

**Second Session - Thirty-Ninth Legislature**  
**of the**  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
**and**  
**PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Ninth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
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ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, November 23, 2007

The House met at 10 a.m.

### PRAYER

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### Bill 3—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 3, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act; Loi modifiant le Code de la route, be now read a first time.

**Mr. Speaker:** It's been moved by the honourable Attorney General, seconded by the honourable Minister of Agriculture and Food (Ms. Wowchuk), that Bill 3, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, as part of the process of our ongoing overhaul of provincial laws to deal with federal Criminal Code violations for which we have no authority, we are bringing forward this amendment to make our provincial law in sync with the recently amended federal law so that we will continue to have the toughest provincial laws in this area across the country.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

#### Bill 202—The Health Services Amendment and Health Services Insurance Amendment Act

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that Bill 202, The Health Services Amendment and Health Services Insurance Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le services de santé et la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie, be now read a first time.

#### *Motion presented.*

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, the heart-rending stories of the tragic medical errors that have occurred in this province are a cry for better accountability in health care. This bill will provide for accountability as a fundamental principle in the delivery of health-care services in Manitoba.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

### PETITIONS

#### Personal Care Homes—Virden

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Manitoba's provincial government has a responsibility to provide quality long-term care for qualifying Manitobans.

Personal care homes in the town of Virden currently have a significant number of empty beds that cannot be filled because of a critical nursing shortage in these facilities.

In 2006, a municipally reformed retention committee was promised that the Virden nursing shortage would be resolved by the fall of 2006.

Virtually all personal care homes in southwest Manitoba are full, yet as of early October 2007, the nursing shortage in Virden is so severe that more than a quarter of the beds at the Westman Nursing Home are sitting empty.

Seniors, many of whom are war veterans, are therefore being transported to other communities for care. These communities are often a long distance from Virden and family members are forced to travel for more than two hours round trip to visit their loved ones, creating significant financial and emotional hardship for these families.

Those seniors that have been moved out of Virden have not received assurance that they will be moved back to Virden when these beds become available.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) to consider taking serious action to fill the nursing vacancies at personal care homes in the town of Virden and to consider reopening the beds that have been closed as the result of this nursing shortage.

To urge the Minister of Health to consider prioritizing the needs of those seniors that have been moved out of their community by committing to move those individuals back into Virden as soon as the beds become available.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by Wilson Gardner, Nellie Cannon, Marge Delvenne and many, many other Virdenites and surrounding area persons.

**Mr. Speaker:** In accordance with our rule 132(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to be received by the House.

#### **Dividing of Trans-Canada Highway**

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The seven-kilometre stretch of the Trans-Canada Highway passing through Headingley is an extremely busy stretch of road, averaging 18,000 vehicles daily.

This section of the Trans-Canada Highway is one of the few remaining stretches of undivided highway in Manitoba, and it has seen more than 100 accidents in the last two years, some of them fatal.

Manitoba's Assistant Deputy Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation told a Winnipeg radio station on October 16, 2007, that when it comes to highways' projects the provincial government has a flexible response program, and we have a couple of opportunities to advance these projects in our five-year plan.

In the interests of protecting motorist safety, it is critical that the dividing of the Trans-Canada Highway in Headingley is completed as soon as possible.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To request the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Lemieux) to consider making the completion of the dividing of the Trans-Canada Highway in Headingley in 2008 an urgent provincial government priority.

To request the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation to consider evaluating whether any other steps can be taken to improve motorist safety while the dividing of the Trans-Canada Highway in Headingley is being completed.

This is signed by Jim Hamm, Joyce Milowski, Larry Milowski and many, many others, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Provincial Nominee Program**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to the petition is as follows:

Immigration is critically important to the future of our province, and the 1998 federal Provincial Nominee Program is the best immigration program that Manitoba has ever had.

The current government needs to recognize that the backlog in processing PNP applications is causing additional stress and anxiety for would-be immigrants and their families and friends here in Manitoba.

The current government needs to recognize the unfairness in its current policy on who qualifies to be an applicant, more specifically, by not allowing professionals such as health care workers to be able to apply for PNP certificates in the same way a computer technician would be able to.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Premier (Mr. Doer) and his government to recognize and acknowledge how important immigration is to our province by improving and strengthening the Provincial Nominee Program.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by J. Tan, J. Tan, Alberto Tan and many, many other fine Manitobans.

\* (10:10)

#### **Introduction of Guests**

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to Oral Questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us today Binx Remnant and Arlene Billinkoff.

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here today.

#### **ORAL QUESTIONS**

##### **Manitoba Hydro Power Line**

##### **Lack of Consultation on East-Side Location**

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I had the pleasure this morning, along

with colleagues in the Legislature, including the minister of highways and infrastructure, to attend the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association breakfast. There were awards presented to some of the leaders in our heavy construction industry. I want to take a moment just to acknowledge and congratulate those who were in receipt of awards for excellence in construction within our province of Manitoba.

The breakfast, Mr. Speaker, was attended by several eminent Manitobans, including Mr. Harold Buchwald; Elijah Harper, the former MLA for Rupertsland and, of course, Dr. Brian Schwartz who was the keynote speaker this morning at the Heavy Construction breakfast. Professor Schwartz has sat as a distinguished member of our community on NAFTA trade dispute resolution panels, a professor of international law in the Asper School of Business. He has written several books and articles on matters of international law and jurisprudence.

This morning Professor Schwartz referred to the, and I quote: Catastrophic waste, arising from the NDP directive to force Hydro to run the hydro line down the wrong side of the province. He referred to the immorality of leaving the poorest people of Canada living in such conditions. He asked the question: How many working Manitobans, how many extra hours are working Manitobans going to have to work to pay for this decision? How many families aren't going to be able to send their children to summer camp because of this decision? How many MRIs are we going to forgo? How many taxes are we not going to be able to reduce? How many roads are going to go unbuilt? How many schools are going to go unbuilt, Mr. Speaker, as a result of the catastrophic waste? Hundreds of millions of dollars arising from this decision, the fact that more boreal forest is going to be cut; the fact that the 40 megawatts of line loss is going to do nothing but heat the atmosphere in western Manitoba instead of displacing other non-renewable resources.

He made particular reference to the fact that, after he went on the record a couple of months ago on this issue along with Mr. Harper, the Premier (Mr. Doer) got up in the House and called into question his credibility by saying, I'm going to check to see whether he's being paid by any of the parties on the east side. Professor Schwartz said this morning that the Premier's checking didn't even involve a phone call to him. He wrote to the Premier weeks ago saying that if the Premier had phoned him and asked, the answer would have been no. I'm not on retainer from those communities; I'm speaking as

an academic. Mr. Speaker, he's written to the Premier asking for an apology weeks ago, has not had a word in response. Mr. Harper has been asking for meetings with the Premier, hasn't been able to get a meeting.

I want to ask the Deputy Premier: Will she do the honourable thing this morning and apologize on behalf of the Premier for his attempt to attack and discredit such eminent members of our community?

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Deputy Premier):** Well, actually, Mr. Speaker, it should be the member opposite, the Leader of the Opposition, who should apologize. It should be the Leader of the Opposition who should apologize for the comments that he has been making and the lack of respect that he has for people on the east side of the province.

Mr. Speaker, our government has been working. We have had countless meetings, 80 meetings, and our government continues to work. Our government continues to work with the people on the east side to have real economic development, to build a road to that area, real jobs in tourism, not just push a hydro line through that will give people on the east side jobs scrubbing the line and then nothing after that.

We need long term—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Not only has the Deputy Premier not taken the opportunity to do the honourable thing and apologize to Dr. Schwartz, she's taken the opportunity to put yet more false information on the record in this debate on what is the most important capital project of our generation, a project that will have an impact through the generations.

Dr. Schwartz also said this morning that members of the communities on the east side, chiefs of east-side communities, went on the record during the so-called 80 meetings that took place. They wanted it noted on the record that they had not been consulted on the east-side power line because they did not want the comments that were made in those meetings, where people were asking questions and wanting more information, to be interpreted as a rejection of the east-side line. They wanted it noted on the record. They hadn't been consulted. These are leaders of communities with 50 percent diabetes rates, leaders of communities where up to 10 percent of the population is suffering from TB. I have visited the Island Lake communities. They commented to me that they've never seen the Deputy Premier set foot in their communities as long as they have been leading those communities.

Will the Deputy Premier today apologize to Dr. Schwartz, apologize to the east-side communities for the fact that they were never consulted with a meaningful proposal with respect to the hydro transmission line and that they wanted that lack of consultation on the record during the so-called earlier consultations that are taken by the government?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** For the first time, the Leader of the Opposition has admitted that there has been consultation and that there were over 80 meetings. I'm glad he acknowledges that fact, Mr. Speaker.

**An Honourable Member:** This is progress.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Yes, we're making progress. I'm also very pleased that he's acknowledging that there are issues of health in the eastern side of the province, because when the members opposite were in government there was never any consideration.

He talks about Island Lake. I'm so proud of the record that we have, that we have put dialysis into that community. I would ask him to consider our housing programs and look at the Throne Speech where we are going to put other dialysis and where we are going to build—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, a remarkable attempt to take credit for federal initiatives and initiatives undertaken by the band on reserve. Chief David Harper, who led the way to bring dialysis to Garden Hill, and who ran in the last campaign, increasing our party's vote in that constituency by some 20 percent as the result of his leadership in bringing dialysis to Garden Hill. It is unbelievable the extent and the depths that they're prepared to sink to, to take credit for the actions of others.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, the communities on the east side, leaders on the east side, have signed on to letters, open letters published in the newspapers, letters directed to the Premier (Mr. Doer). Eleven communities having signed on out of the northern chiefs organization and support Elijah Harper representing many of the communities from Island Lake, present this morning at breakfast, and hundreds of others on the east side who have said: We want to explore the east-side line. We want a meaningful dialogue. We don't want this phony process of throwing out a proposal without any meaningful discussion about how best to deal with the environmental impacts, how to deal with the financial issues and how to ensure an appropriate kind of benefit sharing.

For all of those reasons, this government has taken initial questions and comments to mean rejection. Well, the fact is that it's their position that is, today, being rejected by east-side residents, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the Deputy Premier: Setting aside the issue of apologies which are now called for and overdue to the people that they have attempted to malign; setting that aside, will she do the right thing? Will she call on her Premier to reverse his decision to cave to American environmental activists, to do what's right for Manitobans, do what's right for east-side residents, do what's right for working Manitobans who are struggling to get by? Will she reverse this decision and save the future generations of Manitobans from hundreds of millions of dollars in debt?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Well, Mr. Speaker, we have the Leader of the Opposition acknowledging that there were over 80 meetings. There was consultation. I'm so happy about that.

Mr. Speaker, we want to correct the member opposite when he talks about consultation and tell him what First Nations really say about his party. Chief Ron Evans said: The only time the Tories talk to us is before an election and then they never talk to us.

\*(10:20)

We have ongoing consultation, Mr. Speaker. With regard to the dialysis, the member talks about David Harper. Indeed, this minister who is now the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chomiak) worked with four chiefs to ensure that dialysis got into Island Lake. There was no federal money in it—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

### **Wuskwatim Generating Station Lack of Contractors**

**Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, this NDP government has a terrible history when it comes to mismanagement on large-scale projects. The latest project, the Wuskwatim generating station, is already behind schedule and over budget because this government can't find a company to build it.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: Why can't the NDP find a construction company to take on this project? Is it because they've scared companies away by the threat of forced unionization, just like they did on the floodway?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act):** Mr. Speaker, they built nothing in the '90s, so they didn't have any problem getting contractors. The reality in Manitoba is there's so much construction activity going on. There's so much activity going on in the residential sector, in the commercial sector, in the hydro sector that there's a shortage of skilled labour.

