduce the nutrient loading right down to the 1970 levels and his introduction of a very progressive and innovative piece of legislation, The Water Protection Act, and which I am looking forward to the debate on that issue. I am very much looking forward to seeing it become law in our province.

I also want to touch on the remarkable accomplishments of our Minister of Immigration (Ms. Allan) and the accomplishments of our government in this area. As many people will have heard already, our government came in with the very dramatic goal of increasing the immigration levels to Manitoba to 10 000 people per year. I am very pleased to report that this year we are on track to having 7500 new immigrants come to settle in Manitoba. So we are well on our way to meeting our target of 10 000 people in a few years.

I also want to add that I had the honour of going to my first Canadian citizenship ceremony a few months ago. It was one of the most beautiful ceremonies I have ever seen. It was held down at the citizenship branch in the VIA Rail station on Main

Street. There were over 60 people becoming Canadian citizens, and they came from 27 different countries. They came from Africa, they came from Europe, they came from Asia, they came from Australia and they came from Latin America. They came from every single continent, except Antarctica, in the world. It really made me appreciate just how special a place Manitoba is, the hope that people see in our province, and the fact that of all the places in the world, they have chosen to settle here is one of the finest compliments, I think, anyone could ever pay us.

I certainly support our Immigration Minister and her ongoing efforts to encourage more people to settle here in Manitoba. The funding to help people in settlement services has gone up dramatically under our government's watch. Immigration is such a strong theme throughout the history of our province and the history of our country. I am very proud to, once again, be a member of our government, which is moving forward in this area rather than stagnating or moving backward.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it has been my sincere pleasure to address the Throne Speech today. I thank you very much for listening to my comments, and to my colleagues, as well, I extend my thanks. I look forward to hearing their thoughts on this very progressive Speech from the Throne and the very progressive policies and actions that our government takes behalf of all Manitoban citizens. Thank you very much.

Mr. Denis Rocan (Carman): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do give fair warning to members opposite that I am not going to be up that long today, because we have several individuals on our side of the House yet who are trying to participate in the Throne Speech debate.

But it is a great pleasure this morning to be able to stand here on behalf of the great constituency of Carman and to reply to the Throne Speech. I would like to begin by welcoming the Speaker back, because I know all honourable members appreciate his direction and guidance, and we look forward to working in his presence over the coming days during this very short session.

I would also like to acknowledge the contributions of the table officers, for their diligence during session and knowledge of proceedings, the Sergeant-at-Arms and his staff for keeping with

parliamentary tradition, those who work so hard in Hansard at getting our comments on the record, and the gallery officers for ensuring the public is given every opportunity to come and watch House proceedings.

I would also like to welcome Manitoba's newest Lieutenant-Governor, Son Honneur l'honorable John Harvard et Son Honneur Lenore Berscheid. L'honorable John Harvard a été assermenté à titre de vingt-troisième lieutenant-gouverneur du Manitoba.

Translation

His Honour the Honourable John Harvard and Her Honour Lenore Berscheid. The Honourable John Harvard has been sworn in as the twenty-third Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba.

English

It was His Honour's first Throne Speech, and I would like to thank him for all the work that he will be doing to represent our province at home here in Manitoba, in Canada and on the world stage.

* (10:30)

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate and welcome our pages who will be joining us now and in the new year. I am sure you will find your experience in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly most memorable, and I would like to thank you in advance for all your work you will be doing to ensure House proceedings run as smoothly as possible.

It is also my pleasure this morning to welcome our six new legislative interns. I know how valuable your work is for our researchers and honourable members. I am sure you will find your experience over the coming months to be most rewarding.

The internship program would not be possible without the direction and support of the academic director, and I would like to thank Professor Jean Friesen for taking on this role, and to congratulate our representatives on the hiring committee, the honourable Member for Portage La Prairie (Mr. Faurichou) and the honourable Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale).

To our newly elected members, the honourable Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen) and the

honourable Member for Minto (Mr. Swan), I have lived in the Turtle Mountain constituency and have worked there and have represented them. I have also lived, and my first home was bought, in the Minto constituency, and I have worked from there. I know that you are both proud of the areas that have sent you to this most beautiful place, albeit they are like night and day. So, on behalf of all honourable members, I would like to welcome you to the Legislative Assembly, and I know you will both be excellent representatives for all the great people in your respective constituencies. I wish you all the best in your political careers.

M. le vice-président, d'après le rapport publié par Campagne 2000, intitulé Un million de trop, rapport 2004 sur la pauvreté des enfants au Canada, le taux de pauvreté infantile au Manitoba en 2002 était 20,8 pour cent, équivalent à un sur cinq ou 53 000 enfants au Manitoba qui vivent dans la pauvreté quotidienne. Quand on parle de la pauvreté infantile, on parle vraiment de la pauvreté des enfants et des familles.

Translation

Mr. Deputy Speaker, according to the Campaign 2000 report entitled One Million Too Many—2004 Report Card on Child Poverty in Canada, the rate of child poverty in Manitoba in 2002 was 20.8 percent, which is equivalent to one out of five or 53 000 children in Manitoba living daily in poverty. When we talk about child poverty, we are really talking about child and family poverty.

English

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with so many of our young people and their families fighting to stay afloat, it is unfortunate that there is no mention of a long-term plan to help the poor in our province. Those less fortunate deserve to be afforded every opportunity possible. Yet the poor are left out of this Throne Speech. This Throne Speech is more notable, not for what it has included, but for what it has left out.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, rural Manitoba is in a state of crisis. Ever since May 20, 2003, when a single case of BSE was discovered, Manitoba's agricultural community has been thrown into a downward spiral. Perhaps the Premier (Mr. Doer) has not realized just how important agriculture is to our province. Perhaps the Premier does not realize just how badly farmers in our province are suffering. Yes, in the Throne

Speech, the Premier mentions the U.S. border has been closed for a prolonged and unwarranted length of time for reasons that have little to do with food safety. Indeed, for more than a year and a half, farmers have been struggling. For than a year and a half, the Doer government has had an opportunity to put together a real solution, a real plan to help our farmers. Yet all we have seen is a lack of commitment, a lack of a plan and a lack of future direction.

Farmers have said to us that we need increased slaughter capacity and we need our abattoirs federally inspected. We, the Conservatives, on this side of the House, released a five-point BSE strategy on September 9 of this year that provided for just that. It was to cost \$72 million, and it was to come from the \$180 million promised to our farmers by the Doer government. Yet this government has only flowed about \$90 million to our producers.

The time for action is now, and when will this government fully commit to saving Manitoba's agricultural sector? On October 15, 2004, a 14% antidumping tariff on all live hog exports to the United States was implemented. If the United States Department of Commerce does not rule in favour of Canada's hog producers in April 2005 and remove the tariffs and give back the money to our hog producers, can we expect the same inaction by the Doer government that we saw with the BSE crisis? Will the plight of our hog producers be ignored?

M. le vice-président, peut-être que la seule chose qui indique que le gouvernement pense un peu au futur et pense à l'économie rurale est l'annonce il y a quelques jours concernant l'énergie éolienne et la construction de la première turbine éolienne à St-Léon, Manitoba. C'est sûr que les 10 millions de dollars que ce projet apportera aux fermiers dans la circonscription de Carman et les 190 millions de dollars de construction seraient les bienvenus. Mais comme toujours avec ce gouvernement, on devrait procéder avec prudence.

