

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

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

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Speaker*

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

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	N.D.P.
BLAIKIE, Bill, Hon.	Elmwood	N.D.P.
BOROTSIK, Rick	Brandon West	P.C.
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
BRIESE, Stuart	Ste. Rose	P.C.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
HOWARD, Jennifer, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Wellington	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McFADYEN, Hugh	Fort Whyte	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	N.D.P.
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Carman	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
ROWAT, Leanne	Minnedosa	P.C.
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELBY, Erin	Southdale	N.D.P.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WHITEHEAD, Frank	The Pas	N.D.P.
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	N.D.P.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 6, 2010

*The House met at 1:30 p.m.*

**Mr. Speaker:** O Eternal and Almighty God, from Whom all power and wisdom come, we are assembled here before Thee to frame such laws as may tend to the welfare and prosperity of our province. Grant, O merciful God, we pray Thee, that we may desire only that which is in accordance with Thy will, that we may seek it with wisdom, know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and for the welfare of all our people. Amen.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### Bill 15—The Franchises Act

**Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan), that Bill 15, The Franchises Act; Loi sur les franchises, now be read a first time.

**Mr. Speaker:** It's been moved by the honourable Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade, seconded by the honourable Attorney General, that Bill 15, The Franchises Act, be now read a first time.

**Mr. Bjornson:** I am pleased to introduce The Franchises Act. This bill will ensure that potential franchisees have access to adequate information before making an investment decision in a franchised business and will increase protection from unfair treatment for all parties. The proposed legislation will also give franchisees the right to associate with other franchisees without penalty, and the Manitoba Law Reform Commission recommended that Manitoba adopt franchise legislation.

This bill is consistent with legislation in other provinces and is based on a Uniform Law Conference of Canada model act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### PETITIONS

#### Long-Term Care Facilities—Morden and Winkler

**Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

Many seniors from the Morden and Winkler area are currently patients in Boundary Trails Health Centre while they wait for placement in local personal care homes.

There are presently no beds available for these patients in Salem Home and Tabor Home. To make more beds in the hospital available, the regional health authority is planning to move these patients to personal care homes in outlying regions.

These patients have lived, worked and raised their families in this area for most of their lives. They receive care and support from their family and friends who live in the community, and they will lose this support if they are forced to move to distant communities.

These seniors and their families should not have to bear the consequences of the provincial government's failure to ensure there are adequate personal care home beds in the region.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Health to ensure that patients who are awaiting placement in a personal care home are not moved to distant communities.

And to urge the Minister of Health to consider working with the RHA and the community to speed construction and expansion of long-term care facilities in the region.

This is signed by Mary Derksen, Sara Bartel, Anna Elias, many, many others.

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

#### PTH 15—Twinning

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

In 2004, the Province of Manitoba made a public commitment to the people of Springfield to twin

PTH 15 and the floodway bridge on PTH 15, but then in 2006, the twinning was cancelled.

Injuries resulting from collisions on PTH 15 continue to rise and have doubled from 2007 to 2008.

In August 2008, the Minister of Transportation stated that preliminary analysis of current and future traffic demands indicate that local twinning will be required.

The current plan to replace the floodway bridge on PTH 15 does not include twinning and therefore does not fulfil the current nor future traffic demands cited by the Minister of Transportation.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Transportation consider the immediate twinning of the PTH 15 floodway bridge for the safety of the citizens of Manitoba.

Signed by Ray Joyal, Dorote Rychlowski, Stephanie Freund and many, many other Manitobans. Thank you.

#### **Ophthalmology Services—Swan River**

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The Swan Valley region has a high population of seniors and a very high incidence of diabetes. Every year, hundreds of patients from the Swan Valley region must travel to distant communities for cataract surgery and additional pre-operative and post-operative appointments.

These patients, many of whom are sent as far away as Saskatchewan, need to travel with an escort who must take time off work to drive the patient to his or her appointments without any compensation. Patients who cannot endure this expense and hardship are unable to have the necessary treatment.

The community has located an ophthalmologist who would like to practise in Swan River. The local Lions Club has provided funds for the necessary equipment, and the Swan River Valley hospital has space to accommodate this service.

The Minister of Health has told the Town of Swan River that it has insufficient infrastructure and patient volumes to support a cataract surgery

program; however, residents of the region strongly disagree.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Health to consider rethinking her refusal to allow an ophthalmologist to practise in Swan River and to consider working with the community to provide this service without further delay.

And that is signed by Cliff Robertson, Robert Thom, Stan Husak and many, many others.

#### **Medical Clinic in Weston and Brooklands Area**

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

Community-based medical clinics provide a valuable health-care service.

The closure of the Westbrook Medical Clinic has left both Weston and Brooklands without a community-based medical clinic.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the provincial government to consider how important it is to have a medical clinic located in Weston and Brooklands.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by J. Williams, J. Andreas and M. Terlinski and many, many other fine Manitobans. Thank you.

#### **Bipole III**

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

And this is the background to the petition:

Manitoba Hydro is being forced by the NDP government to construct its next high-voltage direct transmission line, Bipole III, down the west side of Manitoba, a decision for which the NDP government has not been able to provide any logical justification.

Since this will cost Manitoba ratepayers at least 640 million more than an east-side route, and given that the Province of Manitoba is facing its largest deficit on record, the burden of this extra cost could not come at a worse time.

\* (13:40)

Between 2003 and 2009 electricity rates increased by 16 percent, and Manitoba Hydro has filed a request for a further rate increase totalling 6 percent over the next two years.

A western Bipole III route will invariably lead to more rate increases.

In addition to being cheaper, an east-side route would be hundreds of kilometres shorter and would be more reliable than a west-side route.

West-side residents have not been adequately consulted and have identified serious concerns with the proposed line.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to consider proceeding with the cheaper, shorter and more logical east-side route, subject to necessary regulatory approvals, to save ratepayers hundreds of millions of dollars during these challenging economic times.

This petition is signed by Stephanie Grunle, Thérèse Casavant and Shirley Bouchard and many, many other fine Manitobans.

#### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy):** I'm pleased to table the Adult Learning Centres in Manitoba 2008-09 Annual Report.

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

##### Flooding and Ice Jams

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures):** Manitoba is again experiencing spring flooding. This weekend, rainfall was significantly lower than anticipated, heading off a predicted increase in flooding.

In early March, flood trends were predicted to be between a 2006 and 2009 flood. Since that time, warmer, drier weather, including next to no precipitation, has meant that this year's flooding will be significantly less than earlier anticipated.

There has been additional work done to prepare for this and future floods. Before the first forecast this year, my colleague, the Minister of Water Stewardship (Ms. Melnick), announced new ice cutters that have been added to our ever-expanding arsenal of flood-prevention and flood-fighting tools. Since then, the Province has been able to secure

1,500 additional flood tubes to fight overland flooding.

I am pleased to report that the Red River crested at Morris yesterday with no closure of Highway 75. PR 200 and many other major transportation corridors also remained open for business.

The Red River level in downtown Winnipeg this morning was 17.96 feet, which is unchanged from yesterday. River levels in the city are predicted to be in the range of 17.5 to 18.2 feet until this time next week as operations of the Red River Floodway and the Portage Diversion continue.

I'd like to thank MIT, EMO, Water Stewardship persons as well as staff from the municipalities for their assistance and continued support.

As always, flood forecasts are subject to change and heavy precipitation could create a second crest. However, this possibility diminishes every day.

We are working with the City of Winnipeg and affected municipalities to ensure that they have the most up-to-date flood information and that we are prepared for any eventuality.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** I'd like to thank the minister for his comments regarding this spring's high waters. I know that there's been some anxious moments this spring as Manitobans are—have been negatively affected by previous flooding. But so far, we've been spared a major flood this year. But we did see situations in Netley Creek this year and near Petersfield area, just a few days ago, with ice jams that could cause water levels to rise very swiftly, testing our level of flood preparedness.

Thankfully, Manitobans are always willing to rise to the challenge posed by flooding and other natural disasters.

Over the past few weeks, we've seen government officials from all levels, Mr. Speaker, along with private citizens, take many steps to ensure that people are protected and that property damage is minimal. And this work is very much appreciated.

As the member for Morris, I would like, in particular, to acknowledge the considerable work undertaken by provincial officials over the last few days in order to keep Highway 75 open. This is a key artery into the province and for trade and tourism, and it's—very negatively affects those areas as well as

the economic and social well-being of the people in Morris and other communities along the Red River.

I also look forward, in the weeks to come, to learn more about the Province's long-term strategy to help minimize closures of Highway 75 and hope that the people in government will listen to the expertise of the municipal officials and local people when they put forward their ideas.

I also look forward to learning more of other steps that will be taken to improve mitigation strategies throughout different regions of Manitoba that have been affected by the flooding. Investments in infrastructure such as community and private dikes have certainly proven invaluable and—in the Red River area.

So Mr. Speaker, I just want to conclude by giving many thanks to all those who have worked in tackling this spring's high-water event. Thank you.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to speak to the minister's statement.

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

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I'd like to say a thank you to the Premier (Mr. Selinger) for organizing the flood tour which I participated along with the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) last Monday. It was a welcome opportunity to talk together and work on behalf of Manitobans to do the very best we could in terms of the flood situation. I think we can all be very thankful that it has not been worse than it has this year.

And I note that when we were in Morris that Mayor Dale Hoffman was very confident that the bridge was not going to overflow and it turns out that so far he's right, and I'm very pleased for that, as, I think, are other Manitobans, and we'll hope that it stays that way.

And I'd like, jointly, to thank Mayor Roger Vermette and his council who met with us and had a good discussion as well.

So I join other members here in being cognizant of the good luck we've had this year, and hope it lasts for a while. Thank you.

#### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay, prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us from the École Selkirk Junior High, we have 58 grade 9 students

under direction of Ms. Joan Cooney. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar).

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

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Football Stadium Funding Loan

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Eight days after bringing down a budget that projected over \$2 billion in deficits over the coming five years, Mr. Speaker, and an addition of more than \$2 billion to the debt of Manitoba in this year alone, eight days later this Premier signed a memorandum of understanding and made an announcement to expend a further \$105 million of taxpayers' money on a stadium.

And Mr. Speaker, the part of this that we were profoundly and remain very concerned about is the fact that he proposes to have that \$105-million expenditure repaid in part by taking money away from Manitoba schools.

I want to ask the Premier: Why would he take money away from Manitoba schools in order to fund a football stadium?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** When we brought down the budget, we had several key points that will move Manitoba forward, one of which was stimulating the economy with 29,000 additional jobs and \$1.8 billion in capital investment.

Last week, I was able to announce that we have, in co-operation with the City of Winnipeg, in co-operation with the Winnipeg Football Club, in co-operation with the University of Manitoba, in co-operation with David Asper in the private sector, come up with a solution to move forward—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Selinger:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've come up with a solution to move forward on rebuilding a stadium that will require up to \$52 million of repairs and may only last another 10 years.

\* (13:50)

So it only makes sense at a certain point that we find a solution to go forward. This \$90-million loan will be made available to the stakeholders. They will manage this loan on behalf of the Province, the City

and the football club and the university. Those stakeholders will then contract with Creswin to build the new facility—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, I think it's quite clear from the MOU that this isn't a loan, it's an option that's been provided to buy out the Province's position and the fallback is that money is going to be taken—

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

**Mr. McFadyen:** It says option in the MOUs—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Let's have a little decorum here. We've got a lot of students here that come here to listen to question periods. They have the right to hear the questions and the answers. Let's have some co-operation here.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I just want to ask the Premier why it is that he would use Manitoba schools as a backstop for a non-existent loan on a stadium project of this nature.

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, this will be a public asset. It will be at least 50 percent owned by the University of Manitoba. It will be an educational asset. The current stadium—the current site pays zero taxes, so there is no loss when you've got zero. You can't lose any more than when you've got zero.

The new project that will be developed where the stadium is currently located at Polo Park will generate tax revenue. That tax revenue will be available to the municipality. It'll be available to the school division. That is revenue that currently does not exist under the present circumstances. So schools will be better off, the City will be better off, the university will be better off, with this publicly owned asset.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, I can understand why other levels of government might like this agreement; they don't have to front any money. I can understand why Creswin and Mr. Asper like the deal; it makes a ton of sense from their perspective. The only losers are the taxpayers of Manitoba, the schools of Manitoba and those other public services that are going to have to be cut or that are going to have their revenue taken away in order to fund this project that this Premier has put in place in order to

support somebody who made a substantial contribution to his leadership campaign.

I want to ask the Premier if he can confirm that the real driver behind this deal is the fact that he's repaying somebody who made a major contribution to his campaign.

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, I'm proud that this political party banned corporate and union donations for the first time in the history of this province, and let the record show the members opposite were against that bill. They want to legalize corporate and union donations. We have banned those donations.