Yes, there is going to be a challenge getting that project built, but it will be built. The in-service date is still being protected and I know Hydro will work out a solution with the bidder on the project, and it will be built, unlike the '90s when nothing was done.

#### Project Costs

**Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain):** Well, I remind the minister the Progressive Conservatives built Limestone on time and under budget.

Mr. Speaker, it's clear that construction companies are saying no thank you to *[inaudible]* construction projects in this province because of this government's history on bungling projects. This government is content to waste a billion dollars in four years on their proposed daffy detour.

Again, I ask the minister: How much more will the Wuskwatim project cost and when will it be completed?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, the Wuskwatim project will be built. It will be 220 megawatts of clean energy. It's being done for the first time in history in partnership with the Nelson House Cree Nation. It's being done with a job training program that is training people in the north in skills of electrician, plumbing, heavy equipment operation. It's a project that'll breathe new life into northern Manitoba, and it's been well-received in northern Manitoba. And, I can tell you this, it's just the beginning of many other projects that will be built in the north as we move forward to reposition Manitoba as a can-do province with clean energy.

**Mr. Cullen:** Well, if the minister wants the truth, all the contractors have left Manitoba for Alberta and Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, Manitobans are becoming more and more outraged with the fiscal carnage this NDP is placing on our most important Crown corporation. There's even been calls for Manitobans to march by the thousands to the Legislature.

We ask the minister to tell Manitobans why they should support them in this crazy scheme to blow a billion of their dollars on this proposed bipole.

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, I know that there's been a lot of credibility given to statements made by Hydro and perhaps they'd pay attention to the CEO of Hydro and the president who said that if the west side was built, it will gain 75 megawatts of increased efficiency in hydro-electric power. Those 75 megawatts of increased efficiency will result in increased export sales. Those increased export sales will generate revenues which will pay for the west-side transmission line. It's a good deal for ratepayers, it's a good deal for reliability, it's a good deal to protect the east side as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. So it's a win-win-win as opposed to the perfect storm of controversy that the members opposite want to generate.

#### Manitoba Hydro Power Line Lack of Consultation with MKO

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa):** Mr. Speaker, if it was such a win-win where was it in the Throne Speech?

On November 20, MKO sent out a press release outlining where they were hoping to see it in the Throne Speech. The first item on MKO's list referenced an east-side bipole line. The Throne Speech completely failed to address this issue. An east-side line would provide economic opportunities for some of the poorest communities in Canada. It is beyond belief that the NDP are robbing these communities of this opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, how could the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Lathlin) allow his government to ignore the desire of MKO, an organization that represents 30 First Nations communities?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act):** Mr. Speaker, before the election, the Conservative Party of Manitoba—used to be the Progressive Conservative Party, now it's the Conservative Party—held out as a real hope to the people of the east side that they would have ownership and a revenue off the line. After the election, the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. McFadyen) made it very clear that there would be no revenue sharing, there would be no ownership. Members opposite snuffed out the hopes of the people of the east side.

We, on the other hand, on the east side, we're building an all-weather road. We're putting in University College of the North. We're doing energy efficiency programs. We're building dialysis units,

and we're working with those communities to ensure they have a long-term, sustainable ecotourism industry.

#### **Benefit for East-Side Remote Communities**

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa):** Mr. Speaker, what are they scared of? Why are they scared of a hydro line along the east side of Manitoba? The wishes of the east-side residents are clear. They want social and economic opportunities. The Throne Speech references a new Youth Advisory Round Table to discuss the challenges of remote First Nations. The challenges of the remote First Nations are well understood. They are experiencing social and economic isolation. An east-side line would play a role in alleviating this.

When is this minister going to start addressing the issues facing remote First Nations, rather than just discussing them?

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Acting Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I've visited every single community on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. I've visited every single community in northern Manitoba. I'll point to all the improvements we've made in terms of transportation. Let's talk about Island Lake, the airport terminal; let's talk about the Wasagamack-Ste. Therese Point road that is being built right now in partnership with the federal government. Let's talk about what we put in.

But you know what, Mr. Speaker? Let's talk about the real position of the Conservative Party. When we built a road into South Indian Lake—our obligation under Hydro—they opposed it. In the last election they said they would cut funding from one area of the province. When it came to transportation, it was northern Manitoba. They don't care about the east side. They don't care about northern Manitoba. We are doing real things in partnership with northern and Aboriginal communities. That's the difference.

**Mrs. Rowat:** Let's talk about 50 percent diabetes, 10 percent TB, the worst dental health record in this country. Let's talk about the hope that these communities are looking for from this government who is ignoring the east-side issue, Mr. Speaker. What are they afraid of? The bipole line is recognized as the greatest economic opportunity, development opportunity for the east-side residents. Island Lake chiefs are saying that the project could alleviate poverty. Elijah Harper has said that it is immoral to block the line and perpetuate poverty.

Sensible and caring Manitobans support this project, Mr. Speaker.

Why is this minister turning a blind eye to the expectations and wishes of MKO and the people of the east side?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act):** Mr. Speaker, let's be absolutely clear. The position of the opposition right now is that they offer nothing to the people of the east side. No ownership benefits, no revenue-sharing benefits. When it comes to generating resources for the people of the east side, and Kelowna was eliminated by the new federal government, members opposite were silent. They said nothing about taking all those resources off the table. They offered them nothing in terms of transmission, they offered them nothing in terms of health care, they offered them nothing in terms of roads. They actually want to take road resources away from northern Manitoba. That is a position of guaranteed hopelessness. That's what you offer the people of the north. Nothing.

#### **Child Welfare System New Policies**

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance took latitude with the name of our party. I can't help but think that theirs should be the old democratic party because all they have is old ideas.

Mr. Speaker, the number of children in care continues to escalate. This Throne Speech has let them down. It fails to address dangerously high caseloads of the government's mixed-up priorities. They tend to rehash old promises with any acknowledgement of the current crisis in child welfare.

How can the Minister of Family Services justify the fact that his government's Throne Speech is devoid of any hope for 7,000 children in care?

\*(10:30)

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Housing):** Well, Mr. Speaker, members of course know full well that this government has embarked on a very significant overhaul of the child welfare system in this province, and that initiative called Changes for Children, has a budget for three years. I remind members opposite that, in fact, since we've come into office, the

investments that we believe are necessary to enhance child protection have increased by 113 percent.

I would just love the member opposite to actually do a little research into the finances of the former government and make that comparison. That's a doozy.

**Mr. Briese:** Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech stated, and I quote: "A shift in focus from apprehension to prevention." Once again, the minister's priorities are mixed up. He is turning his back on more than 7,000 children who are already in care and need protection today.

Will the minister today revoke this new policy and instead write a policy that makes vulnerable children's safety the only consideration?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, Mr. Speaker, in the last couple of weeks we heard members opposite reject several recommendations made by the Children's Advocate to strengthen the oversight role of the Children's Advocate and the Ombudsman. At that time the member said: Yeah, we rejected those, but the other 284 recommendations look really good and we support them.

Well, then, I think it was two days ago and again today they've just thrown out another 10, and what are those 10 recommendations about? It's for greater child safety by a stronger prevention initiative to get involved when families are showing early signs of struggles, to enhance the parenting skills in families, to deal with the challenges, whether it's addictions, whether it's housing.

That's our commitment. Those were the recommendations from the Children's Advocate. They continue to reject the Children's Advocate's recommendations.

**Mr. Briese:** Once again, a shift in focus. Mr. Speaker, the NDP have imposed mixed-up priorities, fuzzy directives and naive ideals on the child welfare system that is failing to protect children. This government cannot shift away from apprehension when children are at risk. Prevention is important but not at the expense of the more than 7,000 children who are already in care today.

I again ask the minister: Will he stop it in its tracks right now and, instead, focus on making sure that safety is the only consideration governing child welfare decisions?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I've got a quiz, Mr. Speaker, for you as you're sitting there and feel free to answer if

you would. What do the years 1993, 1994, 1996 and 1999 have in common? I'll tell you what they have in common. Those were the years Conservatives cut foster family rates. The bedrock of the child protection system are foster families, and in the face of recommendations and public chastising from the Children's Advocate, they continued, and then they gutted the Foster Family Association. They have no credibility on child welfare.

But, Mr. Speaker, the Children's Advocate, the Ombudsman have said there are numerous studies that indicate that investing and strengthening families and providing support in becoming better parents will have long-term financial benefits in terms of the cost-avoidance of protection expenditures.

Mr. Speaker, it's also about child-

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

### **Health Care Government Spending**

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Mr. Speaker, this clearly is a government that refuses to take responsibility for its own actions. Once again, you know, we see in every other sector of society whether it's in people's individual homes, whether it's in businesses, if they spend more they expect to get more in return. But not with this NDP government. The CIHI report last week again showed that this government has the second-highest per capita spending on health care of any other province in Canada, and yet when you look at the results they're simply not there. When it comes to family physicians, Manitoba is again below the national average on family physicians which means Manitobans have a harder time finding a doctor, which means ERs aren't staying open.

Why does this government continue to spend more but get less when it comes to health care?

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Acting Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to answer this question. I, first off, want to start out to point out that 80 percent of the funding that goes to our health-care system goes to pay salaries of nurses and doctors. When you have 253 more doctors in the system than you did when we came into office; when you have 1,500 more nurses in place than we did when we came into office; when you have a program that funds 250 nurses in rural Manitoba; when you redevelop the two largest health centres in the entire province, Health Sciences Centre and Brandon

centre, you're going to spend money for good uses. We're proud of our record. I think that has something to do with three re-elections.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Mr. Speaker, there seems to be a pattern with this minister. First, he promised to overhaul the justice system and failed to do that. Now he failed, and he failed when he was minister, to overhaul the health-care system. He's created a disaster there, and he's on to creating a disaster in the justice system.

Mr. Speaker, we see that this government continues to spend more, almost more than any other province in all of Canada. Yet there are less specialists than almost any other province in all of Canada, and yes, we can find doctors, yet there are 14 ERs in rural Manitoba that are closed. Maybe the Minister of Healthy Living (Ms. Irvin-Ross) could stand up and explain. She's responsible for ensuring that people get timely access to care in her own particular area.

Can she stand up and say why it is that ERs are closed, 14 of them in rural Manitoba, and yet they continue to spend more and get less results?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, we have expanded and modernized over 65 health-care facilities since 1999, including Brandon, including a new women's hospital, by the way, that's on its way, including Boundary Trails, including Brandon. By the way, all these places now are outside the Perimeter. I don't know if the member's aware of that.

Brandon, Steinbach, Thompson, The Pas, Selkirk, Morden-Winkler, Portage la Prairie: all have CT scans now. New or renovated hospitals: Brandon, Swan River, Thompson, The Pas, Beausejour, Pinawa, Gimli, Morden-Winkler, Ste. Anne, Steinbach, Shoal Lake and on the way is Selkirk, outside of the Perimeter. A new ER is coming in Portage la Prairie; dialysis: Gimli, Peguis, Berens River, Mr. Speaker, all outside of the city of Winnipeg and all that just in a mere eight years.

**Mr. Goertzen:** This from a minister who believes that going south is visiting the fountain in the back of the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, let's be very clear about what this government's record is on health care. Twelve hundred doctors have left this province under this government's watch. Nurses are being trained in other jurisdictions because there are not enough seats, there are not enough spaces to train them here

in Manitoba. PCH beds are sitting empty because there aren't enough nurses to fill them.

ERs are closed in rural Manitoba because this government hasn't got it done. Other jurisdictions like Saskatchewan and like Ontario, which are spending less, have put in insulin pump programs so that type 1 diabetes, children can have access to insulin pumps. This government hasn't done that either. They spend, spend, spend. They get less, less, less.