Translation

Mr. Deputy Speaker, possibly the only thing that indicates that the government is thinking somewhat about the future and thinking about the rural economy is the announcement a few days ago regarding wind power and the construction of the first wind turbine in St. Leon, Manitoba. Of course, the \$10 million this project would provide for

farmers in the constituency of Carman and the \$190 million invested in construction would be welcome. But, as always with this government, one has to be cautious.

English

The residents of the Carman constituency share the concerns of all Manitobans regarding the necessity to protect the environment for future generations, for our children and for our children's children. The cutting-edge, clean energy technology, as the St. Leon wind farm, is a step in the right direction, and I applaud the Doer government for taking this step. However, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one often wonders, when you compare this wind farm announcement with what is going on today in our province, if the current government is taking one step forward and then two steps back.

M. le vice-Président, quelle sorte de message est envoyé aux Métis de notre province quand le premier ministre dit que son gouvernement va respecter les droits de chasse du peuple métis et quelques semaines plus tard, un Métis, M. Will Goodon, est arrêté en train d'exercer son droit qui est soi-disant protégé par le gouvernement Doer?

Translation

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what kind of message is being sent to the Métis of our province when the Premier says that his government will respect the hunting rights of the Métis people and then a few weeks later, a Métis, Mr. Will Goodon, is arrested while exercising his right, which is supposedly protected by the Doer government?

English

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know for a fact that Manitoba is home to some of the best and the brightest children our country has to offer. Just a few weeks ago, I was honoured to attend a very special ceremony at the Graysville School where a group of Grade 1 students were recipients of a national award. These students were able to write, illustrate and put together a book called *Why We Remember*. This book, which deals with the importance of Remembrance Day, is now available for children all across Canada to read. I encourage all members of this House to pick up a copy of this book and share it with their families and friends. The award presented

to the students of Graysville is a testament to the kind, gifted children that live in Manitoba.

It is our responsibility, as legislators and as citizens of Manitoba, to make sure that our future generations inherit a province filled with golden opportunities and endless possibilities. That is the only way we can guarantee that our young people will want to stay in our province and work to build a better future. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in order to do this a sound plan and a sound vision is necessary. This Throne Speech demonstrates that the NDP government is severely lacking in that department.

I would like to conclude today by wishing all Manitobans and all members of this House a very merry Christmas, a happy, safe holiday season and all the best in the upcoming new year. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Labour and Immigration): It is an honour for me today to put a few words on the record regarding our government's Throne Speech. First, I would like to welcome my new colleagues in the Legislature. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the new MLA for Minto. He brings a great deal of strength and commitment to social democracy. I know that he is highly, highly regarded as a family law lawyer in his community. I really believe that this is a wonderful addition to our caucus, and we are just thrilled to have him with us.

I would also like to welcome the MLA for Turtle Mountain. Turtle Mountain is my home town, MacGregor, and I always had great conversations with the former MLA for Turtle Mountain, Merv Tweed. I wish him all the best in the House of Commons in Ottawa, and I look forward to keeping in touch with my home town through the new MLA for Turtle Mountain.

I would like to welcome the pages to the House. The reason that they are here is because of their outstanding achievement in academics, which allows them to participate in this very unique opportunity. It is a chance to see, firsthand, how our Legislature works. That may not always be a blessing depending on what is going on in the Chamber, but it also is an opportunity for them to see firsthand, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how our laws are made here in Manitoba.

*(10:40)

Our province also is very unusual in regard to our public committee process. We are one of the few jurisdictions in Canada where we have public committee meetings and the general public can come and offer their advice to our government in regard to the laws that we are passing. So I am sure that they will find that experience quite interesting and I am sure that they will remember this particular experience in their lives for many years to come, so welcome.

I would like to thank St. Vital for the incredible opportunity to represent them as their MLA. It is a privilege to represent this wonderful community. I have always said that public service is a gift, and I have certainly enjoyed working with community organizations and individuals who are so dedicated to their community and building a better society.

I would like to thank the dedicated staff that work for me in my constituency office, particularly Brenda Deamel. She is my eyes and ears in the community and does an incredible job of connecting with the community. It has been a particularly overwhelming, I know, and big responsibility for her as I took on my added responsibilities as Minister of Labour and Immigration last year.

I would also like to recognize the dedication and the professionalism of my staff in my ministerial office who do just a super job. This is a very demanding job and often very challenging and they really are professional at all times.

Unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we lost a valued member of our team in my office this year, and it has had a profound effect on everyone that knew her. I knew Adrienne Bage for many years, so when I became a minister last year I was thrilled to inherit her as my special assistant. She was a dedicated employee, fiercely loyal, and knowledgeable about labour, immigration and multicultural issues. She was passionate about her politics and she loved her job. She was my rock as I worked through that early journey as a new minister. She was a wonderful mother to Trevor and Chantel and, of course, the love of her life was Bill.

She left us after a courageous battle with cancer and she is missed. I know my colleague from Flin Flon shares my feelings and everyone who knew her shares those feelings. I want to thank the Member for Carman (Mr. Rocan), who came and spoke to me

after we lost her. It was nice to have you speak personally to me and I thank you for that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I first became elected in 1999, I was asked by the Premier (Mr. Doer) to second our government's first Throne Speech and it was an honour. It was my maiden speech in the House—

An Honourable Member: It was a good one.

Ms. Allan: And it was a good one. Of course, it was. Thank you to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Smith) for that little comment. Of course in that speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I paid tribute to my mother. Well, she was passionate about social issues, and she paved the way for women to run.

She was a CCF candidate in the Lakeside constituency in 1952 and 1953. She ran against the most popular premier in Manitoba, Premier Douglas Campbell. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, my mom died with dignity on August 15 of this year, and I learned something new about her in those days around her funeral. The gentleman that organized her funeral brought me a press release. My mom was the first woman appointed to the Civil Service Commission in 1984 by the then-Minister of Labour. I am privileged to have that press release now in my office and it really is something wonderful to learn something new about her. She was a woman ahead of her time and a woman for her time. The NDP has lost a pioneer, and I have lost a mom and a political mentor. I am here today because of her.

I would like to say a few words about Manitoba's immigration strategy, because I think it is an important part of our economic strategy. Canada will depend solely on immigration, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by the year 2014 because of Canada's declining birth rate and our ageing population. Manitoba's Provincial Nominee Program is the most successful Provincial Nominee Program in Canada. It is an economic program that is linked to labour market demand. We also have the most successful Provincial Nominee Program in Canada because 30 percent of our provincial nominees who come to Manitoba come to rural Manitoba and settle in rural communities like Winkler, Morden, Steinbach, and, of course, the city of Brandon. My two city of Brandon colleagues are with me this morning, and I

know that they appreciate Manitoba's immigration program.