Mr. Speaker, this proposal will build a new stadium that will be at least 50 percent owned by the University of Manitoba. It'll be used by the Bisons. It'll be used by the lacrosse. It'll be used by soccer. It'll be used by the community groups as a fitness facility and for amateur sport. It will do all of those things. It will generate 2,400 person-years of employment in the next two years. All of those things will be done, and it'll open up Polo Park—the site at Polo Park, which currently yields zero taxes, for redevelopment, and that site will generate new taxes for schools and for the municipalities, more taxes for schools and municipalities, a better asset to the University of Manitoba and more facilities for all Manitobans to enjoy.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition on a new question.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the MOU that's got his own signature on it on page 3 actually doesn't resemble, even remotely, what he's saying in the House today and what he's saying to Manitobans. In fact, the MOU that he signed last week, which doesn't even have a signature on it from Creswin Properties or Mr. Asper—not even—they're not even signatories to the MOU that he signed—says that they're going to take money away from schools and municipalities down the road as a way of funding the stadium project today.

I want to ask the Premier: On top of the \$2.3 billion that he's saddling the next generation of Manitobans with, how can he live with himself by asking the next generation of Manitobans to pay for a political pet project that's driven more by short-term politics than it is about the future of Manitoba?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, the five-year plan we have will net out at \$1.4 billion of increased spending inside of Manitoba to protect front-line services, to stimulate the economy with 29,000 jobs.

And in that \$1.8 billion of stimulus money will be \$90 million as a loan made available to the stakeholder's group, the stakeholder's group being the university, the City and the football club, who will then contract with Creswin realty to build a new stadium, which will generate 2,400 person-years of employment. It will have community access benefits. It will provide a proud rallying point in Manitoba for everybody to enjoy that facility. It moves Manitoba forward.

What is the member's solution? He has nothing. He doesn't even understand that it will be a publicly owned asset, a publicly owned asset for the benefit of all Manitobans. We're moving Manitoba forward. They're doing nothing but stalling like they always do.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, and I just want to ask the Premier that if he's so proud of the deal that he cooked up last week and which was sprung on the public, why didn't he mention it in the budget that was introduced eight days earlier?

Why did he present a dishonest budget to this Legislature and to the people of Manitoba, and will he now, Mr. Speaker, have the decency to add \$105 million of expenditure over the next two years so that he shows a true deficit number to the people of Manitoba, rather than these fictional numbers that he puts out through smoke and mirrors and deception?

**Mr. Selinger:** The loan authority is contained within the budget. There are many projects that have not yet been officially announced. They will be announced as we will go forward. You have—I was out just a week—two weeks ago, I was out in Brandon announcing a new wellness centre, which is provided for in the budget. This has a \$22.5-million fitness centre, which is part of our commitment on the stimulus program. This was announced as soon as all the people came together: the University of Manitoba, the football club, the City of Winnipeg, the Province of Manitoba, and the private sector as represented by Creswin realty. The whole community came together to solve a problem, to move forward on a stadium, one that was going to require up to \$52 million in repairs and only last 10 years. It builds the assets of Manitoba.

Just like we did the MTS Centre, which the members opposed. Just like we did with the new baseball park, which members did not support. Just like everything we've done in the last 10 years, the members have voted against it as we've moved this

economy forward. We will move Manitoba forward. You will be the monkey-wrench party that makes things go backward.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Well, Mr. Speaker, he is right. He is a right. We are dead set against the way he ran Crocus into the ground. We are dead set against the way he tried to run Manitoba Hydro into the ground when he was minister, and we're dead set against the fact that he's going to add more than \$2 billion in debt for short-term political projects.

And I just want to ask the Premier, whose predecessor, Mr. Doer, said that under no circumstances would he use TIF financing on a stadium deal. He would never ever take money from schools to fund a stadium. Why won't he listen to Mr. Doer? Why won't he listen to taxpayers? Why won't he listen to teachers? Why won't he listen to media commentators and say no—say no to taking money away from schools to spend on sports stadiums?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, it's the third time he's asked that question. The existing property yields zero taxes. The new development at Polo Park, the new 650,000 square foot retail complex that will be built there, will generate substantial—millions of dollars of taxes. Those taxes will be available for the municipality. They'll be available for the school division. It will be a new source of revenue not currently available.

This legislation is an insurance policy in case—in case, Mr. Speaker—and the TIF legislation will be used—and this is something the mayor and I agreed on—it'll be used as an insurance policy to ensure that there is no current revenue or current programs that are affected by the new stadium, that the new stadium will generate up to \$20 million of extra provincial sales taxes, which will fund schools, which will fund hospitals, which will fund essential services inside Manitoba.

\* (14:00)

#### **Winnipeg Hospitals Infectious Disease Control Standards**

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Mr. Speaker, some disturbing news came to light over the weekend, and according to the WRHA accreditation report, Winnipeg hospitals are failing to meet high priority infection control standards, which means that they aren't doing enough to prevent the spread of highly contagious superbugs.

So, I'd like to ask the Minister of Health: Considering that these superbugs can actually kill people, can she tell us why these standards, these very important priority standards, are not being met?

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, like all regional health authorities in Manitoba, is accredited and takes the accreditation process very seriously.

I am pleased to inform the House that the infection prevention and control team indicates that, indeed, they are meeting all of the standards on hospital infection identified in the 2009 accreditation report. This was not reflected in Accreditation Canada's most recent final report, and this was due to the timing of the report in relation to Manitoba's experience with H1N1.

Subsequently, the same people that were working so diligently on H1N1 and the important infection control measures during that time, they have completed the paperwork that confirms that all of these standards are indeed being met, Mr. Speaker.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, according to that report, Winnipeg hospitals fell short in 13 of 17 standards. They had lots of time to pull this together, and it's extra troubling because the majority of hospitals across Canada were meeting these standards at exactly the same time that Winnipeg hospitals were not meeting the standards.

So I'd like to ask this Minister of Health: Why has she failed to make this a priority? They seem to have money for football stadiums, but these superbugs can kill patients. Where's her priority with this issue, Mr. Speaker?

**Ms. Oswald:** We do take infection control very seriously as does the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority.

The member is incorrect in her information concerning timing. These particular accreditations take place across the nation at different times. The time that Manitoba was having this portion of their accreditation reviewed was during the thick of pandemic H1N1.

I can assure the member, as has the infection control team from Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, all of these standards are indeed being met.

The member might also note, although it would be a surprise, that Winnipeg actually ranks consistently lower in—on the national average for superbugs than other jurisdictions.

We know, for example, that the number of C. difficile cases in '09 was 844. It was down more than 25 percent than the previous report. In fact, we're lower than the rest of the nation.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I hope that indeed the minister might be right because it would be better for patients.

In 2007, in fact, we were below the Canadian average, and now we get this report in 2010 by an objective outside accreditation body, and they're saying that Winnipeg has not been meeting priority standards around the issue of superbugs. You can't put aside the superbug issue while there's an H1N1. You should be able to look after both because patients' lives depend on it.

So what's happened with this Minister of Health? She's had all this information for a long time. You can't argue that you put something aside because of H1N1. Did she hit the snooze button, Mr. Speaker?

**Ms. Oswald:** No, in fact, Mr. Speaker, the infection control teams across Manitoba, including the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, were focussed on front-line care during pandemic H1N1. That's why our outcomes in the nation were better than every other jurisdiction when it comes to serious illness. That's a very significant fact.

Furthermore, I can let the member know that the story she's referring to, from her research in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, was that there weren't 13 of 17 not met; the analysis was actually 11 out of 94. And today, Mr. Speaker, all 94 standards are being met by the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority.

Further, that paperwork has now been completed. All of that work had been done. It hadn't been fully documented according to Accreditation Canada's standards. It has been done since then. We know that we are—with C. difficile, we know, in fact, according to our increased reporting of superbugs, comparatively speaking, that our rates are down, Mr. Speaker. Why isn't she speaking of the 2010 accreditation—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

### **Agriculture Industry Program Funding Reductions**

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** Mr. Speaker, Budget 2010 chops agriculture funding by 4.2 percent. Even though agriculture is one of our key economic drivers, this government has no problems making producers pay for their financial mismanagement. Producers are being saddled with new fees, and one is less funding for vital programs like AgriInvest. Yet the Province is wasting hundreds of millions of dollars in misdirected placement of Bipole III transmission line, on enhanced driver's licences, and so on.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain why farm families are being penalized for this government's inability to properly manage Manitoba's finances?

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Finance):** I want to assure this—the member that this government does indeed take very seriously the importance of the agriculture community, Mr. Speaker, and our focus has been to work on further value-added, and that's why I'm so pleased that my colleague the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Struthers) was able today to announce investments in hemp processing in the Parklands. And I hope that members opposite will realize how important it is to move further along the value chain, and, instead of exporting all our materials, look at ways that we can add value to them right here in this province. And we will continue to do that.

**Mr. Eichler:** Mr. Speaker, Manitoba farmers should not be punished that this government can't balance its books.

The supply-managed sector was surprised by a new fee quota on transfers in the budget. All producers will pay more for pesticide, fertilizer licences and Crown land lease rental fees.

Keystone Agricultural Producers President Ian Wishart said of this budget, I quote: Fees on agriculture are not usually positive in terms of the overall economy. These types of fees will also put additional costs on being farmers or those expanding family farm operations.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister again: Why are producers being held for responsible—misgovernment, mismanagement? Why do they want fewer farmers? That won't help this economy.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The member opposite talks about balancing and spending money. He should talk to his leader, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, he—I'll tell you what his leader said. He said, we'll have a policy of balancing the budget as quickly as possible while protecting front-line services. You know, you'd think that was a New Democrat talking. We said we would balance the budget and we would continue to protect front-line services. The members opposite speak against that, but when he talks to the media, he says he will protect front-line services.

And this government will work with the farming industry, will work with producers, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue to protect front-line services that are important to all Manitobans.

**Mr. Eichler:** Mr. Speaker, this is a minister that can't balance her own budget. She's got to change the balanced budget legislation in order to meet her own mess up.

Mr. Speaker, this budget cuts funding from AgriInvest, an important business risk management program. In the April 1st *Manitoba Co-operator*, KAP President Ian Wishart questioned the decision, stating, and I quote: That certainly is a cause for concern because we want a level playing field with other provinces, end of quote.

Our producers will be adversely affected because this government is too busy wasting funds on a misdirected hydro transmission line, forcing the City of Winnipeg to undertake a costly nitrogen-removal cost, and launching an underutilized enhanced driving licence program.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister finally admit that farm families in rural Manitoba are being forced to take the fall for this government's inability to balance their own budget?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the next thing that his leader said was that our policy will be that government should live within its means and that we should cut waste.

Mr. Speaker, you know what that means? We know what that means. That means that they would just do the same thing that the Conservatives did in the '90s. They would fire nurses. They would cut training for doctors. They would—all kinds of programs. They would raise taxes. That's what that message says.

\* (14:10)

But, Mr. Speaker, Manitobans understand that we are prepared to protect front-line services and make investments so that they—we don't have services cut. We will not do what Conservatives do, and that is cut front-line services, raise taxes on farmers, all of those things that they would have done, that they did do in the '90s.

#### **Manitoba Crop Insurance Compensation for Corn Producers**

**Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina):** Mr. Speaker, when you buy fire insurance, you hope you will never need it. The same when you buy crop insurance, you hope you will never use it.

To the Minister of Agriculture: Last fall, because of weather conditions and no fault of the producers, corn developed a mould. This corn was condemned by Manitoba Crop Insurance. The Crop Insurance officials instructed their field agents to tell producers that, if producers harvested the corn, the producers would be fairly compensated, the same as those who harvested for high-moisture corn or coblage.

When will the minister make this final decision?

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** It's good to be here, Mr. Speaker. I—and I very much appreciate the question from my friend across the way.

We have met with the corn growers. We've met with MASC. We're working our way towards a solution to this problem. We know we don't want to have crops left out on the field. The member and I agree to that. And, Mr. Speaker, I think we need to keep working to make sure that this problem gets solved and that farmers are treated fairly.

**Mr. Dyck:** Mr. Speaker, will Manitoba Crop Insurance honour the commitment made to producers who dried and harvested their corn? Will the minister assure the producers that they will be treated fairly, the same as those who harvested high-moisture or coblage?

**Mr. Struthers:** I think we need to make very clear, too, the good work that MASC does do, the good work that they do with farmers right across this province. MASC has met with corn growers on this particular issue. My goal is to make sure that we work our way through this problem and that we leave ourselves in a position so that farmers can make good decisions to utilize that corn and not have it sit out there on the crops. So I want farmers to be

treated fairly and we're going to work with MASC to make sure that happens.

**Mr. Dyck:** There is an urgency to this in that about 10 percent of the crop is still out there. So I would urge the minister to make that decision and to make it very quickly, because certainly it has—it is dependent on what the producers do out there today. So I want to thank him for looking at it but it—the decisions needs to be made and made very soon.