Why doesn't somebody stand up and say why that is, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, much as I like the fountain in the south of the building, it is a legacy of the previous government. I'd like one of our legacies to be the disabled ramp at the front of the building. If you want to talk about contrasts: fountain, disabled. We understand. That's why, when you have to pay 1,500 more nurses to have in the system, we'll do it. When you have to pay 250 more doctors, we'll do it. When you have to have 235 more nurses in rural Manitoba, we'll do it.

And, Mr. Speaker, the only Gamma Knife, we've got it.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Let's have a little decorum, please.

### Post-Secondary Education Funding

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Mr. Speaker, Stats Canada recently reported that Manitoba has brought up the rear in post-secondary education funding, the worst support in Canada, dead last of all the provinces. Yet, the NDP were dead silent on this in the Throne Speech.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Advanced Education how her government can justify spending the least amount in Canada in supporting post-secondary education, particularly since they are getting so much money from the federal government.

Why are they spending the least in Canada on post-secondary education?

\*(10:40)

**Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy):** Mr. Speaker, I think the member has illustrated the danger of cherry-picking information, putting it on the record and therefore

avoiding genuine public discourse on a very important matter. Now, if this member wishes to uphold her reputation as the worst researcher in the Legislature, let her just go ahead and continue with that.

You know, earlier, my colleague, the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Mackintosh), was talking about years—pointed out some years and commonalities: What do 1993-'94, '94-'95, '96-'97, 97- –

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, it is the Stats Canada report that talks about this government's lowest level of spending in Canada on post-secondary education, and on top of significantly underfunding post-secondary education this government has frozen tuition fees for eight years causing a further drain on income for the universities, so now they're talking about having to slash jobs and programs, and only this government would clap at something like that.

Mr. Speaker, how are our universities supposed to provide a quality education for the students when this government is starving them of funding so that the universities are now talking about slashing programs and jobs?

**Ms. McGifford:** Mr. Speaker, 1993-'94, minus 2; 1994-'95, minus 4; '96-'97, minus 2.5; '97-'98, minus 2; 2006-2007, 6.8; 2007-2008, 7.2. These are real statistics, not cherry-picked numbers to, as I said earlier, distort public discourse on a very important matter.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, it's this minister that's cherry-picking. These statistics from Stats Canada show that we are grossly underfunding our post-secondary institutions compared to every other province in Canada. We're worse than Newfoundland and worse than Saskatchewan. So how are our universities and colleges supposed to compete in this country and attract students here and attract professors here when Stats Canada is showing that we are funding these institutions at the lowest level in this whole country, dead last in Canada?

**Ms. McGifford:** Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, the University of Manitoba, Brandon University, the University of Winnipeg, our community colleges are competing by increasing the student population by 35 percent in the past few years.

You know, Mr. Speaker, in the '90s, when the Leader of the Official Opposition sat on the board of

the University of Manitoba, student populations went down, tuitions skyrocketed, students left the province. But again, you know, this member seems to be unable to say anything positive about any of our institutions. The University of Manitoba is competing by having more Rhodes Scholars than any other institution in western Canada. That is very credible.

### Bill 202

#### Request for Government Support

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, accountability is badly needed in Manitoba's health-care system, and yet five times I have introduced legislation to ensure accountability is a fundamental principle in the delivery of health care in Manitoba, and five times the Doer NDP government has failed to support the Liberal initiative for accountability in health care.

I ask the government: When will the Premier (Mr. Doer), the Deputy Premier (Ms. Wowchuk), the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) and the others in the Cabinet, in the government, acknowledge that accountability in health care should be fundamental, and when will the government support our Bill 202?

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Acting Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, I've often said that in public life it's very clear that actions speak louder than words. In 2004, we introduced the Manitoba Institute for Patient Safety, not recommended by the Liberals, only recommended by the Sinclair inquiry that looked at baby deaths under the Tory administration. In 2005, we amended The Medical Act to allow the College of Physicians and Surgeons to post profiles on the Web to provide greater transparency; nothing from the Liberals, nothing from the Conservatives.

We brought in a Protection for Persons in Care office. I brought that as a private members' resolution over and over and over again. The Liberals didn't support me; the Tories didn't support me. It was one of our first pieces of legislation when we formed government, The Protection for Persons in Care Act. On November 1, we proclaimed the WRHA amendment act, enshrining in legislation the policy that had been in place since—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Before recognizing the honourable Member for River Heights, I'd like to remind members that questions and answers through the Chair, please.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, the position of chair at the Manitoba Institute for Patient Safety has been

vacant for 10 months. There was not even a mention of patient safety in the Throne Speech. The very definition of medical error being used by this government is suspect.

Manitobans are writing to me to say they're having a difficult time trusting our health-care system. Further, after their horrendous experiences, they dread ever having to use it again for themselves or their families.

Will the minister make a step in helping to restore trust in the system by supporting Bill 202 to ensure accountability is a principle used in 100 percent of the delivery of health care in Manitoba?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, when the Sinclair inquiry came down and we launched our patient safety initiative we put in place almost all of the recommendations, including patient safety reviews, patient safety institute.

Mr. Speaker, the member speaks like a Liberal. He talks the talk—

**An Honourable Member:** He is a Liberal.

**Mr. Chomiak:** I'm not sure—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Chomiak:** He talks the line of perfection and does little, Mr. Speaker. We brought in that legislation. We put in the chair. We do accept there's human error; there always will be human error, but we'll recognize it.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice talks like a New Democrat. He's not concerned about accountability in Manitoba. Even Troy Westwood is concerned about accountability. Good for Troy Westwood.

On Wednesday evening, Manitoban after Manitoban got up to speak about their heart-rending stories of tragedies here in Manitoba because of medical errors. It's time to change, and yet the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald), the Premier (Mr. Doer) and the Minister of Justice weren't even there. People were disappointed they weren't concerned enough about patient safety to come.

I ask the minister and his government: When will they support accountability and Bill 202?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, the very essence of accountability is being able to make public and admit

mistakes and try to improve them. That's the essence of it.

But if the member wants to show leadership on accountability, I agree. His member has promised to resign if allegations weren't proved correct. He's the so-called Leader of the Liberal Party. Will he not ask his Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) to resign as he promised in this Legislature, and as he promised in the hallway, because that is accountability? That is leadership. Unfortunately, that's Liberalism. One thing one day; one thing the next day, Mr. Speaker. All puff; no action.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

\* (10:50)

### Point of Order

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Member for Inkster, on a point of order?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The New Democratic government has this childish attitude to insist that—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I want to give time to hear the honourable Member for Inkster. I want to remind the member that points of order are to point out to the Speaker a breach of a rule or a procedure of the House. So I haven't heard all of what he had to say, but I'm sure that's where he was going.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Well, yes, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice is attempting to impute motives, trying to suggest that because of his childish, well, you resign; I resign; you do this; we do that, you know, this inappropriate behaviour that he's trying to prevent himself or the government from answering legitimate questions asking for the government to provide accountability.

So they should try to stick to answering the questions as opposed to coming up with some, you know, dream that the New Democrats have had through a press release.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Government House Leader, on the same point of order?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, the member is incorrect in terms of a point of order. It's not a motive. The member said in the Chamber he would resign and then he went back on his word. It's a fact, not a motive.

**Mr. Speaker:** On the point of order—the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on the same point of order?

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite and the Government House Leader have talked about the call on the Member for Inkster to resign. The issue is that there was an investigation for which no reasons were given on the conclusion of that investigation. It may very well be that the allegations against Mr. Balagus were not followed up because of the fact that it didn't fit, Mr. Sidhu didn't fit within the definition of candidate within The Elections Act and that the allegations may actually fall more squarely under the Criminal Code.

So I would just say, Mr. Speaker, rather than asking the Member for Inkster to resign, who was duly elected in the last election, maybe they ought to have the matter fully investigated under the Criminal Code. So whether or not the member has a point of order, he certainly has a point.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. On the point of order raised by the honourable Member for Inkster it's not a point of order. It's a dispute over the facts.

#### **Manitoba – Economy Increase in Minimum Wage**

**Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson):** Mr. Speaker, we're all talking about things that are not really relevant to what we are here for. I'd like to share something as a business owner, a past business owner. Since '99, the NDP took power, Manitoba's economy is on the rise. It's improving. I, being a business owner, would like to share that it's very important to keep our employees happy in our plants. Now that Manitoba has the second-lowest business tax in Canada, you will see on the windows of several small businesses, people are being hired. They're looking for people.

One of the important things also is to look at the—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The honourable member's time has expired.

**Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Labour and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, we made a commitment to do annual incremental increases to the minimum wage. Unlike members opposite during their tenure when they completely and totally ignored the minimum wage, we've increased the minimum wage eight times by 42 percent since we got into

government. We've decreased the business tax by 75 percent. We have the lowest business tax of any jurisdiction in Canada. We believe that's fair and balanced.

I want to remind members opposite that during the election campaign, during the leaders' debate, it was our leader that made a commitment to increase the minimum wage. What did the other leaders say? Nothing. They ducked the question. They were busy dressing up in chicken suits, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Time for Oral Questions has expired.

### **MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

#### **Bullying Awareness Week**

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Bullying Awareness Week, November 18 to 24, 2007.

Bullying both inside and outside of our schools is a dangerous and destructive force for many youth within our province. It is no small problem and it needs to be approached with that in mind. Each year, the harmful effects of bullying are adversely affecting the lives of our children, and, often, it is to an extent greater than we may expect. For the victims, being subjected to bullying can inflict lifelong physical and emotional harm.

We all must listen to our children, be receptive to any signs of mistreatment and work to find solutions where bullying exists. Governments, parents, educators, administrators and whole communities must continue to work together to implement proactive, preventative measures and effectively deal with instances of bullying when they arise.

With the latest technological advances, cyber-bullying activities through chat rooms, blogs, personal Web sites and the increasingly popular Facebook are becoming of increasing concern. Parents, students, educators and administrators are speaking out publicly about the dangers these activities can pose to our children and to our society. It is important that these warnings are heeded and immediate action is taken to address these concerns. At a time when schools and other community centres have been locked down as a result of violent threats and with the tide of violent crime on our streets rising, it is important that as communities we take a strong stand against not only bullying but all violence.

Mr. Speaker, every child's educational experience should occur in a safe, respectful environment. We must work to put a stop to bullying this week and every other week. Thank you.

#### **MacDon Industries**

**Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski (St. James):** Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba economy is growing strong and steady, and my riding of St. James is benefiting. It was my pleasure to tour the state-of-the-art facilities of MacDon Industries recently. This dynamic company has time-tested roots in St. James. The company started its humble beginnings on Roseberry Street back in 1949 and was purchased by the MacDonald family in 1971. This dynamic company now employs over 700 people and is on the cutting edge of new agricultural products. During my tour of their facilities, I was extremely impressed with the company's show floor and conference facilities. The company is fully equipped to train farmers and customers on the latest in agricultural technology.

President Joseph MacDonald moved his family to Winnipeg and purchased what is now MacDon Industries. He has made MacDon Industries one of North America's largest agricultural equipment manufacturers with sales from South Africa to Kazakhstan. Joe's endless energy and important contributions to Manitoba's manufacturing industry recently earned him a spot in the Manitoba Manufacturers Hall of Fame. MacDon Industries welcomes several thousand visitors and customers to the facility every month. Their commitment to excellence and innovation is helping producers all over the world increase the productivity of their crops by designing products that best match the land and crop.

This company is not only a boon for St. James but the entire province. The spinoffs from this company's global customer base are felt by everyone. The huge number of customers travelling to Manitoba supports our international airport, our hotel and restaurant industries, as well as showcases our cultural and entertainment industries.