Last week, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the MLA for Steinbach was trying to take credit for this success of our Provincial Nominee Program, and you know, I really want to give credit where credit is due. The success of our program is because of the hard-working, dedicated and committed staff in our Immigration Branch. They have grown this program from 200 people in 1998 to 7500 principal applicants this year. The success of this program is also because of the excellent partnerships that we have with communities and community organizations and the organizations that provide settlement services so that our newest newcomers to Manitoba can settle in and contribute to Manitoba society.

In June, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we passed The Manitoba Immigration Council Act, appointing 12 council members who will advise the government on our ambitious immigration and integration strategy. On behalf of Premier Doer and my Cabinet colleagues, we are very grateful that these talented and respected individuals have volunteered to serve a three-year term on the new council. The creation of the council is a key component of Manitoba's action strategy for economic growth. This strategy places increased emphasis on the benefits of immigration as we reach our target of 10 000 newcomers annually.

The action strategy and the appointment of the Manitoba Immigration Council are based on recommendations from the Premier's Economic Advisory Council which followed broad consultation with Manitobans. Increased immigration not only maintains our population growth, it is in direct response to the global challenges of declining birth rates and an ageing workforce, but also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the unbalanced distribution of 90 percent of all immigrants going to three provinces. The council is composed of volunteers from business, labour, educators, as well as regional and ethnocultural communities. One of its mandates is to strengthen partnerships to facilitate newcomers' faster and fuller participation in Manitoba's dynamic future. The council will provide advice and information in three key areas: the promotion of Manitoba as an attractive destination for immigrants; the development of appropriate settlement services; and the identification of crucial supports and incentives to retain immigrants in Manitoba. The council is also playing a key role in our Qualifications Recognition Summit next

week. As provinces and countries compete for prospective immigrants, these tasks grow more challenging. As a leader across Canada in immigration, we are committed to strengthening and building on partnerships and inviting new ideas to meet our objectives.

I have to tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that last June when I was in committee and I was trying to get the act through the House that appointed this council, the MLA for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) tried to hold up the passing of this legislation because he had a great deal of concern about the composition of this new council. He was worried. He kept going on and on about how important it was that we appointed business, how important it was that we appointed labour, and you know, that is exactly what we appointed to this council. He went on and on for so long in committee that even the Tories were rolling their eyes, and you know, I have not heard him once since we announced this council, I have not heard him come to me and tell me the good work you did, what I was suggesting. But I am quite sure that he is pleased with our appointments.

* (10:50)

High among our settlement priorities is Manitoba's Qualification Recognition Initiative. We aim to have a fair and efficient system that will enable highly skilled immigrants into occupations for which they have training and experience. On average, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 61 percent of adult immigrants destined to Manitoba annually are highly educated in professions and trades. Our new Manitoba Immigration Council will explore new approaches to fair assessment and qualifications recognition to overcome the wasteful cycle that keeps qualified employees out of work or under-employed. We challenge academic institutions, professional and technical licensing bodies, potential employers and governments to work together with us on these critical issues. Our QR summit, our Qualifications Recognition summit, next week is another important step in ensuring that we continue to move forward on our qualifications recognition strategy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, multiculturalism is an important part of my department and also a very, very important part of Manitoba's multicultural makeup, and one of our greatest strengths. The Manitoba Ethnocultural Advisory and Advocacy

Council is a key component in developing strategies to help us draw on that strength, promote economic growth and bind our community together. The council consists of a 21-member body, with 16 members elected by ethnocultural organizations and 5 members who are appointed by the minister. This group of diverse individuals provides information, advice and recommendations on behalf of the multicultural community on all ethnocultural matters. It also advocates for Manitoba's ethnocultural community.

Recently, I was pleased to introduce the new members of the Manitoba Ethnocultural Advisory and Advocacy Council. These new members bring fresh insights to the council as we continue our pledge to build to stronger relationships between government and Manitoba's ethnocultural communities. I know these dedicated volunteers will continue the council's work in the areas of anti-racism, education, immigration and employment, and cultural and linguistic diversity. It will also forge links with other bodies and agencies to ensure the needs of Manitoba's multicultural communities are clearly understood.

As Minister of Labour and Immigration and Minister responsible for Multiculturalism, I am encouraged by our population growth and our efforts to achieve a welcoming and progressive society. Our government will continue to strive to make Manitoba an attractive place to live, work and raise a family.

I would like to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in direct response to the Throne Speech, that it is an honour for me to say that I will be voting in favour of our government's Throne Speech. Manitoba is growing. Our population growth is at its highest level since the 1980s, and young people are staying here in increasing numbers, from a net loss of young people in 1999 to a net gain in 2004. Housing construction is at an all-time high. College and university enrolment is up one-third. There are 13 000 more students in our post-secondary institutions than there were five years ago. The biotech sector is the fastest growing in Canada, right here in Manitoba. Employment is up 35 percent in the past 18 months.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a strong economic plan for Manitoba, Manitoba's seven-point action plan for economic growth continues in collaboration with the Premier's Economic Advisory Committee. Manitoba's first ever bursary program will be

introduced for post-graduate students, with a special emphasis on advanced study in agriculture. The Province is working with industry to provide the largest expansion of skills training in our history, with emphasis on cutting-edge industries such as biotechnology and research and diversification of food products.

A new advanced manufacturing initiative will be established in partnership with business and educators. A new venture capital fund will be developed in partnership with the private sector. We have an economic plan and we have a dedicated team of people that are led by the most popular Premier (Mr. Doer) in Canada. We will continue to get up every day and work hard for the people of Manitoba. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): I am pleased to rise, as well, today to put a few comments on record regarding the Throne Speech. But, before I do that, I want to, as well, recognize and welcome the Speaker back to his Chair and to the pages, again, for the work that they continue to do, bringing us our water and refreshments and so on. We do appreciate your work, and, of course, to the six new interns who have joined us within this Legislature as well. It is good to be back and I count it an honour and a privilege to be able to represent the constituents of Pembina, one of the fastest growing areas in rural Manitoba.

As I proceed through my discussion here, I will indicate some of the things that are taking place within that area. However, before I do that, I just want to make one thing abundantly clear. Should anyone in any way be misguided by the fact that I would be voting in favour of this Throne Speech, I will endeavour to indicate the reasons why I cannot do that in the next few minutes.

With that, I want to continue, but before I proceed, I want to take this opportunity to welcome our two new members, the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen) and the Member for Minto (Mr. Swan). They will find this an absolutely fascinating experience and, I am sure, very educational. I think of just a few years ago when I was elected and the honour it was to be one of 57 members in the province of this Manitoba, to be able to be in this House and represent the constituents who elected them.

As I indicated, I cannot support the Throne Speech, but that is for the following reasons. First of all, it is that we have a continuation. I have listened to a number of throne speeches that this Premier (Mr. Doer), this government, has put forward. As I have entitled it, it is a continuation of lip service. There are a lot of things that are said about the things that are taking place and are going to take place within this province. However, many of them have not taken place. Of course, the promises that are made and not kept.

I believe that a Throne Speech, yes, it is the road map for the coming year, which is telling Manitobans the direction that this government wants to go. Truly, that is what they should be doing. It is very important that take place because I think we all want to know where we are heading within this province. We love the province of Manitoba dearly, but we want to see it move ahead and progress and move forward. As I look back over the past year and the last number of years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I fail to see a number of the things that have taken place. Yes, there are subsequent things that have happened; however, I feel that we have not moved in the direction that we needed to quickly enough.