**Mr. Struthers:** Yes, and I agree with that. I think timing is of the essence on this and I appreciate the advice that the member for Pembina has given us and MASC on this issue.

We do need to solve this issue quickly. Farmers need to know where they stand on a go-forward basis and the member is right, there is still 10 percent of that crop out there that there's some decisions need to be made on. So I get that point and I thank him for his advice.

#### **Beverage Containers Levy Charges**

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** Mr. Speaker, March 31st was the last day that the province's 2-cent levy on bottle-beverage-container sales in Manitoba was to be collected. These funds had been used to help fund recycling programs. However, a visit to six different retailers in the past two days found that four are charging a 2-cent recycling fee on bottle beverages, or on bottle beverages like water and soda, while two were not.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to table the copies of these receipts to the minister and I want to ask him, will the Minister of Conservation explain why a 2-cent levy is being collected by some retailers but not all? Where is the money going?

**Hon. Bill Blaikie (Minister of Conservation):** Well, Mr. Speaker, as the honourable member will know, April the 1st was the beginning of the new regime for recycling in the province where the MMSM began its extended producer responsibility regime for dealing with recycling.

Now, the discrepancy in terms of the levies—I'm not sure where the honourable member is alleging that the levy that was supposed to end on April the 1st is still being charged in some places and not in others, or whether he's referring to the beverage levy, which has been introduced by the industry itself after April 1st, and is being applied in this way that he speaks of.

So, I'd be interested in finding out more about it, this variation. And what happens in one store and another is not something I'm aware of, and I'm certainly as interested in finding out what's going on as he is.

**Mr. Maguire:** We can all agree, Mr. Speaker, that we need to tackle the issue of excess packaging and find ways to get people to recycle more, but the province has launched a new system without all the details being sorted out. When asked to explain the 2-cent levy, retail cashiers were at a loss as to how it worked.

Mr. Speaker, how is the consumer to know if they should be paying this levy, particularly after the minister announced that it would end on March the 31st? Why did the minister not tell Manitobans that some would continue to pay while others would not? Why did he create such confusion?

**Mr. Blaikie:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that the government levy ended on March 31st and industry has taken it over. This—we're now into extended producer responsibility, something which I understand members opposite supported, it's a concept that they support, having businesses and industry look after, you know, their product that they produce, from one end of the cycle to the other.

Now, if the—if there is a levy being paid at some places and not others, I'd be interested—as the honourable member would, too—to know, is that the new levy, if it has to do with beverage containers, that the industry itself is levying, or is it an inappropriate carry-over of the levy that was supposed to end on March the 31st? I'll get back to the member on that.

**Mr. Maguire:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I've already given the minister the answer. It's on his desk. It is still being collected.

So the Province has ended the recycling program administered by the Manitoba Product Stewardship Corporation. The new Multi-Material Stewardship Manitoba Web site states, and I quote, Mr. Speaker: "The launch of the new program is anticipated for April 1, 2010." But as the receipts from the different retailers clearly show, confusion is the order of the day. Manitobans want to protect the environment, but they also want evidence of the new program's design before they pay a recycling levy that, as they understand, the minister announced would end on March the 31st.

Mr. Speaker, is this type of confusion what the minister planned when he launched the new material management system? When can Manitobans expect this to be sorted out?

**Mr. Blaikie:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I can assure the honourable member that we didn't plan confusion. What we planned was to have an entirely new regime of extended producer responsibility begin on April the 1st. That's what's happened. The member has brought some details to my attention. I'll look into them. But in the meantime, I hope that the honourable member and all members would join with me in hoping that this new regime, which we've—which has begun on April the 1st, will actually increase the amount of recycling that's going on in this province. That's the goal. That's what industry and business wanted and what the honourable members agreed to, and the proof will be in the pudding. And we hope that this system will work better than the system we had.

#### **Post-Secondary Education Faculty Tuition Increases**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, as reported today, the University of Manitoba is proposing to increase tuition for Masters in Business Administration students by \$15,000. We are led to believe that up to seven more schools or faculties within the university are also planning major increases, with the Faculty of Medicine apparently wanting a 114 percent increase, Faculty of Dentistry, a 40 percent increase, the faculty of agriculture, a 20 percent increase.

I ask the Premier: Is he going to allow these increases? And will the Premier increase student aid so that people—students attending these faculties—we're not in a situation where it's just for the rich?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** There have been no submissions or proposals put forward to the Council on Post-Secondary Education yet to have these kinds of increases. If and when they are received, they will be reviewed according to five criteria, and those criteria include whether the fees will have an adverse effect on the programs' accessibility, whether the increased fees will have an adverse effect on Manitoba's labour market, and it will—whether or not it will increase the number of students choosing to enrol in the faculty. It'll also be looked at in terms of whether the grad rates are maintained in the program, and average earned income shortly after graduation is sufficient to support repayment of the loans. And

finally, it will be looked at in terms of whether there's student support.

So there are criteria in place if and when a submission comes forward to the Council on Post-Secondary Education and we would, of course, be concerned that there's not dramatic sticker shock for students in terms of the fees they pay in the future.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, if the Premier is going to allow such huge increases in tuition, at the very least, the Premier should be putting forward much more in terms of student aid, but, in fact, the student aid budget decreased this year, except for a program, a rebate program which the Premier told us a couple of weeks ago would provide \$150 a student. Well, if you're providing \$150 a student, that's virtually nothing for somebody who's got a \$15,000 tuition increase.

\*(14:20)

Come clean, Mr. Premier. That's not good enough. What are you going to do to increase student aid so that this is not just a campus for the rich, this is a campus for all Manitobans.

**Mr. Selinger:** First of all, the member shouldn't assume that there's going to be these dramatic increases in fees when there hasn't even been a submission made to the Council on Post-Secondary Education. I put on the record the criteria that will be used to examine any submission, if and when it's received.

The member also knows in the budget that the reduction in the budget was the Millennium Scholarship Fund which, unfortunately, when he was with the federal government they did not make it permanent; they only made it a temporary fund. That funded—that scholarship fund ended.

Yes, we have increased the graduate tuition tax rebate. We've made it available for the first time ever to students during the course of their studies while they're going to school. It's worth \$7.5 million, and we have a general guideline of a 5 percent increase to tuition fees which are still among the lowest in the country—in the top three—for affordability in the country.

#### **Access Centre Northwest Winnipeg**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

For well over 30 years the Nor'West Community Health Centre has provided valuable services to thousands of residents in Winnipeg's North End, and, in fact, beyond.

Mr. Speaker, there's been an expectation for the last number of years that there would be an access centre which would be able to expand medical services to the residents of Winnipeg's North End, and there's a sense of frustration that the government is once again overlooking the needs of Winnipeg's North End.

My question to the Minister of Health: What can she tell us today, given the budget documents that have been released, that could provide some encouragement to the residents of the Winnipeg north in regards to this access centre that they have been promised for a number of years already?

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for the question. We know that he has a keen interest in medical services, as do many members on this side of the House, for northwest Winnipeg.

We have worked very carefully to provide more access centres, which means more access to primary care in all areas of our city and, indeed, we are committed to continue to build and build one in northwest Winnipeg.

We also know in the interim that there is work going on with the Nor'West Co-op and health professionals in the area where the Westbrook clinic was formerly located.

So I can let the member know that plans for the Nor'West access centre are going forward. We are working on an interim plan with the Nor'West Co-op and with some interested professional—professionals, doctors, et cetera, to locate there. We want to bring as much primary care to the people of northwest Winnipeg as possible, and we're working together to do that.

#### **Provincial Parks Campsite Reservation System**

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** The remarkable questions from the members opposite notwithstanding, the highlight of my day so far has actually been my daily walk to the Legislature enjoying the wonderful spring weather that has now arrived in our fair province and was reflecting this morning that perhaps a number of Manitobans might be interested in maybe visiting one of our provincial

parks for free for the second year in a row, and perhaps they might need to make a reservation somewhere to do that.

I would ask my colleague, the honourable Minister for Conservation, if he could provide the House with an update on how the park reservation system is faring so far.

**Hon. Bill Blaikie (Minister of Conservation):** Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that the honourable member from Wolseley was so inspired on his way to the Legislature this morning and inspired to ask me that question, because what we can celebrate today is that, given the 50th anniversary of provincial parks, the Manitoba Parks Reservation Service set a record for first-day bookings of individual campsites on Monday by handling 13,641 bookings for the 2010 camping season, which is an increase of about 20 percent over last year's opening day.

Now, if we can just get a 20 percent increase in the weather over last summer, everything will be absolutely perfect.

#### **Drain Maintenance Resources**

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose):** Mr. Speaker, two major third-order drains in the McCreary area are basically non-functional because of lack of maintenance. Third-order drains are the responsibility of the Province.

The Turtle drain has sedimentation plant growth to such a severe degree that it keeps water tables artificially high in surrounding farmland.

Will the minister commit today to providing maintenance resources for third-order drains?

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation):** We, on this side, do understand the importance of drainage. In fact, since we came to office, we've significantly increased both the capital and the maintenance for drainage.

I, also, Mr. Speaker, made it a point as minister to meet with municipalities throughout the province; the member knows that from his previous life. And certainly, as we look forward to again this year, we're doing a significant amount of maintenance work.

I certainly welcome the input from the member on this particular drainage issue as I do from all

members of the House. This government, once again, is committed to rural Manitoba and is committed to drainage in rural Manitoba.

**Mr. Briese:** Mr. Speaker, I'd certainly be pleased to take the minister on a tour of that area and show him that none of that—the infrastructure money he's talking about—is being spent there.

I recently saw 20-year-old pictures of a bridge on the Wilson Drain, a third-order drain south of McCreary. In the pictures, men were standing under the bridge with about a foot of head clearance. Today, you couldn't crawl under that bridge on your hands and knees.

Why does the minister allow the deplorable condition of drain maintenance to continue? Why take the risk of paying flood mitigation every year instead of doing one-time maintenance that will last for many years?

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm glad the member mentioned flood mitigation. Dare I say, again, this government has shown its commitment to rural Manitoba by record investments in flood mitigation, and I can indicate we were even better prepared this year, in terms of our flood mitigation, both in terms of the flood tubes, the ice cutters.

And I look forward very shortly, Mr. Speaker, to a further announcement with our partners, the federal government, in terms of that. The member may want to be inspecting underneath bridges and drains across his constituency. We take a forward-thinking view; we're committed to rural Manitoba; we're committed to drainage and of flood mitigation of rural Manitoba.

#### **Westman Regional Laboratory Pathologist Vacancies**

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West):** Mr. Speaker, western regional labs and CancerCare Manitoba facilities in Brandon cannot possibly operate properly if biopsies cannot be tested within a reasonable time line.

I have a constituent, Mr. Speaker, who was waiting weeks for a biopsy result. Without the lab test results, proper cancer care could not be prescribed.

Can the Minister of Health please tell me how many pathologists are currently working out of the

Westman Regional Lab and how many this is short of a full complement?

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** I thank the member for the question.

At the moment, there are 3.75 vacancies at the Westman lab; this is out of six positions. So recruiting is very focussed and aggressive concerning Westman labs.

I can inform the member, however, that Diagnostic Services Manitoba was created in order to enable the sharing of samples and the testing of samples to be expedited.

We know that as a result of this that the sharing of the pathology work is going on. We know that doctors in the Westman lab are indeed prioritizing cases as they always do, and, in some cases, Mr. Speaker, a few cases, tests are being sent out of the province in order to expedite the results.

We know that even waiting one day when there is a fear of the diagnosis of cancer, that's too long, Mr. Speaker. That's why the aggressive recruitment of pathologists is going on at Westman lab.

**Mr. Speaker:** Time for oral questions has expired.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### Marie Rose Nerynck

**Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Carman):** On March 30th, 2010, I had the opportunity to attend a celebration in Swan Lake for Mrs. Marie Rose Nerynck on the occasion of her 105th birthday.

Mrs. Nerynck was one of 10 children born in Bruxelles, Manitoba, March 30th, 1905, to Sidonie and Aelie Ledoyen. Mrs. Nerynck married her husband, Leon, on May 3rd, 1929. They farmed near Bruxelles, Manitoba until 1937 when they moved to Swan Lake. Her husband, Leon, worked at various trade positions, including an elevator agent, a Massey Harris dealer and the department of highways and transportation. Marie and Leon raised their family of four girls and one boy, who all live in Manitoba today. Marie and Leon were married for 69 years. Her husband passed away at the age of 94 years in 1996.

(14:30)

Over the years, Mrs. Nerynck contributed many hours of volunteer service in her community.