In particular, I was pleased to see that MacDon has created a very family-friendly workplace with many corporate events for employees and their families. For example, in October, MacDon hosted their third annual Health and Wellness Exhibition. Over 400 company employees and their families explored ways to live healthier. I was glad to see that MacDon puts—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The honourable member's time has expired.

**Some Honourable Members:** Leave.

**Ms. Korzeniowski:** May I have leave, please?

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the honourable member have leave? *[Agreed]*

The honourable Member for St. James, to continue.

**Ms. Korzeniowski:** I was glad to see that MacDon puts great importance on ensuring that their employees are happy and healthy.

Mr. Speaker, I know that all honourable members will join with me in wishing this St. James success story all the success into the future. Thank you.

#### **CPR Awareness Month**

**Mr. David Faurschou (Portage la Prairie):** Mr. Speaker, November is CPR Awareness Month and I'm very pleased to have had the opportunity to participate in a free CPR training session on November 19. The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Manitoba organized CPR Anytime for Family and Friends, which was two training sessions that took place at Portage la Prairie's campus of Red River College. Portage was just one of 10 locations throughout the province that offered such training programs.

Participants learned the basic skills of CPR and were provided an opportunity to learn more about the automated external defibrillators. Thanks to the very generous donation from the Jewish Foundation of Manitoba, the Heart and Stroke Foundation was able to purchase 600 face shields and 650 Family and Friends CPR Anytime kits. Participants in the training session received these free kits, which included a tutorial DVD, a training booklet on CPR exercises and an inflatable mask that can be used to practise rescue breathing techniques. This way anyone can take a few moments to practise these CPR skills. As it is, 80 percent of heart attacks and strokes occur at home, and therefore having the comfortable knowledge of CPR is invaluable when a life of a family member is at risk.

\* (11:00)

Mr. Speaker, the importance of having defibrillators in large public places such as schools, shopping malls and community centres cannot be underestimated when an individual life is at risk. I

look to all members of the Legislative Assembly to encourage support for more AEDs to be placed in these public venues.

I feel very fortunate to be one of the many participants who took part in the CPR Anytime for Family and Friends training session. May I thank Dorothea Wicklund, B.N., and Judi Linden, B.N., for being wonderful instructors of the course. And may I also offer congratulations to Catherine Newham and Carole Lupkowski and the many volunteers of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Manitoba who were involved in organizing these very successful and important courses.

I encourage everyone to take the time to learn CPR, as it could be necessary—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The honourable member's time has expired.

**Some Honourable Members:** Leave.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the honourable member have leave? [*Agreed*]

The honourable Member for Portage la Prairie, to continue.

**Mr. Faurshou:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to encourage everyone to take the time to learn CPR, as it could be necessary at the most critical moment of a life of a stranger, a friend or family member. Knowing the valuable skills of CPR could save a life. Thank you.

#### **Helen Betty Osborne Foundation**

**Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon):** Mr. Speaker, Helen Betty Osborne was an Aboriginal woman who desired to become a teacher. Her tragic and senseless death in 1971 and the events that resulted from that death raised serious questions about Aboriginal people's relationship with the justice system. The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry concluded that her death and ensuing events were spurred by racism, sexism and indifference.

In December of 2000, almost seven years ago, this Legislature passed an act, with the consent of the Osborne family, creating the Helen Betty Osborne Foundation, recognizing Helen Betty's dream to become a teacher. The foundation provides financial assistance to Aboriginal persons enrolled in post-secondary education. The foundation has helped Aboriginal students go on to become teachers, tradespeople and academics. The foundation serves

as a beacon to those who wish to eliminate racism, intolerance, sexism and indifference.

Mr. Speaker, the scourge of racism, sexism and intolerance in our society is a problem that every member of this Chamber has an obligation to fight. Regardless of our personal ethnic or cultural background, we all must do our part to stand up against discrimination. This is an issue that transcends party lines and invites us all to commit our time and energy to it. Whether people are white, black, Aboriginal, male or female should not determine the way that they are treated or what they can do with their lives.

I would like to extend my congratulations to all Helen Betty Osborne Foundation award winners. These award winners remind us that there is light at the end of the tunnel in the fight against intolerance. These outstanding young people serve as a reminder to Aboriginal people that they can do whatever they put their minds to.

I know I speak for all members in this House when I say we will not forget what happened to Helen Betty Osborne, and we will continue to stand up against racism, sexism and indifference in all its forms. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Member for Carman.

**Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Carman):** No, sorry.

**Mr. Speaker:** No. We have one more member's statement. We have one more. Today, under the agreement, it's Friday of the first week and under our agreement it's Conservatives three and New Democrats two. So do we have another Conservative ready to go?

#### **Turtle Mountain Constituency Events**

**Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain):** It does give me great pleasure to rise today to recognize three special events that happened in Turtle Mountain constituency over the summer.

The Rural Municipality of Argyle celebrated its 125th anniversary on June 22, 23 and 24. A fun-filled weekend was hosted by both the Baldur and Glenora communities. Weekend events included a free pork barbecue hosted by the R.M. of Argyle, duck races, street dance, fireworks, pancake breakfast, ball games, Belgian bowling, children's activities and live bands. I was pleased to participate in the opening ceremonies and welcomed a large crowd to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the R.M. of Argyle.

Celebration 2007 was the theme for the Rural Municipality of Killarney-Turtle Mountain. Killarney celebrated its 100th and Turtle Mountain's 125th anniversary. The celebration continued for a week in Killarney, Holmfield and Ninga, beginning July 1 with a wide variety of activities.

Carberry and the R.M. of North Cypress celebrated 125 years on the weekend of July 4, 2007. That continued through the weekend, and there are many special events, including gingerbread house grand opening, a strawberry social and horse and carriage tours. These events take an enormous amount of time and dedication on behalf of the community and volunteers.

I extend my sincere thanks to all the individuals who were giving of their time to allow the visitors and former residents the opportunity to reflect on their past and plan for the future. I would also like to thank the communities for inviting me to be part of their celebrations. It was a great honour to be included in each and every one. Thank you.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

#### THRONE SPEECH

##### (Third Day of Debate)

**Mr. Speaker:** Resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Member for Rossmere (Ms. Braun) that the following address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor:

We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, thank Your Honour for the gracious speech addressed to us at this Second Session of the Thirty-Ninth Legislature of Manitoba and the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) in amendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Fort Rouge, who has 19 minutes remaining.

**Ms. Jennifer Howard (Fort Rouge):** Mr. Speaker, I think, when I left off, I'd begun to talk about water and some of the commitments in the Speech from the Throne to making sure that our waters are clean and protected for generations to come, and there is one sentence in the Throne Speech that was particularly resonant for me. That was the line that Manitobans have been accustomed to taking our spectacular water resources for granted.

I think that this is true. We are so fortunate to be surrounded by a great amount of fresh water. We are

so fortunate to turn on our taps every day and know that we have a trustworthy, clean source of drinking water, and that we can go and enjoy recreation in many lakes and rivers throughout the province. But we can't take those resources for granted.

This summer, I had the great opportunity of taking a tour of the boat *Namao*, which we have funded along with other levels of government and private donors to do research on Lake Winnipeg. My colleagues and I had a fascinating tour of that boat and discussion with the scientists aboard it. I learned an awful lot about some of the problems that have been plaguing Lake Winnipeg, but also about how important it was to be able to do that research on that boat, that we know far less than we should know about the lake, and that we can't be coming up with good solutions to keep it clean if we don't know some of the problems that are currently plaguing it.

One of the things that I learned on that tour was that, for Lake Winnipeg, the problem of nutrient loading comes from many, many sources. It isn't as simple as turning off the phosphorus and nitrogen tap upstream and it will all be fixed. There are several sources of nutrients, some within our control and some not within our control.

We have taken a tremendous step, I think, in providing over \$200 million more to the waste-water treatment initiatives in the city of Winnipeg, and if other governments also have their money on the table, that could be a billion dollars toward the cleanup of Lake Winnipeg. I think that's a stunning, stunning commitment to keep that lake clean.

The other thing that is perhaps, you know, a smaller initiative but no less important is the banning of phosphates in dishwashing detergent and our commitment to do that. *[interjection]* And other products. I think the way that we have chosen to do that is very instructive on making good public policy. I know that Manitobans want to do their part to keep the waters clean, and I also know that we have to find every way to make doing their part easier and more affordable.

*Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

I had my own journey to find phosphate-free dishwasher detergent. It took me quite a few trips to many stores, and I did find it. I did find it, and I did find it at about twice the cost of regular dishwasher detergent. Now, I, fortunately, can afford that and can make that choice, but I know that we have to

make it easier for all Manitobans to make that choice. I think that the legislation that we have committed to introducing is responsible and will make it easier and more affordable for Manitobans to do the right thing.

\*(11:10)

Something else that I found very good in the Throne Speech and I think is going to be tremendously helpful to my constituents is our continuing commitments to reduce poverty. I just want to reflect for a moment on some of the progress that has been made. I am firmly of the view that no level of poverty is acceptable in a prosperous society like ours, but I did find it interesting to reflect on the fact that since 1999 the number of families headed by single women living in poverty has been reduced by half. I think that's a tremendous achievement and something that we should reflect on and think about how that has been achieved and how we can continue to bring that level of poverty down because often when we talk about child poverty what we're really talking about is the poverty of women and the poverty of single mothers. So I thought to myself, how is it that this number has been cut in half? I think there are a few reasons that this has happened.

One is our commitment to child-care spaces. What is clear, time and time again, when you talk to women about participating in the workforce, they need more child-care spaces, and we need to continue to move on that. I'm very proud that in our time in government we've created 6,000 new spaces and committed to 2,500 more over the next two years. There's certainly more to do, but I think we are on our way.

We've also trained 700 more workers. There will be 250 graduating this year, and we've committed to ensuring that there are fairer wages for those workers. I think that's a particularly stunning commitment by this government in light of the fact that the federal government chose to withdraw its \$14-million funding for child care, and we stayed with that commitment to Manitoba families so they would not suffer by that withdrawal of support for child care.

What's interesting to me, you know, is it took the federal Liberals 10 years to fulfil their promise on child care, and it took the Conservative government about 10 minutes to break that.

The other thing that I think is probably responsible for the decline in poverty rates among

single female-led families are our significant and consistent raises in the minimum wage, another of which we heard about just today. The minimum wage will be going to \$8.50 on April 1, and that will mean that the minimum wage has increased by over 40 percent since 1999. Now, two-thirds of those minimum-wage earners are women. We know that when we increase the minimum wage, we are doing a great deal to reduce the poverty that many women find themselves living in. So I'm very proud of our commitment to continue to do that.

The other thing I would say that I think significantly contributes to the reduction of poverty is our effort to change the Employment and Income Assistance program under the title of Rewarding Work. One of the changes that I found particularly significant, that perhaps has not gotten a great deal of attention, is that we will now be allowing recipients of employment and income assistance to pursue education and training for up to two years. Under the previous government, I know, I had experience working in adult literacy with students who were doing their best to gain literacy skills, to gain job skills and were kicked out of training programs after mere months because their Employment and Income Assistance program would not support them to continue to get the training that would eventually lead to full-time work.

I remember particularly one woman coming to me in tears, telling me that she would have to leave the literacy program that I was involved in because her Employment and Income Assistance worker just simply would no longer support her to attend in that program. That was a great tragedy for her, and I think a great tragedy for our economy, when we did not invest in making people able to work.