In the meantime, while this is taking place, I just find it unacceptable that we would be taking this province deeper and deeper into debt. Not something that I will have to personally pay. I probably will not live that long, but we have put this debt on our children and onto our grandchildren. That to me is absolutely unacceptable because it would be no different than I own a farm, I have a farm. I went together with our children, but if I would continue to add indebtedness to it which they are not capable of servicing, that would be unacceptable. That would not be something that would be good stewardship of my resources. I find that unacceptable, the direction that we are going. That needs to be turned around.

* (11:00)

I was so pleased to hear the Minister of Immigration (Ms. Allan) just up speaking regarding immigration within the province. Yes, truly, the area that I represent, we have and are recipients of the immigrants coming in, and we do appreciate very much their expertise, the ability that they have, the talents they have, what they have added to our community. We appreciate that very much.

However, I want to make one thing abundantly clear that this program, and I have got to hand it to the minister, the NDP, that at least they have not shelved this program, but it was started under the previous government. We were the ones who signed the declaration indicating that this was the direction that we wanted to go. Yes, I do agree with the fact that, in order for this province to continue to grow and to be able to expand, we do need to have the resources of immigrants coming into the province.

This is an aside comment that I am going to make, but I would say that in our family we have contributed. I will just explain that. We have three children, so rather than just replacing ourselves, we have contributed to society. Now, if everyone would be, if I could use that quotation, a contributor, our reliance on immigration may not be as great. On the other hand, I do not want anyone to think that I am opposed to immigration. I believe it is very important that we continue in the direction that we are going.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with this immigration, we need to have supports that continue to give the immigrants, the communities that people are immigrating to, we need to continue to give them the supports so that they can continue to give the services that are required.

Let me refer to several of these supports, but first of all, I want to refer to the area of education. Here again, and I will refer you to the Throne Speech and the resolution that we had put in there, the government's failure to commit to elimination of all educational tax off of residential property and farmland. I believe it is imperative that we do that. This government would have had the ability to do that had they chosen to. I believe, again, it is, as in any business, and this government is running the largest business within the province of Manitoba, it is called priority spending. It could be done if there had been a will to do it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was our party who introduced this and indicated very, very strongly that, should we form government, we would eliminate the education residential taxes as well as the education taxes on farmland. I believe it is imperative that we do that in order to recognize some of the challenges that are out there in rural Manitoba, mind you, not only rural Manitoba but also within the city of Winnipeg. This would apply to all.

Coming back to education and the lack of resources, we all want to highlight our community. Yes, the Minister of Immigration (Ms. Allan) indicated clearly that Morden, Winkler, southern Manitoba had been recipients of a large immigration. Absolutely right, however, if we are going to have that, we need to have the resources that are corresponding with it. We, right now, have close to 700 students in huts. You may say, well, that is not all that bad. Well, the point being that in some of our locations at schools, we have more huts than we have classrooms. The problem that we are facing is that our washroom facilities have not kept pace with the growth. So, consequently, we need to get out there and to get new accommodations and to put the accommodations in place so that we, in fact, can support the growth that is taking place, but that has not happened.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, just to add to that, it is now 598 days ago that the then-Minister of Education, who is now minister of highways, was in southern Manitoba and had the big press release about the new middle school that was going to be built. Has it taken place yet? No, they have reannounced this several times, all we are getting there. But has anything taken place? No, it has not. So that is why I am somewhat sceptical of the promises that are made by this government, yes, the grandiose, nice press releases. Press releases do not build schools.

Then the other comment I want to bring forward was the member for, I believe it was Wolseley, was speaking about education and, of course, how post-secondary education had grown and all the rest of it. I will not deny that that has not taken place. Has there been a freeze on tuition? Yes, it has, but it has always been my contention, and it is years ago that I went to university in Winnipeg.

An Honourable Member: It is not that long ago.

Mr. Dyck: Okay, thank you. The member for Brandon indicates it is not that long ago, and that is absolutely true. It is as though it was yesterday.

However, what I want to draw to the attention of this Assembly here is the fact that, yes, the tuition fees have been frozen. However, those from rural Manitoba are impacted in another way, and that is we have to pay our own room and board. As those costs continue to escalate, there is an unfair advantage to those from the urban area. I do not deny

that they should not have the opportunities to go to university. But I believe that if we are going to stand, and we are going to be proclaiming the greatness of having frozen the tuition fees in the province of Manitoba, let us not forget to recognize the problems that those from rural Manitoba have and the added costs that they have associated with that post-secondary education.

Just added to this whole immigration, the other area I want to talk about is the infrastructure deficit. As areas grow, people move in. If I look at the area that I represent, we have had several hundred new houses built within the total area in the last several years. There is growth, absolutely right, but I would indicate to you and I would appeal to the government of the day, as the Premier (Mr. Doer) said when he was first elected in 1999, he was the Premier, the government, for the whole province. I respect that. In a democratic approach, that would take place. However, I would like to see the corresponding results take place.

Allow me just to indicate to you several reasons why I am saying this has not taken place. We have got provincial highways in southern Manitoba that need, it is not huge dollars, but we need to have some recognition of the fact that, and I will use Highway 32 running through the city of Winkler, we have got 11 000 vehicles driving on that road every day. We need to four-lane a small stretch, a four-kilometre stretch. Are we getting any resources to do that? No. This year we needed to put in new traffic lights. Any resources? Was there even a recognition of it? The answer is no. So the City of Winkler had to go and put these traffic lights out on provincial roads, Highway No. 14 and Highway No. 32. That is unacceptable.

There are responsibilities that this government, that this province, the minister of highways has. Have they recognized that? No they have not. So the list goes on as this area grows, and I know that our Premier, the Minister of Immigration (Ms. Allan), they highlight that, yes, there is good growth taking place within southern Manitoba. Absolutely right, and I am proud of it, but with that growth we need to also have lagoons. We need to have that infrastructure in place.

If at least there was a recognition that there is work being done, however, at this point in time and as the mayor for the City of Winkler indicated fairly

clearly, he says, "I have written letter after letter and do I even get a response? The answer is no. I do not even get a response." This is over a six-month period. It is sitting on somebody's desk. So all I do is I appeal to the government of the day and say if you are going to be government, be government for the total province. You are not government for just certain areas. I think that needs to take place. It is a very important part.

Point of Order

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Minister of Labour and Immigration, on a point of order.

Ms. Allan: On a point of order, I would just like the member across the way to know that the Premier, the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Lemieux) and myself and several other Cabinet ministers met with the mayor and the councillors in his region just a few short months ago. So I just want him to know that. Thank you. We do represent all of Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That is a point of information given.

* * *

Mr. Dyck: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would assume that you are indicating it is not a point of order and also the fact that it probably is sort of a sore note or raw nerve, if you could use that term, and so, consequently, I appreciate that as information. I welcome the Minister of Immigration to come out to southern Manitoba anytime to see what is taking place. We met there and, yes, I recognize the fact that you did. Anyway I know my time is short, and I need to continue. I have so many things I need to say: however, the time is so short.