Mrs. Nerynck's neighbours, the Swan Lake hospital and St. John's Ambulance, amongst others, have all benefited from Mrs. Nerynck's generosity and dedication. Marie Rose Nerynck lived in her own house in Swan Lake until October of this past year. She is currently in the Swan Lake hospital, waiting placement for the personal care home in Notre Dame, Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I had a wonderful visit with Mrs. Nerynck on her birthday. I was teasing her about blowing out so many candles and eating too much cake. However, she assured me she would not eat too much cake. Some of her family celebrated the previous Sunday while the rest of her family were coming on her birthday on March 30th. I want to wish Marie Rose Nerynck a happy 105th birthday.

##### Roger Joseph Carriere Sr.

**Mr. Frank Whitehead (The Pas):** Mr. Speaker, I stand today to share some stories about my late uncle Roger Carriere Sr., a great man who recently passed away. Roger was known as a northern icon, but I would like to speak about the man behind the legend.

Roger was an accomplished woodsman, trapper, but he considered his family to be his greatest achievement and highest priority. His youngest son, Roger Jr., was an accomplished hockey player and a golf aficionado, and Roger Sr. was his biggest fan. He regularly attended his son's games and I remember with pleasure a round of golf I played with his son that Roger caddied for. It is quite an incredible thing to witness a man of his stature in his role as a dad. I always knew him to be a loving and supportive father who acted in his children's best interest.

Roger and his wife, my aunt Olive, visited my family regularly when I was growing up. I recall the conversation always revolved around the importance of community and the strength of family. His commitment to his own family's well-being was evident. He worked tirelessly so his children would have the opportunity to advance their education and have better lives. He and my aunt truly acted as the anchors of the family.

He was well known for his outstanding athletic abilities and commanded respect because he conducted himself not only as an esteemed athlete, but also was a gentleman. He was a true team player and treated his competitors as friends. By nature very humble, he never trumpeted his many athletic

successes. On one occasion, when I was 19 years old, he encouraged me to train and enter a 10-mile snowshoe race that—insisting that it would make me physically and mentally resilient. He was right, Mr. Speaker.

Roger was also famous for his unrivalled bird calling. At a time when these skills were dying out, he shared his gift with his sons, nephews and grandchildren, ensuring that his legacy will surely live on in the younger generation.

Mr. Speaker, I will certainly miss my uncle and his profound positive impact on the Opaskwayak community. The admiration and respect that I and others had will not be forgotten.

#### **Bette Mueller**

**Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina):** I am pleased to rise in the House today to recognize Bette Mueller, one of this year's recipients of the YWCA Women of Distinction Award, recognized for their talents, achievements, imagination and innovation in both their professional and volunteering lives. The YWCA Women of Distinction Awards are presented each year to those women who make an outstanding contribution to their communities. Along with 25 other women of distinction, Bette Mueller accepted her award on March the 4th, 2010, at a gala celebration in Brandon.

Bette Mueller's friend and colleague, Lynda Matchullis, thought it was time Miss Mueller's many contributions were formally recognized and nominated her for the award. Linda enthusiastically detailed all of the contributions that Bette made to the community, outlining each under the three categories set out in the awards criteria. In the area of unique and outstanding individual achievements, Bette Mueller was recognized for her work as an educator, including her role in developing *Success for All Learners: A Handbook for Differentiating Instruction*, an educational tool used across the world.

Under the second criteria, contributing to the well-being of the community, Bette Mueller had undertaken a key role in developing the Pembina-Manitou action committee. This committee has been integral in the success of many projects in the community, including the 55-plus complex, Manitou community pool and the Communities in Bloom initiative. Bette Mueller has also been involved in many tourism and historical initiatives,

including the Log House Tourism Centre, the Nellie McClung statue committee and the heritage committee.

Her contributions as a role model for other women, Bette Mueller's work as an educator, becoming the first female principal of Nellie McClung Collegiate, has inspired many women to excel.

Betty Mueller is an ideal YWCA Woman of Distinction recipient. Her contributions to the community and her achievements professionally are an inspiration to everyone in Manitou. Thank you.

#### **Ham Sandwich Drama Group**

**Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon):** Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday night my wife and I were privileged to attend the play, *Speaking in Tongues*, performed by the Ham Sandwich theatre group in the R.H. Channing auditorium in Flin Flon. The playwright is Canadian Australian Andrew Bovell.

The Ham Sandwich group is widely known for their light comedy and penchant for quirky dialogue. However, they have also not shied away from serious drama. In the fall of 2000, for example, they did a very convincing performance of *Rain*, a drama based on Somerset Maugham's short story by the same name.

Again they have succeeded admirably in this drama, a drama whose theme explores the complexity of communication. *Speaking in Tongues* follows the exploit of two couples who exchange partners and are about to commit adultery.

The stage was structured uniquely, paralleling the split-screen technique which allowed the interactions of both couples to be seen simultaneously. The depth of the performance was enhanced as dialogue involving one couple carried over to the second couple emphasizing the subtle differences in the meaning of words.

Mr. Speaker, the performance was outstanding and I wish to commend the talented artists who put in so much effort to ensure the play was a success: Buz Trevor, Lance Englebrecht, Beth Heine, Miranda Hyndman, Kevin Imrie, Ray Knight, Samantha Moore, John Taylor and Sarah Trevor. Also thanks to Jude McCombie, Doug Peterson, Corey Dewhirst and Derek Novosel. Last but not least, a big thank you to Tom Heine, the director, who is developing a reputation as a serious force in the performing arts in the Flin Flon region. I'm

certainly looking forward to Ham Sandwich's next performance. Thank you.

**Bill Stilwell**

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose):** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today and share with this House the accomplishments of my constituent, Mr. Bill Stilwell, who's served the Manitoba libraries for many years.

Mr. Stilwell's passion for libraries was recognized when he was presented the Library Trustee of Distinction Award at the Manitoba Library Trustees Association. The Trustee of Distinction Award is the highest recognition given to library service of Manitoba, and this is only the sixth time that it's ever been given out.

Mr. Stilwell has been an active advocate of libraries at his local community, provincially and nationally. By serving with organizations such as the Neepawa Library Board, the Manitoba Public Library Board and the Canadian Library Trustee Association, Mr. Stilwell has been a strong advocate of the needs of libraries in Manitoba and across the country.

Libraries are needed to build strong communities and to encourage young people to develop a lifelong desire to read. Mr. Stilwell has recognized this importance and continuously advocates for increased funding and accessibility to ensure that every Manitoban can benefit from the rich resources that libraries have to offer.

Mr. Stilwell has always also helped to rejuvenate the Manitoba Library Trustee Association. When he took over the association, they faced minimal support and membership. Under Bill's enthusiasm and strong leadership, it has transformed into a thriving organization that is constantly seeking to improve library services in Manitoba.

Mr. Stilwell is also an active community member serving as town councillor and Neepawa's deputy mayor and as a director of the Southwest Regional Development Corporation. Over the years he's been on many other committees in an effort to actively support and improve his community.

Manitoba is lucky to have individuals like Bill, who selflessly volunteer their time to serve others. I would like to congratulate Mr. Stilwell in receiving this prestigious award, thank him and many others who work tirelessly to preserve and improve the libraries of Manitoba. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**ORDERS OF THE DAY  
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

**BUDGET DEBATE  
(Second Day of Debate)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Resume adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government 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 Concordia.

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Mr. Speaker, you know, I think I might have heard an audible gasp from the opposition side of the House here just now when the member from Concordia was recognized. But I can assure the members opposite, it is not a ghost of a former member come back to haunt them. I can't, however, promise that the new member from Concordia won't seek to make them take notice in the future.

\* (14:40)

I want to thank my honourable colleagues for this opportunity to speak first to Budget 2010 and to the important priorities that it sets out for my community and for our province.

I want to first take this opportunity, however, as it is my initial speech in this House, to pass along some acknowledgement and some thank-yous to those who have been instrumental in getting me to this point. First and foremost, I want to thank the voters of Concordia. My predecessor once mentioned, even as he was in his third term as premier, what a humbling experience it can be at election time to go to the voters and ask for them to support you. I can tell you that after 33 days of visiting thousands of homes, and having hundreds of conversations with people on the doorsteps and in the coffee shops, I can certainly agree with this sentiment.

It was a hard-fought campaign and one that myself and my team never took lightly. Despite the undeniable—undeniably positive electoral history of the constituency, and the popularity of our current Premier and government, I knew we would have to work hard to allow people to get to know me, who I was and what my vision was for the community. I knew that if I could accomplish that, and if we could effectively get our message out, that we would be

successful. But I also knew that we couldn't rest on our laurels, and I think we ran a lively, a fair, and an exciting campaign, and I'm proud of the hard work put in by all.

On that note, I want to thank the amazing staff and volunteers that helped me communicate that message to the voters over those 33 days. I have volunteered in many election campaigns over the years, and I know just how much work goes into the successful campaign behind the scenes. I was so lucky to have people supporting me that I had so much faith in that I could confidently leave all of the day-to-day operation of the campaign in their hands. All of the important things like getting out literature to mailboxes, putting up signs on lawns, contacting voters on my behalf, these were all vital aspects of the successful campaign we ran, and they were all aspects that were managed by the staff of the campaign and carried out by volunteers. There's absolutely no question, Mr. Speaker, that I couldn't have run such a successful campaign without the support, and I'm incredibly grateful and humbled by all the time and energy that was dedicated to this effort on my behalf.

It was a great feeling then to know that I only had one main job during the campaign, and that was to knock on doors, and talk to as many residents as I could. And despite the sometimes frigid temperatures of a winter by-election, I actually enjoyed this part of the campaign most—I think because I felt that at every door I learned something new.

I came into this campaign believing that I knew my neighbourhood inside and out but with every conversation I had at the doorstep I felt that I came to know the constituency better and better. It was a unique opportunity too because I think there are very few circumstances, outside of an election campaign, that one would knock on all your neighbours doors and introduce yourself, and poll them for their concerns and their thoughts about the neighbourhood. It was a unique opportunity that's reinforced the pride that I feel for my community and has strengthened my commitment to work hard for the betterment of the residents of Concordia.

I also want to thank my family, Mr. Speaker, my wife, Kaila, my mother, Carolyn [*phonetic*], who are both joining me—joining us in the gallery here today. I want to thank my father, Rudy [*phonetic*], my in-laws, Ken and Loreen [*phonetic*], my brothers and sisters. Their encouragement and advice during

the campaign was invaluable to me and I couldn't have done it without their support.

I want to thank my friends in the community as well. Over the past number of years I've had the pleasure of working with many different individuals and community groups in the constituency on a variety of projects. Volunteering my time as a resident for the betterment of my community has been one of the most fulfilling activities that I've ever been involved in. There are so many individuals and community organizations that are having such a positive impact on our community and I would like to acknowledge the incredible work that they are doing, and thank them for the support that they afforded me personally over the years and throughout the campaign.

I want to thank Martin Landy and Robb Massey, and the staff and the board at the Elmwood Community Resource Centre who worked tirelessly day in and day out to provide countless services to those in need in our community. To Jan Stuyck and the community at Beautify Elmwood and the organizers of Happy Days on Henderson/Take Pride Elmwood, which is a great community-building event each summer in our constituency, Mr. Speaker, and to John Kubi and the committee at the residents advisory group, who do great work to create awareness of civic issues in our community.

I want to thank all the contributing members of the River East Neighbourhood Network, the folks at the Good Neighbours Active Living Centre and the EK Seniors—Elmwood-Kildonan Senior Centre, 180 Poplar, who provide crucial programming for seniors in our neighbourhood.

And a special thank-you to Louise Balaban and Sigrun Bailey and the rest of the team of the RENN Trail Committee who are responsible for the wonderful active transportation trail in our neighbourhood, the Northeast Pioneers Greenway that connects our communities, the communities of Concordia and beyond.

And to the many, many others who volunteer their time, energy and money to the betterment of our community: these individuals and groups are working every day to make Concordia a better place to live for all residents, and their hard work and dedication is an inspiration to me as I move into this new relationship with them and to the work that they do. I'm excited to continue to work with them and to

help them connect with provincial resources that will help them accomplish their goals.

I also want to briefly mention, Mr. Speaker, how proud I am to be part of the—a long tradition of NDP representatives in Concordia. Peter Fox was the first member from Concordia who was the Speaker of this Legislature at the time, followed, of course, by Gary Doer, who would go on to be premier.

However, the tradition extends further back even than that, as A.J. Reed who was elected in 1958 as a CCFer in the constituency then known as Kildonan, as it was called at that time.

I feel that, in many ways, Mr. Speaker, I am walking in the shadows of giants, as I look at the accomplishments of these men, but I am committed to working hard to continue the tradition of good representation for the people of Concordia.

I can report to this House, Mr. Speaker, that the previous member for Concordia left the constituency in good shape. One of the things that struck me knocking on doors, is the almost universal acknowledgment that not only was Gary Doer a good premier and the premier who worked for all—for the best interests of all Manitobans, but he was also a good representative of our neighbourhood. Even those voters who were by nature not of the same political persuasion still recognized that Gary was a premier that, despite being engaged with the issues of the whole province and having the responsibility that comes with that, he never lost focus on our community. One only has to look as far as the many projects that were supported by the former premier in Concordia to see his commitment to our community.