The other thing I would say, a recent experience that had a great impact on me was a speech I did, a presentation I gave to a class of upcoming child-welfare workers, and this class came here to the Legislature. We did our presentation and our talk in our caucus room. I took them on a tour of the building afterwards, and they asked tremendously good questions. It was a class of entirely women. These are women who either currently work in child welfare or child care, or who are planning to have careers in that field, and I encouraged them to continue with their education because we know that we're going to need those workers because we've committed to 150 new staff positions in the child-welfare system. So we're going to need those graduates.

I also was very impressed with what we've managed to do to turn around the decline in foster care in the province, that there has been a 23 percent increase in those rates and over 500 new foster placements. That is an incredible, incredible achievement. We all know that the best situation for a child in care is a caring foster placement in a foster family.

I remember the day, I think it was in the early '90s, when the news came down that several organizations would have their provincial funding cut. The Foster Family Association would have its funding cut. The friendship centres would have their funding cut. Resource centres for unemployed people would have their funding cut. I remember that day because a group of us in Brandon went to protest those cuts and we went from office to office to office of organizations that worked tremendously hard, did incredibly good work with very little money who were no longer going to be able to do that work, and we should never, never forget the costs of those decisions to the future. I know that taking away funding and support for foster families did mean that it took us an awfully long time to get those foster families back and to make sure that we had more placements for children in care.

The other thing I wanted to spend a little bit of time on is our commitments to health care that are contained in the Speech from the Throne. I was very pleased to be at our recent announcement regarding the new Women's Hospital that we're going to build. This is an incredible opportunity for Manitobans. There has not been a new women's hospital built for 50 years, long before many of us in this Chamber were born, at least many of us on this side of the House were born.

It was so great to be there and know that as we build this hospital, the first in 50 years, we're going to listen to the women and the men who are going to use that hospital, who are going to be the end users, that we want to hear what will make their experience in the new Women's Hospital even better.

We know that the nurses and the doctors and the technologists and the health-care aides that work in that hospital now do tremendous work to provide excellent care and we can make their jobs a lot easier by having a modern facility. So I'm looking forward to those public consultations because I know listening to the birth stories of women is an incredibly powerful experience.

The other thing I was very pleased to see is our commitment to increasing the staffing in personal care homes. As someone who recently had a grandfather pass away who spent his last years in a personal care home and received tremendously great care, I think that we cannot do enough to make sure that we are supporting end-of-life care with dignity and compassion.

I just want to talk for a moment about what I think has been our fairly straightforward strategy on rebuilding the health-care system. We have made investments in some critical areas. We have made investments in people, in training and education for the people that work in the system. We have made investments in new facilities, in new buildings, in capital projects, and we have made investments in cutting-edge equipment, and that I think is the strategy that has shown great results so far.

I just want to talk for a moment about the costs of cutting the training and education programs for nurses and doctors in the 1990s. Certainly, Manitoba was not alone in taking that decision. That was a decision taken across the country and it is a very instructive case, instructive example of what can happen when you follow the flavour of the day in public policy.

It has taken us decades and it will continue to take us a long time to recover from those cuts that were made to the training programs. I'm reminded of a conversation I had once with the dean of Medicine that reminded me that when those training programs for doctors and nurses were cut in the 1990s, we didn't just lose one graduating class. We didn't just lose those people once from the system; we lost them for generations. Those people that would have been trained in the 1990s would now have been going into leadership positions within the health-care system, would now have been in positions to mentor new nurses and new doctors and they are not there. They are not there because they weren't trained and they weren't educated. We're going to pay for that mistake for a long time yet, I'm afraid.

\* (11:20)

I also want to just take this opportunity to welcome the new chief of police, Chief McCaskill. I have heard very positive things about him and his commitment to working with the community to make neighbourhoods safer. I want to talk about one example in my own constituency, crime and safety, the issues on many people's minds and it is a very difficult problem to tackle, but I just want to talk for

a moment about the Gas Station Theatre which is located in my constituency. That has been an area that for a long time has had difficulty in maintaining a safe space where people feel welcome and where they feel they can come and be part of the neighbourhood.

Under the guidance of one of the employees of the Gas Station Theatre and a local actor and leader in the acting community, Steve McIntyre, they have done a tremendous thing by redesigning the area around that Gas Station Theatre. They put up gates. They've done beautiful works of graffiti and that has turned around the area. There are still lots of issues there, but Steve McIntyre took a tremendous leadership role, worked with some of the kids that were known to hang around that area to make it a safer place. One of the things that he did that I think was just tremendous is he painted one wall of the building black. He told the local kids who may have creative instincts that if that wall stayed black for an entire month, he would turn it over to them to paint on. It did stay for an entire month and now it has a beautiful mural that adorns Osborne Village.

I'm very pleased that we continue to fund police positions. I know that that's going to make a difference on our streets and also that we're expanding the Lighthouse program which makes a tremendous difference to so many kids and young people who now have a safe and constructive place to go after school.

I touched a little bit the last time I spoke on arts and culture. Of course, the constituency I represent has many great artists working in it. I just wanted to, for a moment, single out the eight Manitobans that were recently elected to the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, many of whom live in Fort Rouge. Those are Karen Dahl, Grace Nickel, James Doran, Noam Gonick, Neil Minuk, Reva Stone, Ewa Tarsia and Ione Thorkelsson. I just want to let members know that if they're looking for a great show right now, Ewa Tarsia has a show currently on at the Ken Segal Gallery which is on River Avenue. She is a very innovative artist who produces beautiful works, and it's good for the soul once in a while to go look at some beautiful works of art.

Finally, I want to just speak for a moment about the contrast between this Speech from the Throne and the so-called alternative Speech from the Throne, which I admit to not completely reading but certainly getting the flavour of it.

You know, what was interesting to me some of the criticism from the Speech from the Throne was that it contained our election commitments which I find a puzzling criticism because I thought that in an election, you laid out your commitments, you laid out your plans for the next four years and then you tried to put that plan in place and you continued to make announcements and put it in place and talk about it and get it done over the next four years. That's what I thought we were doing.

Interestingly, to me, in the other Speech from the Throne, there was no mention of bringing back the Jets which was a cornerstone of their election campaign. There was no mention of flooding most of Point Douglas and creating a beach, so I guess that the philosophy on the other side is that you don't talk about your election commitments, especially when they get the kind of response that theirs did in the last campaign. But we will continue to work to meet those commitments because we take them seriously and we made them to Manitobans.

The thing that I found beyond that a little bit disturbing, that some of the tone of the other Speech from the Throne was the tone of divisiveness, I think, that we have to all guard against. Often, you know, we hear this discussion and this warning about appealing to special interests, and I've come to the conclusion that a special interest is any interest that isn't your own. We on this side of the House are going to continue to build a province for all Manitobans and we're going to continue to deliver Speeches from the Throne for all Manitobans.

So let us try to commit ourselves, all of us in this House, to appeal to the best in people, to appeal to people's natural desire to care for each other, to their natural thirst for justice, not to appeal to that which divides us.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell):** Madam Deputy Speaker, it gives me pleasure to respond to the Throne Speech today, although I wish that the government had paid a little more attention to the quality and the content of the Throne Speech, because I think Manitobans were anticipating that indeed the government that has just been elected would have been a little more proactive in terms of the kinds of programs Manitobans are looking for and perhaps a little more creative in the way it addresses some of the issues that are before Manitobans.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, I know that the government always expects members of the opposition to rise in their place and be negative about their Throne Speech, but we always look for the content of a Throne Speech. The way a Throne Speech is written sometimes provides a little bit of vagueness in terms of the specifics, but in this case this Throne Speech is nothing but vague in all areas. It certainly doesn't show a government that has just been recently elected and has some energy and enthusiasm in terms of the programs and the government that it is supposed to provide.

A Throne Speech, Madam Deputy Speaker, is supposed to outline the government's agenda for the coming fiscal year and perhaps even beyond. But what we heard a lot of in this Throne Speech was reference to programs that were announced in the previous Throne Speech and in previous Throne Speeches, actions that had been taken by the government in previous Throne Speeches or previous budgets. So it was a rehash of a lot of activity that government had embarked on in previous times. There is, of course, nothing wrong with government taking some credit for positive things that it has done in the past, but the emphasis on past performance by this government sort of overshadowed any proactive and any future programming that the government is looking at for Manitobans.

We looked at some of the issues that arise out of the Throne Speech, and, on that basis, our leader presented an amendment to the Throne Speech. The amendment, Madam Deputy Speaker, is one that perhaps gives the government a little more clarity as to where it should be going and provides a little clearer direction as to the kinds of initiatives that Manitobans are really looking to government for.

One of the big faux pas I think that this government has embarked on is its announcement with regard to the bipole 3 transmission line that it is proposing for the west side of the province. Now the Premier (Mr. Doer) has indicated that in their discussions over the course of the last number of years that they have consulted with Manitobans, specifically, First Nations. But, Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to ask the government what consultation they have had with people on the west side of the province. The Premier's response, of course, is that, well, we did mention it in our election platform.

Well, the reality is the Premier wouldn't screw up his courage and come to a public debate on the

matter and ducked every opportunity that was presented to him to have a debate on this issue and on others. So, Madam Deputy Speaker, when he says that Manitobans gave him the mandate to put a bipole 3 transmission line on the west side of the province, that indeed is stretching the truth significantly.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I think we have heard from Manitobans, people who are academics, people who are professionals, people whose lives are going to be affected by either the transmission line going through their property or not going through their area. We have heard from these people chastising this government upon its ill-conceived notion that, indeed, it has support to go on the west side of the province.

We have also heard from outside sources as well. People who have looked at our province and looked at the issues that perhaps are going to affect them down the road because of the transmission line. They, too, have commented on the route as being one that hasn't had a lot of scrutiny, hasn't had a lot of thought given to it and the government should be rethinking this.

\* (11:30)

Can we change the government's mind? Can we change the Premier's mind on this? Well, that's our job, Madam Deputy Speaker. It is our job on behalf of Manitobans to ensure that we give this Premier every advantage that he may need to change his mind and to reassess the situation and, indeed, move the line from where he is proposing to where, in fact, it should be. Manitoba Hydro has given us enough information to show why this line is indeed better suited on the east side of the province, east side of Lake Winnipeg, rather than on the west side of the province.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the government in the course of the last number of years has found itself in a number of scandals, and every one of these scandals has been swept under the rug. Now, if the government was not culpable in any of those, I would think that it would have launched an inquiry into any one of these scandals to ensure that those who perhaps were involved in it, had some culpability in it, would be brought before the public and would have to answer some very difficult questions. But, of course, when the government is implicated in some of these, it doesn't want to embark on any inquiries. The government says, well, it's going to cost us millions of dollars to have a

public inquiry on any one of these. Well, I think sometimes dollars spent on a public inquiry are worth it if, in fact, you're going to expose the truth and ensure that justice is brought to bear.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm just going to mention a couple because we could go on on this topic for the rest of my time and never address many of the other issues, but I do want to mention a couple. The biggest one where some 34,000 Manitobans lost millions and millions of dollars is the Crocus scandal. Now, we have seen on other occasions where the Premier (Mr. Doer) has been, you know, pretty Johnny-on-the-spot when it comes to calling an inquiry and has done it forthwith. I only mention the one, the Morris-Macdonald School Division, when the Premier very quickly brought in the RCMP to investigate something that he thought would land on the shoulders of a previous government, but indeed that didn't happen and so the investigation went on.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, when it came to Crocus, the Premier sat on his hands and did not move so quickly, as a matter of fact, has not moved to date. As more and more information keeps coming, we're going to find that indeed this government—and I predict that we're going to find that this government indeed had its hands in the cookie jar, and it was responsible for some of the things that happened that caused 34,000 Manitobans to lose the kind of money that they lost.