I want to move on next to agriculture. Mr. Deputy Speaker, agriculture is a big part of the area that I represent. Here, again, it is now 560-some-odd days ago, and I know that we have all talked about the BSE issue and so on. But how are we addressing it? I know that the present government is either indicating that, yes, the borders need to be opened up, and I do not disagree with that, or they are saying that the federal government is not taking their fair share. I will not disagree with that either because I think it is a co-operative effort where we are going to be able to move ahead. But this government has had time to put in place a processing plant. I believe that

if they were really, really serious, really serious, to be able to assist the farmers in being able to get and move some of those cull cows and move them to market, they would during this period of time, and this is a year and a half, there would have been some concrete recognition of the fact that a processing plant would have been built. Yet that has not taken place.

*(11:10)

I know that the members are looking at me and saying, "Well, he just wants that in southern Manitoba." I would say do it in a place in the province of Manitoba, wherever it makes geographic sense, but please go ahead and do it. It needs to be done.

Added to that, of course, we have the problems of the hog tariffs that have been added. Of course, this past year there is, and I know that all of us recognize the fact that it has been a monsoon year, as someone has put it, last year it was a drought, this year a monsoon year, and so those involved in agriculture have been really, really hard hit by some of the weather that has taken place in the past year. Now this, of course, relates also to businesses within those communities and so we need to continue to put supports out there that are going to encourage and that are going to keep these rural communities alive.

Added to that, in the area that I represent, because so much of the product that we produce there is shipped to the U.S., they market it to the U.S., there are a number of things that are taking place, and I know that this is ongoing and I realize this government does not have control over the value of the dollar, but with the escalation of our own dollar, the devaluation of the American dollar, that they are having some real challenges out there. So they need to be competitive, which of course would lead me to the other side of it, in order to recognize that in order to be able to continue to give some supports there, we need to be very cautious of our own taxation structure, that we need to be competitive in the markets.

So this combination of raising taxes and be that in the form of Hydro, and I know we have had a 10% increase on that one, and that is a very direct form of taxation, it is a cost that is attributed to any business that is doing business out there.

But then I need to move on to Justice, just to highlight this one. In the last week, within my area we had six break-ins. I believe there was a headline in the paper just this morning, but it was this whole area of a catch-and-release program. We need to get tough on crime. Yes, it says here, and I will just draw this out, NDP must put an end to the catch and release. It is something that we, as a party, had been talking about for a number of years.

We cannot just give that little tap on the hand and say, "Well, just please do not do that again." I will cite an example within our own area of some of those who are breaking and entering. I know that one of the young fellows was released from the Remand Centre just two weeks ago, but it was exactly that; he thought this was a big joke. He had been there for a little bit and it was just a joke. We need to toughen down on people who are violating others in the properties that they have.

Then, of course, health care. Now, here it is, the same old one, but we need to continue to remind the government of the day that in 1999 they said they would be elected, and I see our former Minister of Health is here now, but in six months and \$15 million, we can solve a lot of problems. Well, I think we all know where health care is today. It is a difficult one, and I will recognize that fact, but I do want to indicate though at this point that the calls that I have had in the last while, and I realize and recognize that we have an aging population, but the hip replacements and the knee replacements, those lines are certainly getting longer all the time. The waits are getting longer.

If, for whatever reason, the waits are getting longer, I just know that last week I had two letters from two of my constituents who were slated to be having surgery in February and they have now been postponed and put down to, I believe it is July or August of the next year. This is unacceptable when they have been waiting for a year already. The reason I say it is unacceptable, I mean that is certainly not the indication that we had from the government of the day that they were going to be shortening these lists and resolving these problems. So I would encourage them to continue to work on that.

I do want to also recognize the fact that they have allowed my area another orthopedic surgeon and so they are going to be increasing the hip

replacements. I believe they are going to double those and they are going to start with knee replacements, I think that is the correct term there. So I think that that is going to be taking place. I do appreciate that because, again, we do not need to send everyone from rural Manitoba into the urban centre to have these procedures take place if, in fact, we can do them back home. So I do want to thank the government of the day for looking into that and doing that.

I need to conclude, but before I do, though, I just want to give one analogy here. Two days ago, we had the discussion and a very appropriate resolution that took place, the debate we had here regarding the Ukraine and the democratic process that needed to take place out there. We were all in favour of that, and I think that many of us had an opportunity to get up, speak to that resolution, to highlight the things that are out there, the fact that, yes, a secret ballot is important, yes, it is important that there be an honourable way, a democratic way of electing governments.

However, I do want to draw a parallel to this, and I see the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) is here, and he and I had a little bit of a discussion the other day. He indicated fairly clearly that the members on this side of the House, here, that the Tory party, and I think if I could quote him fairly accurately, he said that we were totally, totally opposed to unions, and I indicated to him very clearly, I said, "No, we are opposed to forced unionization." The reason I bring this up is, I want to draw a parallel here which I believe is somewhat, if I can use the term, hypocritical, in the sense where we are saying that we would take the secret ballot away from people who are looking at unionizing, we would take that secret ballot away from them, but on the other hand, we stand up in the House here and we lecture one another and we say, "We have a combined resolution." We say though, "Ah, but in the Ukraine, now, that is different."

I am sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I really, really fail to see where the differences are. I think if we are going to have a free, democratic society, one that I would promote, one that I would like us to see continue to have within this province, I believe it needs to be for everyone. If you are going to have a unionization, I am not opposed to unions, I believe they have their place. But, my goodness, let us not be hypocritical about this and say, "Oh, yeah, but for

those people out there, that is a good thing, but out here, well, that is somewhat different." Unless someone can explain to me this difference, I will continue to indicate that this is a hypocritical approach for this government to take where they say that there are very, very sound differences.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that my time is moving on quickly. I planned to get up for only a few minutes, but as I indicated, there are so many things to say and so little time, but I know there are others who want to speak as well. I want to thank you for this opportunity, to just put a few comments on record and to indicate to the constituency of Pembina that I do appreciate their support and the energetic way that they approach things. As many of them would say, that they continue to grow and to expand, and in some cases, not because of the government but in spite of. They will move ahead. They will continue to grow this province.

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs): I am also, like other members of this Chamber, very pleased to rise this morning to put a few remarks on record respecting the Throne Speech. Before I do that, however, I would also like to extend my congratulations to the two new members, Minto and Turtle Mountain. I welcome those two new members to this Chamber, and I hope that they do well here and find that being in public office is truly an honourable occupation, as I certainly have found out over the time that I have spent here, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Next, I want to welcome the young people who will be serving in this Chamber as pages. Again, congratulations to each of you for having been selected, as I understand that there was a large number of young people who applied for these positions. You are to be congratulated. I know that your experience, or at least I hope that your experience here for the next while will be meaningful and you will find it useful.

* (11:20)

I would like to talk about very briefly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I want to give time to other members of the House to speak to the Throne Speech, but I would like to talk a little bit about our government's record as it applies to northern Manitoba. For the past five years, northern people, for the first time in a long time, have been feeling

that the government is listening to them again, and that government is doing something to address their issues. Northerners are now feeling that they matter. They are now feeling that government is not ignoring them anymore.