*Ms. Marilyn Brick, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

He was also someone who managed to maintain a personal connection with the many constituents in Concordia despite how busy he was. As I was knocking on doors, I found many people would share a story or two about how Gary had visited their house and sat down at their kitchen table for a chat or how they would see him at his daughter's soccer games cheering on the team with the rest of the parents.

People knew that Gary was someone they could relate to, someone who was, like them, interested in making the community a better place to raise his family, and I hope to have the same relationship with the people of Concordia and intend to work hard to foster that relationship.

I have to admit, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the last couple of months have felt like a bit of a roller coaster for me following the hard work and the long hours put in during the campaign and then, of course, the success of election day and now my first—my subsequent first experiences here in this Chamber. And my family and I have also been dealing with the passing of my grandmother, Aganetha Wiebe, my oma, as we would call her, at the age of 95. It was a lot to take in in such a short time, but it has also helped me to appreciate the strong ties my family and I have to this community.

My grandparents came to Canada as refugees from the Soviet Union by way of Germany in 1949 and settled and raised their family in East Kildonan just a few blocks outside of the area that I now represent. My grandmother was still around to hear that I'd successfully been elected, and I'm grateful that she was here to know that her grandson came to represent the community that she cared so much about.

In fact, my immediate family never strayed too far from where my grandparents first settled. My parents moved a few times in northeast Winnipeg but eventually moved into north—into Valley Gardens in the northern part of the constituency of Concordia where I grew up, just a few blocks down the street from where my grandparents first came.

Similarly, I moved around a bit in east Kildonan. I lived in Morse Place for a while but eventually settled very close again, in Elmwood, in the southern part of Concordia. I feel that this family history in the neighbourhood has given me a unique knowledge of this constituency and the issues people care about in this community.

I mention this as well because my oma spent her last days at Concordia Hospital in my constituency, so my experience with the care she received there is very fresh in my mind. On behalf of my family, I want to thank the staff at the hospital who did their best to treat her and later to help her and my family be comfortable. I know many from the constituency of Concordia and the rest of northeast Winnipeg have contact with this hospital every day, and in some of their most difficult times, and I'm sure they appreciate the care that they receive there as well.

\* (14:50)

They know that, as a community asset—that a community asset like Concordia Hospital is vital to the overall well-being of our community. That is

why I am proud that this government has committed to keeping health care as one of our No. 1 priorities despite the economic realities in this province along with the rest of the world.

The constituents in Concordia know the importance of investments in health care, and they only need to look as far as the hospital to see the government's record on health care: a new emergency room, Mr. Speaker, capital funding for the Hip & Knee Institute, an ongoing commitment for funding for research at that facility. All these are tangible representations of our government's commitment to health care.

And now, as we tackle this current global economic reality—created not, I might add, by the hardworking people of Manitoba, but created on Wall Street—it is clear that our government continues to make health care a priority. Without this unprecedented commitment to health care, even in difficult times, many initiatives that people have told me are priorities would then be at risk. Projects such as the new birth centre for Winnipeg, the mental-health crisis response centre and the new state-of-the-art cardiac care centre at St. Boniface Hospital would all be at risk, Mr. Speaker, without a commitment by this government to the front-line services that matter most to Manitobans.

I keep saying "Mr. Speaker."

This is in stark contrast to the government's reaction the last time Manitobans faced difficult economic times, of course. The last time the government faced difficult choices in the 1990s they chose to cut health-care funding, to cut nurses from the payrolls and to slash dollars for doctors, and the effects of these disastrous policies have been felt in Manitoba for over a decade. Manitobans are telling us now that they want government to maintain these vital services, and our budget reflects those priorities.

In this budget 90 percent of new funding is going directly to services Manitobans count on, like health care, and I am proud of that fact.

Manitobans are also telling us that they want to continue to fund initiatives that make our communities safer. During the by-election, Madam Deputy Speaker, my opponents tried to make political hay using the overly simplistic slogan of getting tough on crime. You know, time after time on the doorstep in the—during the campaign, I heard from the residents of Concordia that we need to address the root causes of crime and delinquency in

our neighbourhood, not just talk about punitive measures.

That is why I'm so happy that our government is continuing to fund those initiatives in our community that promote safe activities for youth. The expansion of the Lighthouses program by five additional sites is an excellent example of the priorities that this government places on community safety. Giving youth an opportunity to have a safe, healthy environment to spend their time after school is an invaluable resource for families who struggle to provide their children with after-school activities. I believe the success of this program demonstrates the type of forward thinking our government takes on issues like community safety, and the continued commitment to this program even in difficult economic circumstances showcases this government's commitment to those front-line services.

I'm also thrilled that this government has committed to extending the Neighbourhoods Alive! program to include the neighbourhood of Elmwood. This type of commitment is vital to the continued ability of our community to address the needs of residents on the ground level. I know personally of several community groups and programs—I mentioned some of them earlier here—that will benefit, directly benefit from this commitment and will be in a position to directly provide front-line services to those who need it. Additional government money for programs that are proven to work is an example of the commitment our government has made to keeping vital programs and services available to those who need them.

In my work as chair of the Elmwood Safety Committee I found that residents value the small measures that help make their neighbourhoods safer, and having the Neighbourhoods Alive! initiative in our community will go a long way to helping those on the ground deliver the plethora of programs they know firsthand will help our community.

In addition to this, Madam Deputy Speaker, our government knows that we must also continue to address the realities of crime by increasing the funding for police officers on the street at a level that is unprecedented in Manitoba history by giving—and giving the people of Concordia and other communities across this province the security in their neighbourhoods that they want. Our government is committed to increasing the number of police officers that are funded by the Province to 13 new

officers in this budget, which brings to a total of 93 the number of new officers this government has put on our streets since 2005. I'm very proud of this fact, as these officers are on the front lines who will directly impact the communities that they work in.

As well, our government's commitment to once again increase the provincial funding for prosecutors in this province, to fund an additional nine prosecutors, Madam Deputy Speaker, means that those charged with crimes will be tried more quickly, and this will get—both get criminals off the streets and make our system fair.

And, finally, our government's commitment to listen to the recommendation of the Winnipeg Police and help them fund the police helicopter that they have identified to us, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the experts have determined is a vital crime-fighting tool, is an exciting commitment. On the doorstep, I heard that people want to listen to the advice of experts on these matters and assist them with whatever tools that they feel are most useful.

Another concern I heard during the campaign, Madam Deputy Speaker, was regarding public housing. I'm proud that Budget 2010 identifies housing as an important part of this government's commitment to Manitobans as well. In my community we have several affordable housing options, but what I heard from constituents is that retaining the quality of this housing is also a priority. By increasing the operating and capital investments in housing by 10 percent in this budget, I am pleased that this government has pledged to both increase the amount of affordable housing by 1,500 units, which is substantial, but also seek to improve the quality of housing available. Upgrades to existing housing—existing units are vital for ensuring that our social housing remains a healthy place for our families to live. As well, the commitment to promoting the use of members of the community to make certain upgrades is an important commitment to developing skills and community pride in these neighbourhoods.

Another vital area—another area vital to Manitoba families is health care. I heard from people during the campaign that child care was a priority, and I know this first-hand, Madam Deputy Speaker. I'm recently married and, while I don't have any children quite yet, it is top of mind, and I can certainly say that it's an area I know we have to continue to make a priority. Our government's commitment in this budget is to fund hundreds of additional child-care spaces slated for this fall is a

critical commitment for Manitoban families. And Concordia has already seen some additional funds to increase the number of spaces available to our families. In 2009—October 2009—it was announced that a new facility at Concordia Hospital would be one of the new—the 16 new child-care centres in Manitoba to receive a share of \$2.35 million in capital funding to renovate space at the hospital complex. As well, Budget 2010 commits to a new pension plan system that will provide child-care workers more stability and help recruit and retain these vital early childhood educators.

Finally, I am also proud, Madam Deputy Speaker, that Manitoba is one of the most affordable places in Canada to live, and this budget goes a long way in keeping it affordable. By keeping tax rates low while at the same time stimulating our economy through \$1.8 billion in spending on capital projects—a 90 percent increase over last year—as well as keeping our government services that people have come to count on, our government will ensure that the Manitoba economy remains strong. There is a commitment in this budget to support the creation of 29,000 direct and indirect jobs through infrastructure investments and this is a commitment that very clearly focusses on neighbourhoods like Concordia. Concordia is proudly a working-class neighbourhood. We know that giving people the opportunity to work is important for keeping neighbourhoods healthy as well as our economy healthy.

Our government is committed to increasing the minimum wage, while at the same time eliminating the small business tax. I know several small business owners in my constituency, Madam Deputy Speaker, who have directly benefited from this program. And more money for training and apprenticeship programs and more money for universities mean that more people in my community will have an opportunity to further their education. Our community is one that wants to work, Madam Deputy Speaker, and this government is committed to helping them give—give them that opportunity.

I am proud to be part of a government that puts people first. This economic plan seeks to protect the citizens of Manitoba from an economic downturn that was created on Wall Street, Madam Deputy Speaker, but it's being felt here in Manitoba on Grey Street and on Molson Street and on Munroe Avenue.

Budget 2010 clearly states that it is this government's commitment to deal with the global

economic realities in a responsible, prudent manner that protects the services that are important to Manitobans. I think it's an important thing, Madam Deputy Speaker, that we support this budget and I thank you for your time. Thank you very much.

\* (15:00)

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose):** I do want to welcome the new member from Concordia to the House. I'm sure he'll be a useful member of this august body over the years to come.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to put a few thoughts and comments on the record regarding the latest attempt by the NDP to put forward a budget, and I think my views are going to differ a little bit from some of the member from Concordia's.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I've only been a member of this House since my election in 2007, and during that short tenure I have seen two poor attempts by this government to deliver budgets, but this feeble attempt has to be the poorest approach to budgeting I've ever seen.

Last year, the NDP projected in their budget that there would be a surplus of \$2 million. Now we find that there is actually a deficit of close to \$600 million. I guess the obvious question is: Do we really believe any of the spin the NDP is putting on—putting forward in this budget?

In 2010-2011 budget, the NDP are projecting another \$545-million deficit. Keeping in mind that they missed the mark by over a half a billion dollars last year, what safeguards are there to protect Manitobans from the same incompetence this year? It's certainly feasible that we could see a shortfall of well over a billion dollars in the year—in this year alone.

Now the Premier (Mr. Selinger) chooses to call H1N1 a disaster, but in reality it was a disaster that never occurred, and I believe the NDP should be accountable for the more than \$100 million supposedly spent on H1N1, especially in light of the fact that the federal government paid for the vaccine and covered a large portion of the costs.

The second thing that the Premier claims is that the spring flooding resulted in some \$50 million of extra costs, and that isn't entirely accurate either. Under Disaster Financial Assistance, once the total damage reaches \$5 per capita, the federal government picks up 90 percent of the costs. So, by

simply doing the math, the Premier is saying that we had 460 million of flood damages last year and no one, repeat, no one believes that that is true, and there are no figures anywhere to back up the Premier's claims. Even if the NDP figures for H1N1 are anywhere near accurate, they still mismanaged and wasted \$350 million in last year's budget.

This Premier and the former minister of Finance, along—and former minister of Finance, along with his Cabinet, do not have a revenue problem; what they have is a spending problem. They have no idea what it's like to live within their means. The constant solution to any problem is throw more money at it, not do an assessment of what results are expected from the expenditure.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we hear a regular response in this House from the Premier and his ministers. That response is that we put this many million into whatever may be the issue of the day, but we have very little about—we hear very little about results that are achieved by expenditures, and that should be the No. 1 priority.

When Manitobans spend money, they expect results and they have every right to ask for them. They have every right to demand that their government get results with their money as well.

You know, I heard a phrase used the other day, and I quote: If you are telling the truth, why do you need spin doctors? This budget is so weak that even the army of spin doctors that the NDP employ cannot improve it, and the people of Manitobans—the people of Manitoba are astute enough that they are seeing through the façade. The NDP are spending tens of thousands of dollars on ads, talking about their five-year action plan, when they can't even come close, remotely close, on a one-year action plan. They missed their mark by \$600 million.

They say the plan will stimulate economic growth and then they cut back funding to core industries, such as agriculture and mining. They talk about the 29,000 jobs that they're going to produce. It's not 29,000 jobs; it's 29,000 man-years. That's the figure they're using. But, on top of that, most of those jobs already exist. They didn't increase the infrastructure funding very much from last year or the year before, so those jobs are already out there. They're—and, keep in mind, also, that that vaunted \$1.7 billion on infrastructure is over five years, not one year, as they're trying to let people believe.

They say they will manage government spending when they have set a track record over the last 10 years with the Premier (Mr. Selinger), the former minister of Finance, at the helm, of not having the common sense that a child has in managing their piggybank. The question arises, are you smarter than a fifth grader?