Enough said on that one, Madam Deputy Speaker. I want to mention another one, and that is the Seven Oaks School Division scandal that in anybody's mind showed that this was a wrong-headed decision. Of course, the person at the head of this was one who was very closely tied to the New Democratic Party, headed a campaign for the New Democratic Party, so, therefore, the government would never want to investigate him. Therefore, no inquiry was held into that. But then that complicated matters a little bit because the chair of the Public Schools Finance Board was also tied fairly closely to that party, and once again you wouldn't want to investigate someone who was that tightly close to the New Democratic Party.

Well, the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) brings another scandal over to the floor of this Legislature, and that is the one regarding a member of the NDP party who wanted to run for them but wasn't the favoured son. Therefore, they took a Mr. Michael Balagus, a chief operator in the New

Democratic Party, and injected him into the fray and ensured that this person was not going to be a candidate but offered him kind of a second prize, if you like, a conciliation prize, if he would take his name out of the race and not become involved in the campaign.

Well, we saw what happened in that. The Premier (Mr. Doer) said he handed this over to the Chief Electoral Officer, which he did not. The evidence was clear; he gave it to his party. Well, the party kind of massaged this thing and then threw it over to the Elections officer, and then on technicalities, on technicalities, this was all thrown out, Madam Deputy Speaker, on technicalities. Well, my leader this morning, I think, put it squarely to the government. He said, well, perhaps we should have a criminal investigation of this matter and see whether or not the truth can be brought out in that way.

So, you see, Madam Deputy Speaker, the government has wiggled its way around these issues, swept them under the carpet, weaseled its way around so that none of this would come forward for the public scrutiny and for the public to really have an evaluation of whether or not this is a government that is truthful, a government that is straightforward and a government who, indeed, is acting in the best interests of Manitobans.

I can't leave this without mentioning one more issue, and that is, remember the issue of land development on the north end of the city near Lockport? When the now-Premier was the Minister of Urban Affairs, I believe it was, and for 12 years—*[interjection]*

You know, when the minister was with the Pawley government, he was the Minister of Urban Affairs, and there was a land development plan near Lockport. It was about a mile in length if you were to drive along it, and if you were to drive along it today, you would see that that, for some reason, is vacant. But, on both sides of that property, there is development. It was the Minister of Urban Affairs who disallowed development in that area. Well, he was challenged. The owners of the property decided to take this then-minister to court. Well, they lost government, and this stayed before the courts, stayed before the courts for years, and it was remanded from time to time to time because more information needed to come. Well, finally, finally, finally the NDP became government. Well, what do you think happened to the court case? Do you think it was proceeded with?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Derkach:** No, it wouldn't have been proceeded with. No, we'll have a little out-of-court settlement here. But what are we going to use to settle out of court? Well, we can't use personal money because we don't have it, don't have that kind of money, so we'll just use government money. So we'll use taxpayer dollars to have an out-of-court settlement for something that was, truly, the responsibility of the now-Premier. We'll use a hundred thousand dollars, but we'll make sure that those people who were taking him to task, who were taking him to court are going to be silenced.

**An Honourable Member:** Careful now.

**Mr. Derkach:** So they can't speak about this kind of activity. Now, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chomiak) says, careful. I am careful. I am careful because this is the truth. This is the truth, and I'm not afraid to stand up here and tell the truth.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this government is riddled with scandal from top to bottom. Every single issue that we bring forward and ask for an investigation on, this government sweeps under the carpet.

Now, everybody makes mistakes, Madam Deputy Speaker. Everybody is vulnerable sometimes and makes an error in judgment, but when you make it as a government and there is intent to hide information, then it is time to investigate. You know, I'm not afraid to talk about the Monnin inquiry because it did not—I'd have no implications in that at all, but that was a case of \$4,000 of private money. Four thousand dollars of private money, and my Premier, Gary Filmon, was brave enough to say, let's have a public inquiry and get to the bottom of this. And we did. We did. And then it was embarrassing. Yes, Madam Deputy Speaker, it was embarrassing, but the right thing was done. The right thing was done.

Now I say to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chomiak), the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Ashton), do the honourable thing. Do the right thing. Call a public inquiry on the Crocus Fund. Call a public inquiry on Seven Oaks and do the right thing. Call a public inquiry into what happened with your candidate. But, oh, no. You would rather—let's have a public inquiry on the issue of the out-of-court settlement because that's taxpayer money, and I can go on.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

Remember Sunrise School Division. My God, you know, I'm going to spend all my time on scandals here but there are so many. Take a look at Agassiz, the old Agassiz School Division.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Derkach:** I think the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) was then the minister, if I'm not—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

\* (11:40)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Derkach:** —I'm not mistaken. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I think it was the Member for Brandon East who was then minister of the issue and, all of a sudden—and the Auditor General, the Auditor General himself, indicated that there was wrongdoing in the way that the money was transferred over to a school division, that it was not right, that it was against the law. But was there an inquiry on that issue?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Derkach:** No, there wasn't an inquiry.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that I have to spend this much time on these issues, but you know this government holds itself up and says, oh, look how pure we are, how we govern in openness. Well, that's all bunk, to be honest with everybody. That is all bunk because this government has weaseled its way around issues, has wiggled its way around scandals, and if they are truthful and they want to be open, then they would be launching public inquiries into matters. Yes, we launched a public inquiry on \$4,000 of private money, but we have a situation here: 34,000 Manitobans lost over \$60 million, and the government refuses to call a public inquiry.

Now they're going to be brought to task because there is a class action lawsuit, and I would daresay that that class action lawsuit is going to be settled by this government while they're in government. They're going to do that while they're in government because they certainly don't want to have this brought out into the open afterwards. They're going to settle it while they are still in government at millions of dollars of cost to taxpayers, and they will settle out of court.

Now that's a prediction, and we will wait to see whether or not they're going to be brave enough to have their Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), to have their Premier (Mr. Doer) put their hand on the Bible and then disclose what really went on in the backrooms, what really went on at the Cabinet table when this matter was brought to light to them at the Cabinet table, Mr. Speaker, because we know that that happened.

We know that in 2001 they were warned, fully warned, about the implications that could occur if they did not change course on the Crocus Fund and they continued to allow Manitobans to invest, knowing full well that this money would be lost.

I have another question about this whole issue and that is, and maybe that will be brought out in a lawsuit, it certainly would be in a public inquiry. How many people connected to the NDP party who had investments in Crocus pulled them between 2001 and the time that Crocus went down? I am not accusing anybody of that, but that is an interesting concept, because I look around this room and I wonder how many people sitting in this Chamber today are connected to people who had investments in Crocus that were pulled once that information was known by Cabinet. Only a public inquiry can bring that out, and only a public inquiry.

You know what, maybe there should be a criminal investigation into that because we don't have the answers. All we have—Mr. Speaker, I'm not pointing a finger at anyone. All I'm putting out there is a question and if there's an answer to it, then I ask any minister on the benches of the government to rise and give us an answer—*[interjection]*—or say no.

Say no, and I'll be satisfied, but we have said before and we will say it again, keep your notes. Keep your notes, folks, because this is not a matter that we will allow to be swept under the carpet forever. This is not a matter that we will ever seesaw on on behalf of Manitobans. We don't have to be asking questions on this every day, Mr. Speaker, we don't have to ask questions on this every day, but we'll keep reminding you.

The Minister of Justice (Mr. Chomiak) is a little bit sensitive to this and I can understand that, you know, because listen to their Throne Speech. How many references were there to the 1990s? How many references were there to the former Filmon administration? How many references were there back to the '90s? I keep telling you, Mr. Minister of Justice, and all members of the opposite side, we will

keep the Crocus issue in front of your faces until you have the courage, until you have the intestinal fortitude to stand up and call a public inquiry, because if you don't call it, we will, and that day will come.

Yes, we will keep calling for it and, you know what? Finally, those people who lost all that money, thirty-three, thirty-four thousand Manitobans now have a class action lawsuit involving the government. Remember that, in this case, the government is named. The government is named.

Now, I don't think there was ever a case in the 1990s when the government was named in a lawsuit, but there is certainly one before us today, and, Mr. Speaker, I would daresay that if we had a class action lawsuit that involves Seven Oaks School Division, you would have the same thing. Government would be named. *[interjection]* Yes, *[inaudible]* would be named.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I tell you that some of the times a government has to stop, and if it's not implicated in any of these things, then it has to do the honourable thing and call for that public inquiry. *[interjection]* Oh, no. An election does not sweep everything under the carpet. The Minister of Justice says, yes, we'll call an election. Well, that's a nice way out, but, in fact, that doesn't hide the issue. That doesn't hide the issue. *[interjection]*

Oh, well, you see, the arrogance is starting to come out, Mr. Speaker. One of the dangers of a government when it increases its majority over a certain percentage, it becomes arrogant. I think we're starting to see that arrogance sort of ooze out of this government when they give their answers in the House and also in the comments that they throw back at us. The arrogance is starting to show, and that is a danger because that danger manifests itself into Manitobans losing confidence in what this government is about and what it should be doing.

Mr. Speaker, when I look at the amendments that have been proposed by my leader, I have to tell you that these amendments were put forward thoughtfully and with consideration to what Manitobans really want to see from a government. If, by some freak of nature, we could ever get the government to agree with amendments of this kind, I think we could improve the Throne Speech as it is before us by a thousand percent, but I don't think that is going to happen.

Mr. Speaker, there is one other issue that I have to address—a couple. Rural Manitoba, by and large, has suffered at the hands of this government. For eight years now, a little more than eight years, rural Manitobans have been the scapegoat of this government, and I say that in honesty because look at the number of emergency centres in our hospitals that have been closed since this government has taken office.

Were there any emergency centres outside of the city of Winnipeg closed when the Conservative government was in power in the 1990s? Even in the face of reduced transfers from Ottawa, this government, the Conservative government in the 1990s, did not close a single hospital or a single emergency ward.

What happened after the '90s? Well, in 1999, when this government took over, Mr. Speaker, they all of a sudden enjoyed a windfall of money coming from Ottawa, an enormous windfall of money coming from Ottawa. The fruits of labour of the 1990s resulted in an economy that was starting to move very actively, and there were revenues coming to this government beyond their expectations. I remember the Premier (Mr. Doer) saying, after he won the election, he couldn't find a billion dollars that was promised by the Conservatives. It didn't take him long to find it—less than a year. He was spending it as fast as it was coming in and hasn't stopped spending it because this government has a spending habit.

But what have they done to rural Manitoba, Mr. Speaker? How many emergency centres are closed in rural Manitoba? There are 14, I believe.

**An Honourable Member:** Fifteen.

**Mr. Derkach:** Fifteen now. Fifteen emergency centres in rural Manitoba closed. Now how can a government who is flush with money ever allow that kind of a thing to happen? The Premier himself came to Erickson, Manitoba, in the 2003 election, a day before the election, a day before the vote and promised the people in Erickson that he would re-open the emergency ward in Erickson hospital.

\* (11:50)

**An Honourable Member:** And what happened?

**Mr. Derkach:** And what happened? Today that emergency centre remains closed. There are 40,000 people living north of Erickson at Onanole, Lake Audy, Clear Lake during the summer months and the

only service they have to emergency services is an ambulance parked with a nurse and paramedics at Clear Lake. Forty thousand people, no emergency ward, and what do you get? An ambulance.

Now, can you imagine any city of that size—I don't care whether it's Winkler, Morden, Brandon, Portage—having an ambulance and a nurse parked at their city? Now that's your health-care system under this government.

So the Premier (Mr. Doer) last year said in the House that something had to be done about the emergency services in Erickson, and that still remains an issue. That has not been addressed.