For the past 11 or 12 years, I believe it was 11 years, before 1999, northerners felt that they were being ignored by the Manitoba government. I think that they had good reasons for feeling that way, for feeling that they were being neglected, Mr. Deputy Speaker. For example, in the area of transportation, when we got into government for the first time, we funded with government funds a winter road that goes to Lac Brochet.

For the member from Morris, who earlier told us that we should be looking at all areas of Manitoba, the nerve of that member to suggest that we are not working with all areas of southern Manitoba today. I am really disappointed, because it was they, when they were in government for 11 to 12 years, they did not work with all areas of Manitoba. I remember as an opposition member when I would ask questions or try to advocate for northerners, invariably I would be told, "The taxpayers live in southern Manitoba, and they all live in Winnipeg, Oscar. The sooner you recognize that, the better off you will feel." I remember being told that by the former Member for Lakeside when I was asking questions of the government as to why there were so few programs and services being allocated for the North.

In the area of transportation, for example, I remember when I would review the transportation budget, 120 million sometimes, and only 4 or 5 percent of that budget being allocated for northern purposes, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I also remember one election year, they actually had allocated 11 percent, but that was before an election. So no wonder people from the North were feeling neglected.

Now we are spending certainly more than 5 percent of the transportation budget in the North. Roads which were falling apart for 11, 12 years under the Tory government are now being fixed and people appreciate that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The bridge at Cross Lake was finally built under our government, and this was, of course, part of the Northern Flood Agreement compensation which had ended up in the arbitration process. Twice the arbitrator ruled in favour of Cross Lake for government to build the bridge at Cross Lake. Twice

the Tory government appealed the arbitrator's ruling, and of course, when we came into government in 1999, one of the first things we did was to instruct government workers that they were not to appeal anymore the arbitrator's decision with respect to the Cross Lake bridge. The bridge has been completed this year. It was the right thing to do, and people appreciated that.

Since we have begun to improve the transportation infrastructure in the North, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was really saddened to listen to members opposite in Estimates questioning the minister as to why or how much money had been spent on roads leading up to Indian reserves in northern Manitoba. They were also questioning the minister as to why they spend all this money on winter roads, again leading to Indian reserves in northern Manitoba.

I think the members opposite will wait a long time if they are expecting to get some kind of an apology from this side, when we have done all this work in the North and then people appreciate the work that we have done in the North.

In health, for example, facilities have been upgraded in the North. In fact, our government has been busy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in trying to catch up doing what was neglected for 11, 12 years. When you have neglected an area for 11, 12 years, it will take, I am afraid, not just one year to catch up, but it will take several years.

That is what we are doing right now. Facilities were upgraded in Flin Flon, Thompson and The Pas. Again, people appreciate that because they know that government is listening to them. They know that their issues matter.

So we have also started working with Aboriginal people in the North to improve health services. In Garden Hill, for example, a dialysis unit was installed. Our government basically took the attitude that these people living in the Island Lake area are human beings, just like the ones living in Ste. Rose.

And they needed to be treated as such, like human beings. When it gets cold, they look for shelter. When it rains, it rains on them, too. So these people, regardless of their racial origin or their geographical location, deserve health care services just like everybody else. It does not matter that they live on a reserve.

Of course, the Aboriginal people and northerners appreciate that. Our government eliminated the northern patients' occupation fee, which had been imposed on northerners by the Tory government. Again, people appreciate it for us doing that.

The last thing I want to mention, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the University College of the North. This, of course, had been a dream for a long time by many northerners. Well, that dream became the reality this year. Many northerners no longer have to come south for post-secondary education. Of course, this will dramatically improve their socio-economic situation.

Again, the people appreciate this, even though this is another project for which we were criticized severely and, in fact, opposed by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray). But we knew better. We knew that we had to work with all areas of the province, just like what we are doing right now.

So I would like to close by saying that I hope all members of this Assembly will vote for the Throne Speech. I am certainly going to be voting for it.

I want to thank you for the time that being allowed in here to say the few words. Thank you.

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): We are nearing the end of Throne Speech debate. There have been a lot of salient points made. Actually, some on both sides. But I certainly want to contribute to the debate and the discussion in a constructive way. But I have to start off by looking at it from a political perspective because that is what all 57 of us in this Chamber are, is elected politicians. Whether or not we are able to communicate to our electorate, or to the population as a whole, what we believe is the appropriate thing to occur on behalf of the province. After all, if we do not have the best interests of the citizens of this province foremost in our minds when we come to this Chamber, then probably we are wasting everybody's time.

* (11:30)

I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, given your advocacy over the years, that probably comes pretty close to your heart. I just came through the door of the Chamber in time to hear the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Lathlin) refer to the fact that some of his constituents were human, the same as the constituents from Ste. Rose. I am unaware of where that

came from. I am aware that he went on to make the point that their ethnic background did not matter.

I would remind you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that if the onus for all of us in this Chamber is to represent our people, well, then fine, that is what should be our objective every day in this House and every day when we go to work, no matter where we park our shoes that particular day. Once we formed government, government itself is an institution. It is responsible for all the people in the province, and as opposition we point out the flaws of the government. We provide alternate direction. We provide criticism where it is warranted, and strange as that may seem to those who listen irregularly to debate in this Chamber, there are times when opposition is quite prepared to provide credit where credit is due, but very often that is a matter of degree.

This Throne Speech is masterfully crafted. I would say to anyone who listens that this is a well-written Throne Speech because it does a beautiful job of masking the fact that this government is driving looking in the rearview mirror. Most of the comments in the Throne Speech, and I would challenge anyone here to pull out the Throne Speech and go through it page by page, 90 percent of it refers to where the government has been, or what it has accomplished. Very little of it talked about where the government wants to take this province, where it wants to lead our citizens, and that is my umbrage with this Throne Speech.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that the government is going to be critical when we say that we are going to vote against this Throne Speech. You are going to say, "You are voting against tax cuts." We are not voting against tax cuts. We have been proposing tax cuts that go far beyond what this government has been talking about. We are ashamed of this government, given the influx of money to the coffers of this province since 1999-2000. The revenues to this province have grown dramatically, particularly in the first three years of the current administration. They went from \$6 billion to \$7 billion, that is \$6 billion to \$7 billion. Put in that context, you would appreciate that there are a lot of people out there had high expectations about whether or not some of their pent-up concerns, demands, and needs, were going to be addressed.

I think it is very legitimate to look around this province and to realize that there are a lot of

demands in a province as diverse as Manitoba. We have the full range of municipalities and population. We have a major urban centre right here where we stand. One of the best urban centres in Canada, well known for the services that it provides to its people, well known for a good place to do business in many areas, it is also one of the significant parts of the economic engine of this province very significant to all of us. Once you get outside of the Perimeter then you enter into, first of all your surrounding areas, not suburban but bedroom communities, what has been known over the years as the add zone, and then changed to the surrounding municipalities, represented by a specific organization. As you go out from this major centre of Winnipeg, you get into areas that are very dependent on agriculture, and you get into areas where communities have literally disappeared. Now that is not just the fault of this government. It is an evolution over the years. You know that, those of us who lived there know that. In the end, we have to say what kind of community do we want to have, just the same as the people in the urban centres say what kind of a community do we want to have.