They say they will restore balance. There would be no need to restore balance if they had used some common sense for the last 10 years. The NDP inherited balanced budgets from the Filmon PC government at a time when provincial revenues were rapidly escalating. Revenues have actually doubled in the last 10 years and yet the NDP have wasted and mismanaged their windfall. When they cut debt repayment by \$90 million a year in the recent legislation, and they still can't come within a half a billion dollars of balancing their books, what assurance do Manitobans have that the NDP will ever restore balance?

They say they will maintain affordability, and that is one of the most misleading statements of their entire ad campaign. Manitobans are the highest-taxed people in western Canada. Just in this year we see personal taxes and costs for a single person making 30,000 a year rise by \$207. A two-earner family of four making \$60,000 a year will see a rise of \$797 under the cost of living. We still have bracket creep in this province and none of the small tax changes from the previous budget have been implemented.

Alberta has no provincial sales tax and they have a personal tax exemption of close to \$16,000. Saskatchewan lowered their provincial sales tax to 5 percent and have a personal tax exemption of close to \$13,000. Manitoba has a provincial sales tax of 7 percent and a personal exemption of a measly \$8,900.

In addition, the NDP have raised almost every licence permit and user fee they can think of and then added a few new ones. Camping fees are up 6.25 a night. The NDP gets you in the gate and then they nail you. Speeding fines have increased dramatically. Property transfer fees have doubled. Vehicle registration fees are up \$18, which goes directly to general revenues.

Pharmacare deductibles are up one to 5 percent on top of 35 percent increase in the last five years. Crown land rental fees are up at a time when the cattle industry is really struggling. Hydro rates have gone up 16 percent in the last five years and going up an additional 2.9 percent this year for three main

reasons: the NDP have raised water rates to Hydro by 150 percent to \$125 million a year; the NDP have raided Manitoba Hydro in 2002 for \$203 million to balance their budget; thirdly, the political interference of mismanagement in Hydro and almost all of the aspects of the corporate-corporations management. And Ag, in spite of a 4.5 percent decrease on funding, there are new levies on pesticide fertilizer licences and a new 2 percent tax on transfer quota.

Madam Deputy Speaker, everywhere Manitobans turn, the greedy tentacles of the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and his government are reaching into their wallets and their purses. Every Manitoban, rich or poor, young or old, will have less disposable income at the end of this year than they had last year, yet the Premier says he's keeping Manitoba affordable and that he's stimulating the economy. The way to stimulate the economy is to leave more money in Manitobans' pockets. Let the people decide themselves how they want to spend their money.

The former minister of Finance has led us down this road with his Alfred E. Neuman approach from *MAD Magazine* of, what, me worry? Until six months ago this Premier told us everything was coming up roses. The economy was charging along. We had nothing to worry about. Then, in an abrupt about-face, we heard the famous words, flat is the new up. What sheer hypocrisy. This budget is bad news for families, bad news for all Manitobans.

\*(15:10)

This is a budget of debt growing faster than the economy, a budget of waste, of mismanagement, a budget that has absolutely no credibility or any sense of fiscal prudence is gone.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the NDP budget is really quite extraordinary in its departure from any attempt to keep spending under control. The former premier pledged in '99 to maintain balanced budgets but the new Premier appears to be from the old socialist school of thought. Balancing a budget is the furthest thing from his mind.

Spending is out of control. This budget has nothing to do with the economic recession, everything to do with overspending and, as such, both the budget and the five-year plan are unsustainable. This budget is based on wage freezes and stagnant interest rates and both are highly unlikely. Governments do have to spend for many

reasons but there must be emphasis placed on results, on priorities and, especially, on fiscal responsibility.

I suspect we will hear from the NDP that we are against all manner of things in the days to come and I want to make it clear that I understand the need for spending, but it must be done wisely, with common sense. The results must be tangible and verifiable.

There are many ways of spending taxpayers' money that could get meaningful results and save money into the future. Supports to primary industries, the real wealth providers of the province, always bring long-term gains. Those primary industries include agriculture, fisheries, mining and forestry. Every dollar spent on those wealth-providing industries results in long-term economic gain for the province. Those industries provide the wealth that allows Manitobans to provide social services to our population.

Small businesses provide 80 percent of the employment in this province but are treated with disdain by this NDP government. This government has overtaxed, overregulated small business to the point of despair. There is no recognition that in order to be in a position to write paycheques, employers must take risks. The government should be a leader in controlling those risks, not be one of the risks. One of the impediments that business leaders must deal with should not be the provincial government.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the former minister of Agriculture, along with the former minister of Conservation, will long be remembered in rural agricultural areas for their mismanagement of the livestock industry in this province. Together they destroyed the hog industry by forcing large producers out with legislation and small producers out with regulation. BSE happened almost seven years ago. The impacts are still being felt in the cattle industry. What did the minister do? Well, she twiddled her thumbs and used phrases like, I am hopeful, and, I hope that this isn't the case. Well, that is simply not good enough. When the livestock industry needed clear decisive leadership, it was nowhere to be found in this government. They were too busy putting more regressive regulations in place. This government will leave a clear legacy of the lack of action in the ag community and it will be long remembered.

Mr. Speaker, there—another—a number—Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm sorry—there are a number of other points I want to touch on. Situations in this province like the long-term projected waste of

revenues in this province, the west-side Bipole III proposal, is simply ridiculous. There's no firm reason why it shouldn't go down the east side. It's compatible with the UNESCO site. The First Nations along the east side want it there. They feel there is some economic development that will come with it and some trade-offs they can make to have it go through their territory. I've heard the phrases on caribou herds and there is two caribou herds on the east side and five on the west side.

But the sheer extra distance of that line is the main drawback. That extra distance is going to cost at least \$640 million more. On top of that, there will be 13 to 14 hundred more towers that have to be maintained and—first of all, erected and maintained. And I've been told, from fairly good sources in Hydro, that once the full load is on that line, once the Conawapa dam is in place, full load goes on that line, our line losses could be as high as \$50 million a year by the extra distance of that line.

Now 50 million extra dollars a year, think about that. If we were generating that revenue rather than wasting it on lost hydro in a line, we could build a new arena in 25 small towns every year. We could build a new \$50-million hospital, we could build one of those every year. There's absolutely no reason to waste that kind of money.

We're seeing another \$350 million being committed to nitrogen removal from waste water in Winnipeg, and we're seeing over 60 fairly vaunted experts saying that's the wrong way to go.

Spirited Energy campaign: cost us \$3 million, gained us nothing. What do we see of Spirited Energy today? That \$3 million is money that could be well used in a number of other places. I asked questions today about the third-order drainage in the province and the lack of maintenance, and I hear back that we haven't got enough money to do any of this. Well, don't waste \$3 million. Use it in something that's useful. Photo IDs: 14 million more wasted dollars.

Some of the things that I've heard in the last few weeks I'm just absolutely shocked at, one being the new wind farm proposal. I have no problem with another wind farm going up in this province. I think it should be going up with private money. I don't think it should be loans from Manitoba Hydro or Manitoba government. We have a company that's in very good shape in the United States that are going to put up a \$350-million wind farm providing only \$90 million of their own and getting a \$250-million

loan—or a \$260-million loan from Manitoba Hydro. And what's that loan for? That's loan is for that company to put up a wind farm to produce power to sell back to Manitoba Hydro at a higher price than Manitoba Hydro can already produce power for themselves. That's a shameful approach. That's a tremendous waste of money.

Another thing I find quite ironic is when Manitoba Hydro spends \$160 million to, at the behest of this government, to hire lawyers and consultants and various other people to fight against Manitoba's—Hydro's lawyers and consultants. It just doesn't make any sense. And as I mentioned earlier, the 150 percent increase in Hydro's water rates, the rate they pay the province, is just unacceptable. If that—we're told that the 3 percent increase in the Hydro rates will produce about \$35 million, and we've raised Manitoba Hydro's rent for water by \$75 million a year. We would not need the rate increases if that hadn't have happened.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I understand governments are expected to spend money, and I certainly have no problem making some recommendations where some of that money should be spent, and—but I also believe they should get a bang for the buck. They need to get meaningful results. This is another budget in a long line of budgets that is mostly about re-election at all costs. Service to people doesn't matter. Spin, smoke and mirrors, and half-truths are the only constants in NDP governments.

\*(15:20)

One thing I do agree with the Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) on is the fact that it'll take at least five years and probably much longer to clean up the mess her predecessor, the Premier (Mr. Selinger), made of the finances of the Province. I wish her well in her endeavours, and I thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation):** I first want to comment, Madam Deputy Speaker, that it's spring in Manitoba and what a spring. We saw, this past few days, many Manitobans celebrate Easter. In fact, both Orthodox and Catholic, Protestant Easter coincided this year. We saw Jewish celebration of Passover. The next few weeks we'll see Indo-Canadian communities celebrating Vaisakhi. We are seeing not just a spring season, but a general sense of optimism in this province.

Pretty well everywhere you go, you'll find that, except amongst members of the opposition. And I want to contrast, you know, and first commend the new member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe), I think, captured that in his first speech. And I do want to say, as someone who has spoken on the budget on more than a few occasions, he did an admirable job and continuing in a great tradition of members for Concordia. And I wish him well as MLA, continuing in the tradition of Peter Fox and—who was the last MLA for Concordia? Yes, Gary Doer. I say that because I'm only just getting used to saying his name in this House.

But I think you'll see a general sense of optimism. Why shouldn't there be, Madam Deputy Speaker? You know, let's put aside the, you know, the give-and-take of this House for a moment. But—members opposite not realize that we just had the announcement that we had the highest population increase in this province in 38 years—38 years. We've had a situation that's virtually unparalleled. We've had 10 years of economic growth and even with the global economic slowdown, this province has escaped much of the dramatic slowdown we've seen—and I look at Ontario, or Alberta even, or British Columbia.

We maintain it by, I think, a combination of factors, and I want to say that, you know, we'll get into that in our—in the budget debate. But it didn't just happen.

So we've had—we got, I think, a growing sense of optimism you'll see reflected across this province. I have the great opportunity to travel much of the province on a weekly basis, going back and forth to my home community of Thompson, and you'll see it in northern Manitoba. And, yes, there have been some tougher times in some communities, but right now there's a significant amount of optimism in the mining industry, and you'll see the resilience in the forestry sector in The Pas. You'll see it across rural Manitoba and, you know, I realize that there have been some significant challenges over the last number of years. But when you look at the kind of investment we're seeing in agribusiness, when you see the kind of investment in the new frontiers of biofuels, when you see the kind of investment we're seeing now in terms of wind farms, you'll see a dynamic and growing rural economy.

In fact, I was just in Steinbach last week turning on traffic lights. They've got urban traffic counts in Steinbach. Again, 10 years of the NDP government

and you've seen record growth in Steinbach, you know, and I think that's something the member of Steinbach, you know, must be really, really happy about.

And here in Winnipeg, you know, when I look at the dynamic growth that's taking place in our downtown and across this city, when I particularly look at the fact we're seeing a rebound of confidence in our North End, in our core area, and I realize members are having a difficulty hearing me. Madam Deputy Speaker, you know what? I'm enthusiastic about the fact we're seeing a dramatic turnaround in some of the most challenged parts of Winnipeg. And it, again, didn't happen, it's a result of direct policy initiatives and a partnership.

Now, why am I putting this forward? For one simple reason, and that is because I see over the period of time in this budget debate, and over the next year, and next year and a half, that Manitobans are going to have very clear choice. We have been a government that has been in government for 10 years. We have a proven record, but we're not running on our government—our government's record. We have an economy that has outperformed pretty well every jurisdiction in Canada. We've proven—we're growing the economy, we're growing the population. There'll be that alternative on the one side or—well, what do the opposition members really offer? We're not really quite sure. You know, we know what they did in the '90s. We know what they did when they hit a recession. They know what they did, Madam Deputy Speaker. And you know, it's interesting, because as we've seen the slowdown in the economy, you will see a complete contrast between what we have done, and what they did in the '90s, and what they would do if they were elected government.

Let's start with a couple of basic things that we're doing in this budget, and we're going to be giving as alternatives to Manitobans over the next year and year and a half. Have we cut significant—anything in terms of health services or education services? No, Madam Deputy Speaker. Vital human services like health and education are critical in our budget.

Now, by the way, if you think that's, again, just accidental, and I know we've just had a joint meeting with the Saskatchewan Cabinet, but I'm sure they wouldn't mind me relating their budget. They have a slightly different political philosophy than we do. You know, what did they do with education in

Saskatchewan? They cut it by \$60 million. We're increasing public school funding by 3 percent. We're increasing our colleges and universities by 4.5 percent; that includes capital funding. They are cutting it.

Now, again, invest in it vital human services—not what they did in the '90s; not what similar governments are doing elsewhere in the country. Not what they would do if they had the unfortunate situation of being in government.