I want to talk about another one. My own community, in 1999, before the election, our government promised a dialysis unit in the Russell hospital for the western region of the province because of the incidence of diabetes and dialysis requirements in that part of the province. So a dialysis unit was promised. We lost government. A new government came in. The promise was made by the then-Minister of Health that they would see a dialysis unit placed in that hospital.

In 2003, in the Throne Speech, I believe it was, once again a dialysis unit was promised in the Throne Speech to the Russell hospital.

This Throne Speech, right here, promises a dialysis unit for the Russell hospital.

Eight years of government, eight long years of government, people have died of diabetes. People who have had to travel to Brandon, have had to move their homes to Brandon, have had to sell their homes and move to Brandon to get dialysis, cannot get it there because this government refuses to make a commitment for that unit.

Today I call on the government to live up to its commitment that it has made again in this Throne Speech to ensure that that unit is installed before its year mandate is done, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I can go on about every single hospital that has been closed in rural Manitoba and the services that have been taken away, services that were taken away for no reason. I want to talk about chemotherapy. Chemotherapy was offered in my hospital in Russell. Then it was shut off; then it came back again. It's off and on. There are lineups of people waiting for chemotherapy and sometimes they don't know whether they're going to get it there or not. Now, today, as I stand here, chemotherapy is

provided in Russell, and I thank God for that because there are many people who need that service who live a long distance from the city.

Mr. Speaker, Manitobans are suffering outside of this city because they can't get access to proper health care that they expect. The tax dollars that they are paying are not coming back in the services that should be provided by a government. Fourteen emergency services closed in rural Manitoba. They can brag about new ambulances. I don't care if I ride in a new ambulance or an old ambulance; just get me to a facility. Just get me there so that I can be treated. That's all Manitobans ask for. If I have to wait for an ambulance for 40 or 50 or an hour, if I have a heart attack in rural Manitoba, an ambulance does me no good. I need that facility. I need that facility close at hand.

You know, we talk about schools, schools being built in a community, and they should be. That's a policy that should be enshrined, that communities should have schools, but even more importantly communities deserve a hospital and an emergency service so that people who live in those areas can be treated humanely, can be treated with respect and can expect to have the kind of service they need to perhaps save their lives.

Mr. Speaker, I see my light is flashing and I haven't even begun to address many of the issues that I would like to address in this Throne Speech, but I am gravely disappointed in what this government has presented as a Throne Speech, because what it wants to do is continue to pat itself on the back. These kinds of platitudes do Manitobans no good. This government must take hold of an agenda that is truly meant to help people in this province.

With those comments, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the time.

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** Now for something completely different.

My colleagues in the Legislature who have just joined us since the last election won't know this, but the last Throne Speech that I had a chance to speak at was last year, and I had designed it around the theme of sustainable development, which, of course, as I'm sure we all know, involves looking at the environment and looking at the economy and looking at society all together in a comprehensive package.

I had a detailed list of accomplishments that our government had already achieved at that point in time, but because of time constraints and so much

good news to share I only got through the economic and the social achievements at that time. So I figured this time around I would focus just in on the environmental. It's particularly fitting, given that the first section in our Throne Speech, a very impressive document as always, is entitled green and growing. This is a key priority for our government, and we are very, very proud, not just of what we've achieved already but the fact that we're doing it in partnership with so many individual Manitobans and partner organizations and businesses and also very proud of the enormous vision and strength of character that has been outlined in the Throne Speech.

Along the way, I might also take the liberty to contrast where we're headed in these very important areas with what our predecessors did or, more often, did not do.

I'll start with energy and climate change if I may, Mr. Speaker. Particularly interesting to note that the member for the opposition who is the critic for this area has taken to writing letters to the editor in the *Winnipeg Sun*, trying to defuse the remarkable event that happened a few days ago where a *Winnipeg Sun* editorial came out in favour of climate change and of our own plan. Heaven forbid, you know, that that go unnoticed and uncorrected by the right wing of the Conservatives' branch. Now, I don't know how many people buy the *Sun* to actually read it, particularly to read the letters to the editor, but it is quite telling to look at the history of greenhouse gas emissions in our province under the Conservatives versus what's happened since the NDP came to power.

In 1990, Mr. Speaker, Manitoba's emissions were 18 megatonnes. That's 18 million metric tonnes of emissions. When they finally left office, that number was up at 20.2 megatonnes. So, over a two-megatonne growth in just 10 years. Now, since 2000 to 2005, we might want to ask ourselves, how have Manitoba's emissions changed? Well, they've gone all the way from 20.2 megatonnes to 20.3 megatonnes. So, rather than growing at, let's say, one megatonne in five years, they've gone up one-tenth of a megatonne in five years under the NDP, and now they're going to start going down as we bring in our Kyoto legislation. You don't often hear in the media or in the questions that get asked during Question Period in this Chamber any recognition from the opposition members that they are almost entirely responsible for the fact that Manitoba has emissions higher now than they did when they first came to office in 1990, which is the year when Kyoto kicked into effect. That is the

starting base-line year for Kyoto emissions, not just in Manitoba, but around the world.

Now, in terms of the things just in the Throne Speech that we announced that are going to be happening, the made-in-Manitoba vehicle emissions standard, we're going to be one of the continent's leaders in this area. It'll be based on what California's done, but it'll also be reflective of Manitoba's diversity and the needs of our citizens. The Kyoto legislation, you know, lots of different jurisdictions have talked about planning to meet certain emissions by certain dates. I think the federal government is now all the way up to—what is it?—2050 before they feel that anything might finally start happening on the national scene according to their so-called vision? Well, we're putting into law here in Manitoba that Kyoto is going to be required. Whatever government is sitting here, unless they want to come in and gut the legislation that we're going to bring forward, in Manitoba we are so committed and so understanding of the enormous stress that our planet is under when we talk about climate change that, in Manitoba, reducing our emissions is going to become the law. We're the first jurisdiction in Canada to do so.

\* (12:00)

The Brandon phase-out, of course, our last coal plant. We're already over 97 percent fossil-fuel-free in the generation of our electricity. It's an unprecedented situation that any jurisdiction would be rightly envious of. The former coal-belching plant in Selkirk, with all of the pollution associated with that, has, of course, now been converted to not be running on coal. It runs on natural gas, which is far more efficient, as we all know. Brandon is the last coal plant that we have for generating electricity. We've announced in the Throne Speech that that is going to be phased out, thereby removing coal altogether from our electricity generation grid.

We're also going to be requiring the capture of methane from landfills throughout the province. For those that aren't aware of this, methane is many times more, 21 times more, potent as a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide is. These landfills are some of the largest emitters that we have in our province. So we are, once again, taking the leadership and announcing that we are going to require that those landfill gases be captured.

We also have some very impressive province-wide plans for low-income families in communities so that they can access the funds and

supports available to implement energy conservation measures in their homes and for all of the benefits involved in that: job creation, better indoor living conditions and, of course, reduced environmental footprint and savings on your monthly bills.

A new biodiesel mandate will come into effect. For those that aren't aware, when we bring in our biodiesel plan, it will be the equivalent of half a megatonne reduction, 500,000 tonnes, from biodiesel alone, and that's in addition to the 135,000 tonnes that will be reduced from the ethanol mandate that we're bringing in. So biofuels, again, there isn't any single magic wand on one issue or one initiative that is available to us. It is a wide variety of approaches to address climate change in Manitoba, and biofuels are a key part of it. In fact, we have not one or two or three, but four plants under construction now. Some of them are very close to going into a commercial-stage production of biodiesel in Manitoba. It's another fantastic success story.

Five million trees are going to be planted over the next five years, a million trees a year. This is above and beyond normal tree planting that is required already by the forestry industry.

A new 40-kilometre bicycle trail extending all the way from the floodway out to Birds Hill Park. Another fantastic accomplishment of our government in providing opportunities for active transportation and alternative ways of moving around rather than things related to fossil-fuel consumption.

All of these things, again, Mr. Speaker, I need to emphasize, just relate to what we announced in our Throne Speech. Only so much time in any Throne Speech, of course, but there are other initiatives under way which our government has started.

Wind power, there was no such thing as a wind turbine when we came to office. I don't know why that would be the case. It's not any secret that on the Prairies we have lots and lots of wind available to us. We now have Manitoba's first wind farm, one of the largest in the country. There was none of that going on when we came to office. We've moved that file forward very successfully. A hundred megawatts installed already with a vision, again, of 1,000 megawatts in the coming years. To put that in perspective, our entire electricity grid is a little bit over 5,000 megawatts. So a very significant commitment there on the wind front from us.

New hydro-electricity development. Again, people may not appreciate just how much Hydro has

changed in the way they approach these negotiations with First Nations communities. In the case of the Wuskwatim dam, for instance, the original design was thrown out because the amount of flooding that was associated with it was unacceptable to everybody—to us, to Hydro and, certainly, to the local communities. So that dam has been redesigned. The flooding is now less than one half of a square kilometre, incredibly minimal. Very, very small environmental impacts resulting from that, and the project is only proceeding now because the local community, the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, voted not once but twice to see it proceed. They will be equity partners with Hydro, with the public good in Manitoba, receiving benefits from that development for many, many years to come. As they say, so long as the rivers shall run.

Our green building policy. Any significant project that is receiving funds from us, whether it be a new building or a significant renovation of an existing building, now must meet the LEED Silver requirements. None of that was done under the previous government, and this is leading to some spectacular developments in our downtown. The Red River College Princess Street Campus, of course, the new Hydro tower will be among the most energy-efficient buildings of its type in the whole world. In my constituency of Wolseley, the University of Winnipeg is included in that. They are pursuing the highest rating under the LEED program, LEED Platinum, for their new science building, which is under construction as we speak. So some very exciting times there.

We are also, at the same time, updating the building code to not just make programs that receive government funding follow an environmental path, but also to raise the floor for all construction that happens, whether it be in the public or the private sector, so that, as a province, we move forward on energy efficiency.

Let's not forget, Mr. Speaker, when we came to office, Manitoba was ranked ninth out of 10 provinces—that's kind of a polite way of saying second worst—when it came to energy efficiency. We have now, two times in a row, by the independent agency which does this evaluation, the Canadian energy efficiency association, they have ranked Manitoba the most energy-efficient province in the country. That is a trend that I am very hopeful will continue, especially since many of our initiatives that I have just mentioned hadn't been fully implemented and announced when they did their last assessment.

So we certainly have a very good chance of continuing our national leadership in that area.

A personal favourite of mine, where we are also national if not international leaders, is in the whole area of promoting geothermal ground-source heat pumps. My wife and I, our family decided to install a geothermal heat pump in our home just a couple of summers ago. Its performance has been fantastic, whether it be the cooling in the summer or the heating in the winter. To realize that we are now approaching 5,000 installations of geothermal units, both for residential owners or individual families choosing to go that route, and for many, many commercial applications is a true testament to our enormous leadership in this area.

Manitoba also trains a significant number of the people in Canada who wish to become geothermal technicians and then go back home to their home communities and take what they've learned in Manitoba and apply this excellent technology. Geothermal, just for the record, is 300 percent efficient. That means that for every unit of energy that you put in to operate the pump in a geothermal system you get 300, or you get three units of energy back out. Put that in contrast with the efficiency of internal combustion engines, which rank about 15 percent efficiency. So very, very exciting times on the energy front.

I also want to talk about water. Having covered energy and climate change, our government has taken some very, very impressive steps. I want to begin with some information that I haven't seen in the public discourse very often, but which I think really needs to be highlighted. That is, quite simply, the percentage of the nutrients heading into Lake Winnipeg, which we are taking so many positive steps to reduce, just what a small percentage it is that we actually have direct control over here in Manitoba. For the nitrogen, which ends up in Lake Winnipeg, only 10 percent of it is really within the purview of our government to be able to address. When it comes to the phosphorus that is ending up in Lake Winnipeg, it's 24 percent.