I will write this right down to my constituency. I have three native bands that I represent. In fact, I would suggest, and seeing as how the minister of northern and native affairs raised the issue, I will use the same phraseology as he did, native communities that are struggling to get an opportunity to move forward.

I have communities, however, that also have completely disappeared off the map. Within a radius of 10 miles around where I live, there are four communities that were post offices when I was growing up in my misspent youth, I suppose some would say. But the fact is there is an evolution going on out there. This government right today has an opportunity to engage itself in that evolution of rural Manitoba. Not just in northern Manitoba, not just in the urban centres, but for all people in this province, there is an evolution occurring. Any government that does not recognize that very quickly starts to lose touch with the populace, and eventually will lose the support of the populace.

I look at the area that I represent. I would suggest that there are four regions of this province that were hit harder, eventually with the weather interaction and the BSE, all agricultural portions of this province were severely hit. But with the BSE

issue, I represent one of the areas that was probably hit more significantly than any other area. I have a significant portion of the commerce in the constituency that I represent that is based on beef production, end of statement. It is that simple. The province of Manitoba has, over the years, had an evolution of how we provide the opportunity for commerce, how we provide the opportunity for employment, how we provide the opportunity for economic opportunity within a wide range of communities across this province.

I look, first of all, to the potato industry, very controversial in this Legislature because of irrigation. The contractors, the Simplots, the McCains, the plant at Carberry have significant demands for irrigated potatoes. In fact, the Carberry plant has gone through a couple of evolutions, but the original plant was begun by the original Simplot organization and came there because there was the opportunity for potato production that included irrigation.

As government, and I want to compare the actions of today's government with the action of government 10 years ago. If somebody across there wants to say I was just criticizing people for looking in the rearview mirror, I want to do this in the sense of looking at what can be done to change the direction of your community, to change the direction of your economy. The same as I pointed to several communities that have died in my area, I can point to several communities that were on the verge of dying, but recovered because there were jobs such as the jobs that were in potato processing, that became available within driving distance of where they lived. So they chose to live in a smaller community and the advantages associated with that, and work in what could be deemed an industrial climate with a reasonable wage that would allow them to live very comfortably in a less urban setting, in almost a rural setting, but it is still a small community.

Having said that, something that has been able to occur in this province was realizing that we could grow potatoes here and we could easily compete with southern Alberta. That was our first target. We knew we could compete with southern Alberta, because irrigation was probably more feasible and more easily managed here than it is in southern Alberta, in terms of ground water, in terms of the river availability, but most importantly, in terms of the talent of the people and the quality of the land that we had, and potato land is not judged in the

same way that wheat production land is judged, because it needs to be near water that is available for irrigation, but it also has to be appropriate soil type in order to get the best opportunity out of the cost that is incurred in putting water on that land and into a highly valuable crop such as potatoes.

* (11:40)

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that thinking led to literally going out and searching out other companies willing to invest. They were not investment companies, they were potato companies. The McCains of this country, one of the best in the world, were interested in coming here provided they could have an opportunity for irrigation. They knew they could count on the producers to produce. They needed to count on government to become involved in licensing and providing the opportunity to use that resource, that water.

We had the secondary expansion at Portage, so we ended up with double the opportunity in that area. I would suggest to a large degree the fact that that occurred was, and there is a third, actually a fourth plant, but I consider all production that we currently have available, there was a fourth opportunity to escape this province because we were expanding so fast that they did not believe they could get the land, the water and the potatoes quickly enough to get return on their investment. So they ended up investing in Alberta, and anybody that wants to challenge me on that can check the records. They build a plant in Alberta, but they said, given the appropriate conditions, they would be back here. They wanted to be in Manitoba.

One of the hassles that we have lived with over the years in this province and in this Legislature very often is about the use of resources. I will link two things that seem somewhat separate, but the fact is the government of Howard Pawley eliminated logging in the southeastern corner of the province in and around the Parkland, and said this was a protection of the environment. But you know what they did? They reissued those logging permits on the park fringes and in the park settings in my part of the world. Does that make sense? I do not think so. But what it says is that they at least recognized that the company in Pine Falls needed some resources, but it was put forward as an environmental protection priority. I did not realize for a long time that the

trade-off was that the logs were going to come out of the parks closer to my residence.

I point out that out because we have had a bit of a dog-in-the-manger approach in this Chamber over the years. He who can scream the loudest about how development is bad for the province, goes on and on to—pardon me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was distracted here for a minute. The argument goes on and on about who can best do a job of providing development at the same time a balance of protection within this province.

One of the most disappointing debates that I have been involved in, in this Chamber anywhere else is the debate about the expansion of the livestock opportunity in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When the subsidy, and there was a huge subsidy to assist the freight of grain out of this province to salt water for export, either to the west coast or to Montreal or through the Lakehead. That debate raged on and then finally, the federal government said, "There is not going to be any more freight subsidy." So now when I and other grain farmers get their cheques, there is about a dollar a bushel comes off the value of that grain. A lot of people have said this is not such a bad thing because that means we have got the cheapest grain in North America right here because we are landlocked and that dollar a bushel will keep us from easily accessing export markets. So let us develop our livestock industry. Alberta seized the opportunity quicker than Manitoba did. They got the kill plants, they got the feedlots. Even before the freight rate subsidy began to disappear, they started taking Manitoba grain to Alberta to feed Manitoba calves that they had bought to put through Alberta slaughter plants, the very time when the slaughter plants were here in Manitoba and Winnipeg was the "Chicago of the North." It was still the "Chicago of the North" when it came to livestock processing, and we should have been damn proud of that. But what did we do? We let the Swifts, we let the Maple Leafs, we let the Burns plants, we let them go, the Canada Packers. We kept a few, but not of significant capacity.

The die was cast on the cattle business, and today, when we are dealing with the BSE issue, we have gone on now for 18 months; 20 months, I think, let us say 18, a nice round figure, a year and a half, 560 days, something like that, and we have not reacted, in my opinion, the way we should have reacted to the BSE issue, because it became very

apparent that we were on our bended knee, for those who were feeding cattle in this province, to get them into Alberta slaughter plants. And you know what? We did not make the priority list. The packing house had working arrangements with feedlots in Alberta. They took those cattle first. We had cattle that were discounted because we had to hold them for too long. This is history and well known, that is the BSE debate.

But the point I want to make is that, tragically, the government has talked a good line, they have talked about establishing kill capacity here, they have talked about expanding capacity, but for some reason, nothing has happened. That is what government is about. That is why I mentioned the growth of the potato industry in this province. That is why I referenced the Maple Leaf plant in Brandon. It was opposed by many people because it would be a large producer of waste, so that had to be dealt with through Brandon's waste operations. The best to my knowledge, it has been appropriately dealt with, but the real issue is, the reason that they wanted to establish in Manitoba, and the reason that to some extent that they established in Brandon, was that Manitoba did not have quite enough hogs. They wanted to be able to bring those hogs in from Saskatchewan as well. The vast majority of hogs are produced relatively close to this urban centre, in the Red River Valley and across the southern part of the province. The plant was not located right in the middle of where the barns are, but part of the hoped-for accomplishment in bringing the largest kill facility in Canada to Manitoba was that we would be able to expand our hog production.