Now, that's the one element. I want to talk about infrastructure because, again, we are now investing record amounts in infrastructure, and to the members opposite, the member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Briese), and I look at, you know, the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), any of the members opposite, the member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik). You know, what I love about infrastructure is you couldn't get a clearer distinction. You know these members, especially those that purport to speak for rural Manitoba, I want to tell you what the Tories did, of what similar governments are doing right now. In Saskatchewan, what did they cut? Highways and infrastructure, by \$33.7 million.

We now have our second year of record funding—\$366 million on capital expenditures. What we're doing is we're maintaining record expenditures. Now, how does that compare? In the 1990s, they spent a quarter of it. We've quadrupled, quadrupled the amount that's spent on highways and infrastructure. Now, what are we doing by the way? The federal government is, through infrastructure spending, is investing in our highways. What did we do? We put it on our highways. Do you know what they did in the 1990s? They took federal money, and they took it out of their own budget. They actually cut back in '97 and '98 and '99.

Now, what is the difference? We understand one thing. We are creating jobs—29,000 of them during an economic slowdown, and we're also investing in the future. Let there be no doubt that if members opposite were in government again, they would follow the same policies. And, by the way, in Saskatchewan, they've also cut back on investment in health-care capital. And I note, by the way, the significant announcements we've made in health-care capital, our Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) has made, and by the way, significant announcements in terms of post-secondary education.

I'm particularly looking forward to a day, very soon, in which we're going to have the

announcement of a new UCN campus for Thompson, my home community, Madam Deputy Speaker. Again, something that's part of this budget. So we know the difference. We know what they have done. We know what similar governments are doing in the future.

So that's the first point, by the way. You have to be a good manager of the economy, and we've proven we are good managers of the economy. Ten years of solid growth; record population growth.

Well, the second thing I think you have to do is prove to Manitobans you have a social conscience. You know, and I realize members opposite have a difficult time with this, you know, but I am a great believer that Manitobans—and you saw it in Concordia, I think, in the by-election—don't buy sort of very simplistic slogans when it comes to public safety, for example.

\* (15:30)

You know what, they expect some consequences in terms of crime. They also understand, however, that the key thing you should be doing is working to prevent crime by tackling the causes of crime. And it makes sense no matter where you live in the city or wherever you live, in rural Manitoba or northern Manitoba because, you know what, if you focus in on it, and you focus in on the causes of crime, you can make a real difference. We're seeing that and I point to the community here in the city, of Point Douglas, where local residents have taken on that challenge, and right now Point Douglas is one of the safest neighbourhoods in the city. They did it. *[interjection]* They did it and, you know, I'm glad the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) is excited about what's—what he's seeing in Point Douglas.

*Mr. Mohinder Saran, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

But you know what? It's a combination of things. We're there as a province with Neighbourhoods Alive! We're there in terms of working with community groups and organizations, and you'll see that throughout the North End, and I'm pleased that we're expanding Neighbourhoods Alive! now into the Elmwood area, because we've tackled the challenge in many of our most challenged communities. And it does make a difference.

We're doing it with recreation. We as a Province have put specific funding in for rec directors in those same communities, rec directors. We didn't just sit back and run little slogans on the top of lawn signs in an election. We got in there and we said, give those

kids a chance and give them opportunities. So we've been there and we've done it.

And, by the way, we're doing it across the city. I was very pleased recently to be at an announcement of provincial support at the—for the new expanded community centre in Lindenwoods. So, again, you know, we're there for all of the city, regardless of which party they're officially represented, and I think that's something I'll get to in a moment. But we're tackling those costs.

We've seen a significant investment in other important social areas as well in terms of our child care system. And, you know, I always note, by the way, that the Tories, when we originally brought in licensed child care in this province, they had great difficulties with it. They didn't think it was necessary. You know, we've now seen a generation that's grown up with child care, and we're seeing across this city that it's one of the key demands and key challenges, and we're there to meet it and we've done it by recognizing that one of the things we have to do is invest in child-care workers, and in terms of salaries, and in terms of training, as well in terms of facilities.

I think you'll see across the board that we've shown, as a government, that we understand the social dimension. Yes, the economic dimension, we have to have strong economic policies to develop wealth in this province, but when it comes to the social dimension we also have to make sure we're looking at making sure that everyone shares in that benefit.

And, yes, by the way, you can include the minimum wage. I note election after election after election, the members opposite have gotten up and they've said they're opposed to increases in the minimum wage. Can you imagine if we had the same minimum wage we had 10 years ago in this province? What kind of legacy would that have left? And we—by the way, and we've balanced it. By now we're going to be a zero small business tax jurisdiction, Mr. Acting Speaker, the first in Canada. So we also understand the challenges of small businesses as well. Where are the members opposite? I remember when they used to talk about small business. They don't even bother any more. They literally have given up in that whole area. So you need a social conscience.

Now, having said that, I think there's another important element as well that any government has to pass, and that is the sense of bringing people

together. And I mentioned, you know, I was in Steinbach at a traffic lights opening ceremony. I was in Lindenwoods recently. I travel throughout the province in my official capacity, and I'm really proud of the fact that we as a government have worked really hard for every single region in this province.

But you know what? What does the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen)—the would-be alternative for premier—talk about? You know, it's interesting, he doesn't say this in northern Manitoba, and I want to thank the *Carman Valley Leader*, by the way, because, you know, they sure managed—they sure managed to get out the real Tory agenda. And I'm going to start with the fact that the member—the Leader of the Opposition in the *Carman Valley Leader*—this is November 20th—he said that, well, southern Manitoba has not done as well as they should in terms of allocation of highway and bridge budgets. Well, here we go again.

You know, in the last election he did the same thing. He was going to cut northern Manitoba in terms of highways. By the way, north was north of the Riding Mountain National Park. That shows you how far it goes. I think they actually would probably start on the southern end of the member for La Verendrye's (Mr. Lemieux) boundary, but, you know, they have a different view of the north. He didn't come to Thompson. He didn't come to The Pas. He didn't come to Flin Flon. He didn't come to Swan River and say it.

You know what? I could tell you, we've invested \$75 million on Highway 75—\$75 million, another \$10 million this year. When they were in government they spent \$100,000 on a passing lane. We've four-laned Highway No. 1 and we've significantly improved the condition of Highway No. 1, so members like the member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik) can get home with a more smooth ride, Mr. Acting Speaker, but not a word from them in terms of that.

We've had major investment on the Yellowhead, the Trans-Canada Highway, Mr. Acting Speaker, but not a word is said about that.

We've had investments on Highway 6, Highway 10, throughout this province. We are investing in every area of this province and we're doing way more than the Tories ever did. They know that.

But, you know, I think that the key element here though, and I again want to thank the *Carman Valley Leader*, because, you know, the member for Carman

(Mr. Pedersen), he—well, he stated that the Tories are going to put less focus on other issues, right? Remember he had his top five. Guess what they're not going to put reference on now and going into the next election? Health, roads, social services, agriculture, rural depopulation and the First Nations.

Well, you know what, I mean, you know, it must be pretty embarrassing for the Ag critic to get up and ask Ag questions when the member for Carman has given it away. They're not going to put tension on Agriculture. Rural depopulation, well, of course, why would they? You know what? If they have one thing in common, it's this sense that somehow they represent rural Manitoba. They talk about it. They don't actually do anything when they're in government. They oppose every single initiative you can imagine that's good for rural Manitoba, but they don't do it. But, you know what? First Nations, well, we know that. We know that Tories when they get into government don't care about First Nations. Social services, well, he gave it away, social services, hack and slash. That's what they did when they were in government; that's what they would do again.

But, you know what? I mean, health care? I mean, how many questions have we heard from members opposite on health care? Numerous times, right? They get up on their local hospital. They talk about this situation, that situation. I mean, good for them. Did nobody bother to check with the real plan here? And, by the way, I got to say this: Roads. The member for Carman has put it on the record that they're not going to emphasize roads. They're not even going to emphasize highways.

So I've got a bit of a message for the members opposite, by the way, and that is we're going to take your real agenda to rural Manitobans. We're going to talk about it in this budget. We're going to talk about it in the next six months, the next year, right up to and including the next provincial election, because what you've said is very clear. You're going to run, I know, and you're already started. You tried it in Concordia on a few glib one-liners, you're going to run on, you know, we're different. Well, yeah, you are different. You know what, Mr. Acting Speaker? They are different from New Democrats.

But you know what? We know what that difference really means. We've been there in the '90s. We're seeing similar philosophies put in place in Saskatchewan and elsewhere. We're seeing the kind of extreme right-wing approach to this circumstance

because they don't view an economic slowdown as something to be dealt with through a balanced approach. They view it as an opportunity to cut back on terms of the size of government, and I've heard that from members opposite over the years. They see it as an opportunity to get rid of the kind of programs they never supported in the first place. You know, social services, to quote the member for Carman, you know, and programs for First Nations, and that's what they did then.

But, you know, we're even seeing, in the way they approach things, that they would go back to the way they managed infrastructure. You know, do they not understand that we are still catching up on the infrastructure deficit from the 1990s that we inherited: \$366 million is a record in terms of the investment of our highway system, but we're still only catching up from the 10 years of neglect.

So that's why I want to finish off with the other point, Mr. Acting Speaker, and that is I really do believe that provincial governments, the real test is their ability to bring people together, and to have some sense of the whole province. I'm really proud of the fact that each and every member of our caucus has a provincial perspective. You don't hear our members standing up in their local newspaper and say, well, we're going to cut back on this region, or urban or rural or northern, because, you know what? If you're in government you don't have the luxury of playing that kind of Tory divide-and-conquer politics. What you have to do is you have to look out for the best interests of everyone, because, you know, I've said that it doesn't matter which part of this province, we're all in it together. So the strength of our agricultural sector, our mining industry, our manufacturing, it doesn't matter. Rural, northern and urban, and we're much stronger when we're all working together.

So I believe the members opposite are putting forward a vision. Okay? Not much of a vision, but a clear difference in what we put forth. Our vision is very clear and this is what we're going to be hammering away over the next period of time. A forward-thinking vision that reflects the fact that we've got economic growth and population growth and we want to keep growing in this province, not go back to the way it was.

\* (15:40)

We also have a clear sense of a social conscience, that we are a province where we do care about our fellow citizens and we expect government

to be part of the solution in promoting social and economic justice for our fellow citizens. And, finally, that we are a government—and this budget demonstrates it—a government that brings together all Manitobans, as compared to the members opposite who still believe in divide and conquer, whether it be on a regional basis, or whether it be pitting one Manitoban against another.

And I am confident, just as we have been given the good fortune, the honour of being government in this province for the last 10 years that, given a clear choice, Manitobans will choose the kind of vision being put forward in this budget, the kind of vision put forward by the NDP, a vision for all Manitobans, a vision for the future. Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West):** Mr. Acting Speaker, it's not that difficult to follow the last speaker with respect to this budget because there is going to be a bit of a change of direction, simply because this speaker and this government are taking this province in the wrong direction. They are absolutely going in the wrong direction.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I remember in question period when the Speaker stood up and said, order, order. We have a classroom in the gallery, and show some decorum. We shouldn't apologize for the lack of decorum in this House. What we should apologize for is this government because those children and that class is going to be saddled with a legacy of debt. That debt of those children, they're going to have to pay for the foolish management of this government, not of just this budget but of the last 10 years. It's those children, those children right there, who I feel sorry for, going forward in this province, because there is no vision. All the vision that they have is photo ops, cheque presentations and borrowing more money. Isn't that lovely? On the backs, on the backs of those children that were in the gallery today.

Mr. Acting Speaker, this Finance Minister and this government have absolutely no credibility when it comes to managing the finances of this Province. Last budget year, the previous Finance minister, now the Premier (Mr. Selinger) put forward a budget that said they were going to have a core operating surplus of \$2 million. Now, that didn't take into account the \$110 million they were using from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund but they were going to show a surplus in the last budget of \$2 million.

That budget, this fiscal year, which we haven't got the financials just yet, for the final year ending March 31st, but it's anticipated we're going to be running close to a \$600-million deficit. Now, I can see being off the mark just a little bit. Budgets are budgets. You take assumptions. There are certain areas that you aren't necessarily totally in tune with when you're looking at a budget but you should have some basic understanding as to what your revenues are going to be, and what your expenditures are going to be—some understanding.

From a \$2-million projected surplus we went to a \$600-million deficit, which, by the way, balanced budget legislation didn't account for until they changed it for the first and second time. And we're going to get into balanced budget legislation a little later because now proposing to change it a third time. But what we don't have is a credible Finance Minister and we don't have a credible government on how to manage the financial resources of this Province.