\*(12:10)

Now, why is that the case? Well, in both instances, more than half of the nutrients, be it nitrogen or phosphorus, don't start in Manitoba. They come from Saskatchewan or Alberta or Ontario or from several states in the United States to the south of us. The remaining portions come from natural processes such as atmosphere deposition, which, as a

government, we also don't have very much control over. Again, the response of our government to this situation has been so intelligent, because we've recognized there isn't any one single solution. There isn't any one single sector that needs to be asked to fix this problem. There isn't any one main contributor to the problem. Just as in climate change, there are many, many different initiatives that need to be brought in, and we are very proudly doing that.

I would group our water efforts into three different categories. One of them would certainly be protecting the water from excessive nutrients, and amongst the specific areas that we're working on, Mr. Speaker, is when municipalities, be it the city of Winnipeg, or Brandon, or Portage, or smaller communities, come to us for an environmental licence to operate their sewage treatment plants, we now put nutrient removal requirements into those licences which they then have to meet.

To give you an example of how enormously effective this is, for Winnipeg alone, because of the hard work that our government has done to not only speed up the time line that the City of Winnipeg had originally given us of needing 50 years to implement this initiative, not only have we shrunk that down remarkably by about 90 percent—it'll be about a five-year time line—but by doing that, Mr. Speaker, we are going to be removing 250 tonnes of phosphorus per year from the city of Winnipeg's sewage waste stream. That, all by itself, could be as much as one-third of the estimated total reduction that we need to do in order to help Lake Winnipeg be restored to its much healthier status that it was in the 1970s, but again this is just one piece of the work we need to do.

Our government also passed groundbreaking legislation, which nobody else in the country had done, in the form of The Water Protection Act, which members opposite spoke against at length. I'm not really quite sure why they would do that. This is the first legislation in Canada to ever protect the quality of water at source to make sure we're not just dealing with, you know, end-of-pipe solutions, though those are certainly important. We also need to be proactive and get onto the front end of the problem and prevent pollution in the first place, a very common-sense approach. It's not at all surprising that we're leaders here once again. After all, ours is the first government to even have a Water Stewardship Minister.

Another very important area in the whole question of nutrients is the referral to the Clean Environment Commission of the entire hog industry in Manitoba and the very firm pause that our government has put into place on the expansion of that industry until the Clean Environment Commission is able to report back to our government and to the public as a whole on what is a sustainable level of operation.

Of the other two areas where we have been very active in protecting the quality and safety of Manitoba's water, one is protecting it against foreign threats from outside of our borders. The first piece of legislation that the Doer government passed, and I can take no personal credit for this because I wasn't here—it's a clear indication of how important the environment has been to this government from day one, and I tip my hat to all of my colleagues who made this happen right from the beginning—but the first legislation passed in the Legislature under Premier Doer was a ban on the bulk export of Manitoba's fresh water.

We were at the time the first Canadian jurisdiction to do that. My understanding is we remain the only jurisdiction in Canada to have done that; and, with the enormous concerns around not just quality but quantity of water that our neighbours to the south are experiencing in many areas, this will be a landmark piece of legislation protecting the integrity of Manitoba's waterways for many, many years to come.

We have also, of course, taken a very strong and effective role in opposing the completely ineffectual Devils Lake diversion, even if it were the case that water heading to Manitoba were clean, which we've received no reports to indicate that. In fact, our work in government has shown that there are foreign species in that water, and we remain very committed to work with our federal partners and with the states involved and the U.S. federal government to try and get these decisions change. But, even if that were the case and the outlet were operating all summer, the lake would have shrunk all of about a couple of inches this past summer. So this remains a very significant concern to our government, and that will not change any time soon, and very, very proud of the very strong stance that we have taken in opposition to that project.

Also, in a much more positive light, through our diplomacy and our confident lobbying, we have managed to receive assurances from both Minnesota

and North Dakota that they will reduce their nutrient loading of Lake Winnipeg by the same 10 percent goal that we have set for ourselves. This agreement has been recognized and endorsed formally by the International Joint Commission. We very much take strong hope from that accomplishment and remain hopeful that, in other areas such as Devils Lake, we will be able to reach a much more sane agreement that benefits everyone involved.

The third area in water where we have been particularly proactive is, of course, in drinking water safety. This includes bringing in a new Drinking Water Safety Act, restoring the financial supports to homeowners that had been taken away under the previous government for well water testing, far more stringent application of the law and regulations to the quality of water that comes out of our taps and the requirements for trained staff to review the quality of the water.

Let's not forget, Mr. Speaker, that, under a Conservative government in Ontario, where cutbacks and privatization ruled the day on water quality, we had the Walkerton tragedy, where people not only became very, very sick from E. coli in the water that had contaminated their drinking water, but some citizens tragically passed on as well and died from that circumstance. That flowed quite directly from government decisions.

All of this, Mr. Speaker, are just things that we have already had in place. In our Throne Speech, again, going back to the vision of our government, we have announced a \$206-million investment for the waste-water upgrades for the city of Winnipeg alone. In addition to that, again, governing for all citizens in Manitoba, something that did not happen and will not happen under the members opposite, we have an additional \$150 million allocated for waste-water treatment for rural and northern Manitobans.

We've also, of course, introduced legislation for limits on dish detergent, not just dish detergent, but also for lawn fertilizers, taking a very strong look at some poor planning decisions made in the past regarding septic fields. So those will receive some detailed examination and new requirements to stop the leaching of contaminants and sewage and nutrients, ultimately, into our lake.

A very exciting announcement, we will be bringing in a new water conservation program modelled on the enormously successful Power Smart

program for energy efficiency run by Manitoba Hydro.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those words said on those two pivotal topics facing not just our province and our government, but facing our entire planet, climate change and the quality of water protection and drinking water, I wish to just simply close by stating again how proud I am to be the MLA for Wolseley, how pleased I am each and every time my citizens and constituents contact me with their concerns, often on environmental issues, these two primarily: water and climate change. I hope that all of us can, on the one hand, celebrate what we have accomplished while, at the same time, recognizing that we all must work collectively to achieve the enormous work ahead. Thank you very much.

\* (12:20)

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose):** I'm pleased to rise today to put my thoughts on the record on the amendment to the Speech from the Throne and my support of those amendments. Without those amendments being made, there is absolutely no way that I can support the Speech from the Throne that we received a couple of days ago.

I first want to talk a little bit, though, about my own constituency. I think I have a very unique constituency. In my constituency, I represent three First Nations. I have 10 Hutterite colonies. I have two Francophone communities. I have four or five Métis communities. I have the first settlement of Old Order Mennonites anywhere in Manitoba. Some of you refer to them as Amish, but they prefer to be called Old Order Mennonites. We have four towns, numerous villages, nine rural municipalities, four hospitals. Three conservation districts are in my constituency and three school divisions. As you can see, it's a very diverse setting in the Ste. Rose constituency.

Agriculture is the dominant industry in my constituency. I saw very little in the Throne Speech that even referred to agricultural issues. We see a minister that's putting all her eggs in one basket, and that basket is called CAIS, and ignoring all the other issues that are out there surrounding agriculture right now.

We have the livestock part of the agricultural industry in severe difficulties right now. We get lip-service paid that, well, CAIS money is going to flow, but we don't when, and we don't know how

much and we don't know what's going to happen with it.

The catch phrase over the last number of years has always been diversification, diversification, diversification. We've tried to move that way. The CAIS program does not recognize diversification. CAIS does not separate livestock operations from grain-growing operations. Until it does, there is no assistance for the farmers that have diversified.

In the Ste. Rose constituency, Mr. Speaker, we have hardworking, independent, proud people who take their responsibilities seriously, and we have a government that pays little attention. We know that in rural areas we'll be a lot further away from schools and hospitals and emergency rooms, but there are limits. We hear talk about closures. We've heard the talk about 15 emergency rooms closed. In my constituency, that's 100 miles long, 50 miles wide. We only have two fully operating emergency rooms now. We have people that are an hour away from an emergency room. We have kids getting on school buses an hour-and-a-half ride in the morning, an hour-and-a-half ride home at night. These are five- and six-year-olds. There have got to be limits. We still look at this government going out and forcing the closure of more schools, more emergency rooms. When we lack the emergency services, and I heard nothing about it in the Throne Speech, paramedic services become absolutely essential.

The Ebb and Flow First Nations, Bacon Ridge Métis community, roughly 2,500 people, they need ambulance service. There's ambulance service out of Ste. Rose, but they have roughly 200 calls a year there. Most of them are transported by private vehicle. The ambulance has to come all the way out from Ste. Rose to that area and then take the patient back in. They find it's far quicker just to put them in their private vehicles and take them in. I don't know of any of the other urban centres in Manitoba with a population that high that don't have ambulance services. I can't understand why a centre that size would not have that support.

As I said, we don't ask for much. All we want are the tools, the tools that we can do our jobs with and provide for our families. Those tools include some very simple things that this government does not provide for us.

I've raised the issue of roads in the northern part of my constituency on several occasions in this House. We have roads that are provincial jurisdiction that are below grade line, in horrible shape,

impassable at certain times of the year. These are roads that have to be accessed into areas for emergency services, for school buses. They become totally impassable, and they are provincial jurisdiction. The response I get, we did a lot of work in the north end of your constituency on No. 68 highway. Well, they did about 20 miles of upgrade on 68 highway and they think they have done their duty. That's all the answer we're getting. Why aren't we addressing these other roads? They're not huge upgrades. They're things that need to be done. The water runs over one of them for three months of the year in the spring.

Some of the other things that come out of my constituency are Crown land issues. Crown land covers a huge part of the northern part of my constituency, and problems continue to arise. There are some really silly rules in The Crown Lands Act that need reviewing, need amendment. I've asked for that to be done, and I've received no response on that.

Communications in my constituency. As soon as I go about 10 to 15 miles north of Neepawa, I run out of cell phone service. Why aren't they providing that? High-speed Internet—those services aren't there. Why are we treated as second-class citizens in those areas?

Tourism development in that area of the province is totally forgotten about. We have a lot of American hunters now starting to come into that area with money to spend, interest put into our hunting resources there. We have outdated Conservation Department rules on those non-resident hunters. For instance, I can hunt all day long in goose season; the American hunters can only hunt till noon. That goes against encouraging them to come. We have huge populations of geese that become somewhat of a nuisance in the last few years. Allow these hunters that really want to come here and hunt full access to those game birds.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned it a little earlier, but agriculture is struggling. We see a government totally failing to acknowledge the problems there. Instead, the NDP work at putting up roadblocks and finding inventive ways to pull more money out of farmers' pockets. Over the last several years, they've expanded sales tax, provincial sales tax to engineering, accounting, legal, architects' bills. Those are all things that agriculture and any other business and any other individual has to have access to, and they're raking in more and more sales tax.

They threw another tax at us with the \$2-a-head beef enhancement tax. It's definitely a tax. It's going into the coffers of the provincial government.

They charged us \$1.5 million over the last five years to administer the school tax rebate, when the school tax rebate could quite easily be just taken off the tax bill at no cost at all. Why do we need \$1.5 million taken out of our pockets to administer a program?

Moratorium on hogs—not necessary; never was. It's a program to pay lip service to the environmental interests. It has nothing to do with that industry causing problems to our waterways.

It passed on needed legislation. The Planning Act amendment—not necessary. Those issues were looked after in the local development plans. There was no need to do it.

They have a misguided belief that farmers must build processing plants. What we should be doing in this province is creating a climate that is friendly to private business—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Briese) will have 19 minutes remaining.

The hour being 12:30, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, November 23, 2007

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