Out where I come from that means \$15-an-hour jobs. That is not big money, but that will keep people in my community. That will keep people working in my community. They will live in some of the smaller communities and they will commute. Right now, the Springhill hog plant, which is in my home town, people come from as far away as Dauphin to work in that plant. They carpool down to Neepawa to get access to those jobs.

* (11:50)

Why have we not seen more aggressive action on the part of this government to deal with the issue of the opportunity that is being lost in this province, to increase, not only the slaughter capacity, but the opportunity for jobs in this province? The very party

that is in government today, that prides itself for being in support of the workers of this province, the working class, I hesitate to use that term, but they pride themselves in being closely associated with the unions, where people work for salaries, they have dropped the ball. They have badly dropped the ball.

The concern that I have is that we continue to fumble this ball. There are a number of opportunities to increase slaughter capacity in this province. There are plants out there that want to expand, to export out of this province. They, no doubt, need support to get to federal inspection standards so that they can move it across the border. That would be a quicker route than saying we are looking for a co-operative approach to standardize inspections across the country. Of course, that would be a solution, but it has been talked about for 20 years already, so it is not going to happen very quickly.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government has not looked at the opportunity. Manitoba is the only jurisdiction in North America, including Texas, that has increased its cow herd. We are the only jurisdiction that has done that. Now why have we not seized that opportunity? The reason I stand here and rail about it is because I see such a lost opportunity in my part of the world. Talk about government for all the people.

Well, it looks like Rancher's Choice is going to locate, but Rancher's Choice has always had a challenge. I support Rancher's Choice, and I do not mind saying that, in my own modest way, I have bought some space in that kill plant so that some of my poor old girls can go to the big pasture in the sky through the plant when it is established in Dauphin. That said, I believe that this plant could have been given a kick-start or a boost early on in the thinking process so the cement would be in the ground, the structure would be up and if it was not killing cattle by now, we would be. We have missed that opportunity, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In fact, it will be next spring now, so that will be a full two years after the fact.

We lost the momentum. And I say we, because we as cattle producers, and I point out my involvement is very small as a cattle producer, but I had cow manure on my running shoes when I was three years old, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I know the cattle business, and the fact is that we did not react when we should have because everybody, especially the Minister of

Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) in order to defend herself, kept saying, "Well, we are not sure, but we think the border will be open pretty soon." I would point out for the record my own position was I cannot tell you when the border is going to be open, and then it evolved to saying, "If you think the government is going to save you, you are in big trouble because it is not going to happen." Unfortunately, it became a self-fulfilling prophecy, the way that the programs have been administered in this province.

There have been big announcements. So help me, there is a chunk of cash being made available to Rancher's Choice, but there keeps being strings attached to it that slow down the process. I cannot let it go by any longer without commenting on the fact that it seems to be getting more and more obvious that the government has almost been deliberately attaching those conditions in order not to have to flow the money, because if the border opens, then everybody is going to raise the question, "Well, what about the viability of this plant?" Now people are saying, "Well, maybe the American border is going to be open to all classes of cattle, including aged animals, which would be Rancher's Choice market." I do not think that will happen, but people are raising that concern out there. Meanwhile, we have lost opportunities on about four other operations that were ready to get rolling in this province, and it always, always seemed to be that there were conditions attached to the support to get that going, and those conditions inevitably caused a slow-down. When you are in a crisis situation, such as we are, that slow-down is very, very costly.

I would indicate that talking to someone who is involved in wanting to put his waste animals, his cull animals, through the Rancher's Choice plant indicated to me that he had about 100 cull cows that had been saved up over the last two years or a year and a half. He did not get rid of his cull cows the first year, and he still has not got rid of them the second year. I said, "Are you going to be able to hold on to them and get them into the plant?" He said, "I cannot afford to hold them any longer. They will have to go at today's sacrifice price." There is an opportunity that Rancher's Choice or any other plant has lost.

You know, we constantly stand across the way here. We seem to find example after example, whether it is Hydra House, whether it is even the Children's Advocate that we were discussing this

morning in committee where the government seems to be inattentive.

They have an announced agenda, but that agenda is only a mile long and an inch thick. You get down to managing the details, their support for the Child Advocate is not as adequate as it should be. The support for Hydra House, for the people living in Hydra House, was not adequate, and I believe that somehow, while this government has said many of the right things around how to deal with the BSE crisis, they have not translated that into action. When I talk about translating it into action, I am talking about not out-socializing the socialists, so much as being aggressive and, behalf of the general public, taking a risk. When I talk about taking a risk, this government reorganized Family Services. Now there is a huge risk on behalf of the children, it was intended with best intentions, but no one could say that was not without risk, and there are significant resources at play there as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, to put the development of slaughter capacity into perspective, we have a growing cow herd, we have a growing opportunity to process in this province that would have created jobs, it would have created opportunities for people to invest, put risk capital to work in this province. It required a vision. There was no vision. That is what happened. They were timid.

They went to Oak Ridge Meats in McCreary, who wanted to build a small plant and said, "If there is government support, is there some program that we can access?" "Oh, there are all these programs; but you are in the drawing stage. You have already thought about doing this, so you are not eligible." They might have expanded the capacity of the plant at that opportunity, but it was not given to them, it was not presented to them. Multiply that by 10 times, that is what has been wrong with how this government has approached, the response to the BSE. That is where they have failed the rural agricultural areas of this province.

Continuing on that vein, if we had a plant going, even if we had three or four McCreary-sized plants, that would be 60 or 70 people employed, 5 of them times 15; 15 might be a whole community in some cases. Nevertheless, to put 60 jobs, 70 jobs into modest-size communities across rural Manitoba, provide the added security of having a market for your product, which would be the beef, in some

cases lamb, sheep, buffalo, all of these animals are looking for slaughter capacity, well, the animals are not, but the parents sure are, or their owners.

It seems to me, in fact, my little slip of the tongue, Mr. Deputy Speaker, probably represents the feelings of an awful lot of farmers out there. The owners treat their livestock, they work with them every day, they work closely with them, and, frankly, in many cases, they have been the midwife, they have been the source of food and water for that stock all their life.

They take their responsibility seriously, and they look after their animals well, contrary to a lot of people who are not happy with the idea of large hog operations.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, my time has run out, but I plead with the government to take a look at a visionary approach to dealing with this problem.

There are so many opportunities that can be built on our rural sector in this province. Do not look in the rearview mirror, look forward. Take a risk on behalf of the people you represent in this province, and let us get on with making things happen.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hour being twelve noon, I am leaving the Chair with the understanding that the House will reconvene at 1:30 p.m.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have no more minutes remaining. It is finished up to 12. When this matter is before the House the debate will remain open.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, December 2, 2004

CONTENTS

ORDERS OF THE DAY		Altemeyer	321
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS		Rocan	325
Adjourned Debate		Allan	328
(Eighth Day of Debate)		Dyck	331
		Lathlin	335
Lamoureux	321	Cummings	337