Mr. Acting Speaker, there are a number of assumptions that one has to make when they're putting a budget together and I asked the Finance Minister, not that long ago, if she and her department had taken into consideration two very important assumptions going forward. They had a \$600-million deficit last year. They're now projecting another \$600 million going forward and that doesn't take into consideration two very valuable, two very important factors, one of them being an increase in interest rates, and the other one being equalization payments, the dependency that this government has on the federal government.

Now, the answer I got was, we have some very capable staff within the Finance Department who have looked at all these assumptions very carefully in putting forward the budget. Now I have to admit, the staff that I've met in the Finance Department certainly are very capable, but sometimes there's a little bit too much of micromanaging, Mr. Acting Speaker. And perhaps the Finance Minister is micromanaged just a little bit too much. For you see, they do have some very competent people but when you forecast a \$2-million surplus and come up with a \$600-million deficit, I kind of question the competency of this Finance Minister and probably her political staff.

So we look forward to this new budget and we say, well, there's very competent people that have looked at the assumptions of interest rates and of

equalization payments going forward, but I'm not so sure just how we can depend on those assumptions.

We do know that Mr. Carney has said that he's going to raise the interest rates probably sooner than he had anticipated, this June or July. We don't know what that interest rate increase is going to be. It could be a quarter of a point; could be a half a point.

Australia just raised their interest rate today, as a matter of fact, for the fifth time. They're now at 4.25. We're at 0.25.

When you increase the debt to the levels that this government is increasing the debt, one percentage point on that debt is unsustainable. Two percentage points and three percentage points, Mr. Speaker, instead of providing the necessary social services that the member from Thompson has indicated that they're going to do, what you then do, is simply service debt. You're sending money to the bankers, not to the services that require it here in the province of Manitoba.

But they can't get that through their head. You see, Mr. Acting Speaker, the other shoe has dropped. The other shoe has dropped. For the last 10 years, there was at least an attempt to try to balance budget because the previous premier, Mr. Doer, at least played lip-service to balanced budgets. Lip-service, yes, because they raided Manitoba Hydro one year and they then put in summary budget legislation the following year, so he paid lip-service to it. But this government, in this budget, has absolutely shown the true stripes of this particular animal.

You see, this is a socialist budget; this is a tax-and-spend budget. That's what it is. They're going to borrow, they're going to tax and they're going to spend. You see, borrowings in this budget are going to increase by \$2.2 billion; \$2.2 billion.

Yes, the Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) is shaking her head, but if she goes to page No. 20 of the budget book, the borrowings are going from \$21.2 billion to \$23.4 billion; \$2.2 billion is going to be borrowed by the taxpayers. And, by the way, that doesn't include the 260 million that they just gave a California company for some Manitoba Hydro wind, and that doesn't include the hundred-and-some-odd-million dollars that's going to go into the stadium. So there's going to be more than just \$2.2 billion in borrowing but that's—the point is, when there's an additional \$2.2 billion in borrowing, and interest rates go up, and you haven't assumed that into the

budget, the \$600-million projected deficit is going to go up.

But this is a truly socialistic budget because they don't care about tomorrow. They don't care about what happens to those children in the gallery. They don't care about the debt-servicing costs that are going to go forward and the social services that are going to have to be cut by this government because of it. They don't care about that.

You know why? Because a photo op is more important to this government. Because a cheque presentation makes a photo op more exciting. And that's how they manage: photo ops and cheque presentations.

We can get spun by this government how it's an investment into our province, but it's not. What it is, it's a legacy of debt for our students in the province of Manitoba.

Now, what this budget reflects is an increase of 5.2 percent in spending this fiscal year. Now, the Finance Minister said oh no, no, no, no, no. That's only a 1 percent increase of fiscal spending because the actuals, as of March 31st, compared to the budget going forward is only 1 percent. But what she didn't say was—is that the budget to budget is an increase of 5.2 percent.

\*(15:50)

Now there's an excuse. There's always excuses for this government. There's an excuse because we had these extraordinary costs. We had H1N1, which was an extraordinary cost; we had flooding that was an extraordinary cost. But, Mr. Acting Speaker, even if you take those numbers outside of the budget, or out of the budget there's still a 5.2 percent increase in spending. So we can't anticipate those extraordinary costs going forward in this budget but we're going to spend a lot more money. But we're going to spend a lot more money, but, unfortunately, it's not going to be spent very wisely. They're going to mismanage that 5.2 percent because, you see, the services that we're providing here in the province of Manitoba are suspect.

We talk about health care, some 47 or 48 percent of our total budget, 45 percent of our total budget goes to health care. The Conference Board of Canada says we spend probably the most, or almost the most, per capita on health care, but we deliver one of the worst health-care services in the country. So we spend a lot of money, but we don't deliver a really great service.

We have a government here who, Mr. Acting Speaker, is trying to micromanage a wonderful resource that we have in this province, Manitoba Hydro. We have a government. We have a Premier (Mr. Selinger) and we have a Premier-elect who are now forcing Manitoba Hydro to spend an additional \$640 million that they don't have, \$640 million that has to be borrowed, \$640 million that's going to have to be paid by ratepayers, those seniors and those children we saw today in the gallery, because of their false ideology. There is absolutely no justification for what they're doing other than the fact that they say—in fact, the minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro at a committee not that long ago said, we made the decision and we're going to do it and that's the last thing. Because we can. We made the decision because we can. Not because it's the right decision, because we can meddle, we can meddle with a corporation that they shouldn't be meddling with.

But that's just bad management, totally bad management. Then we have just those minor little mismanaged projects that they have going forward like an enhanced identification program that was destined to failure and now cost Manitobans some \$15 million. Now, it doesn't sound like a lot, but \$15 million is a lot of hard-taxpayers' hard-earned money, Mr. Acting Speaker.

So this is truly a socialist budget going forward but not just for this year. It's a truly socialist budget going forward for the next four years because they now are going to deficit finance for the next four years out. Now, that wasn't part of balanced budget legislation, but we're now going to deficit budget for four years out. Every other province said that their budgets are going to be balanced an awful lot sooner than what Manitoba is suggesting, an awful lot sooner. Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia will have their budgets balanced before this government even knows what hit them because they're going to continue to borrow money to balance their budgets. Borrow money.

The other assumption, other than interest rates, the other assumption was equalization payments. Now, western Canada has four provinces, one of which is most dependent on equalization. This government, this government for the past 10 years has been dependent upon handouts from the federal government. I would liken them to social assistance payments, Mr. Acting Speaker, because it's so much easier, so much easier for this Finance Minister and this government to simply say, we need more social assistance to operate our services from the federal

government than it is to manage properly and efficiently.

It's so much easier to do that. When almost 40 percent of our total budget comes from the federal government, there's a huge problem, a huge problem in political ideology, because why do they want to do anything different? Why should they manage better? Why should they be more efficient? Because somebody else is going to pay the freight. And that somebody else is the rest of Canada, but that's okay as long as the rest of Canada's prepared to pay the freight, we're going to continue to take it.

In fact, one of the candidates for leadership of the NDP government, I remember him saying publicly that, when I go to Ottawa, I'm going to put the most dire picture forward so we can get as much out of the federal government as we possibly can. When his position should have been, I want to go to Ottawa and say that we are prepared to stand on our own two feet, we want to be a 'have' province and we're going to make sure we manage the affairs of this Province correctly so that we don't depend on equalization payments from the federal government to the degree and to the level that we depend on them now. That should have been the answer. But, no, a socialist budget says we would like to get money from other people because we don't want to have to work for it. It's wrong. It's absolutely wrong. If there's a vision, and there should be a vision in this Legislature, the vision should be: Manitobans are proud; Manitobans have resources; Manitobans have human resources. We want to be able to stand with our heads high in this Confederation and say we are contributors, not takers. But, no, that's not the socialistic way. They want to make sure that they are going to continue to be takers.

But, you know what, Madam Finance Minister, with your projections going forward four years of your deficit funding, the equalization is going to be impacted. It is going to be impacted. This year was a one-off. In fact, there was a reduction in equalization this year, but the federal government, in its largesse, said, we're not going to affect provinces; therefore, we're going to give the Finance Minister of Manitoba an additional \$175 million to keep it equal to what it was last year—\$2.063 billion, that's the equalization component—and we're going to keep it the same because we don't want to impact the Province of Manitoba and, heaven forbid, suggest that they manage better. No, we're going to keep on throwing money at them this year. But you know what? The

next year and the following year and the following year, there isn't going to be quite that same largesse. But we don't have a plan in this province. We don't have a plan in this province. What we have is a handout, but not a plan. So, Madam Finance Minister, good luck in the next one because it's going to be much more difficult to try to be efficient and manage properly than it is just simply to take largesse from the federal government.

Now, balanced budget legislation—when I say this is truly a shift in ideology, it is, because before they said there was at least some lip-service about having balanced budget legislation. But the first thing that the previous finance minister did was he changed balanced budget legislation. And he wanted to do what was referred to as a summary budget so he could bring all of the other Crown corporations into the complete package of this government and use their retained earnings and their revenue centres as balancing their budgets. You see, that made a lot of sense. The only problem is that Manitoba Hydro hasn't been doing very well lately. So all of their revenue centre dried up, and the summary budget didn't balance either. It wasn't just the core operating, which is really serious, but now the summary budget doesn't balance either. So, instead of doing a three- or four-year rolling average in the summary budget, now there's going to be new legislation in this Legislature that is going to want to change balanced budget for the third time. Oh, and they are going to pay down some debt; we'll talk about that.

But, in this new legislation, what they're going to suggest is that they're going to be able to run a deficit for four years and, in the fifth year, have a surplus. That in itself is very, very scary. So, please, Manitobans, don't allow it to happen. They're going to run four years in a deficit and, in the fifth year, they're going to show a surplus. Oh, sure they are. Yeah, they're going to show a surplus all right. What they're going to do is they're going to use every sneaky trick in the book, the smoke and mirrors that they're very good at, to come up with a million-dollar, two-million dollar surplus in the fifth year and then run deficits again for another four years.

\* (16:00)

Now the Finance Minister said it's what any family would do—it's absolutely what any family would do. If you need money, you overexpend and you go borrow. That's what she said. Families around

this country, if in bad years you need more money to operate, what you do is you continue to spend, overspend and borrow money. Well, you know what, the good families don't do that. What the good families do is they don't go out for filet for dinner three times a week; what they do is they cut back and they have Hamburger Helper because they don't want to overexpend. And you know what else, Mr. Acting Speaker, what the good families do? They don't go out and buy a plasma TV. What they do is they stay with the TV that they've got already and they make it work for another year or another two years. They manage their finances. Those are what good families do.

By the way, the other families that go out and spend, even though they haven't got the revenue or the income, and they borrow money, and they put it on their credit cards, that's exactly what this government's doing. They're putting \$500 million dollars a year on their credit card and that credit card interest keeps on ticking. And eventually what they do is they borrow on one credit card to pay off another credit card. And then they go out and they put a second mortgage on the house. But are they going to cut back on expenses? No. They're still going to go out every night. They're still going to buy the boat and plasma TV. But you know what happens, ultimately, is those families and this government have to pay the piper. Now, those families claim bankruptcy. In fact, bankruptcies—personal bankruptcies in Manitoba are up, up quite dramatically, actually, because those families that are reacting the same way that this government is, they have to pay the piper or claim bankruptcy.

Now, we don't have nor do we suggest that this government will ever claim bankruptcy or go into CCRA-CC, double A—but what they will do, is that they're going to have to spend more money on debt servicing for the debt that they are incurring and they're going to have to raise taxes. That's what governments do. They raise taxes. They raise revenue by raising taxes. But, you know, that's in itself a slippery slope.

The member from Thompson talked about Saskatchewan and Alberta and British Columbia with derision. What he should have been looking at was the tax rates in those three provinces. He should have been looking at the public sector, the private sector, development going on in those three provinces. Private, capital-generating, income-generating economy. That's what he should have been looking at. But he didn't look at that, no.

What he did say was, we have to increase minimum wage and the members across the aisle were opposed to minimum wage. Well, my suggestion to that is rather than increasing minimum wage, why not reduce the taxation to those people? Why not increase the basic personal exemption? We've got the lowest basic personal exemption in western Canada. The lowest. So rather than raise minimum wage, paid by the commercial corporate, why not just increase the basic personal exemption and put more money in the pockets of Manitobans? No, that's too easy, because they have to get more money to spend more money and that's where they're heading.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we had 10 years of the best economic growth in this country that we've ever seen—10 years. In the '90s. Ten best years of economic growth we ever saw.

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

**Mr. Borotsik:** You know what? I was just making sure that they were still awake and listening and I do give them full marks; they were awake and they were listening. Isn't that wonderful? But I hope they were listening to the rest of what I had to tell them, too, about their mismanagement.

This government—this NDP government—through no fault of their own, had 10 years of the best economy that we had in this country, through, basically, no fault of their own. They had the best economy, and what did they do? They borrowed money. They spent recklessly. They put very, very little into what's referred to as the rainy day fund.

And it's like the biblical—where we have seven years of plenty and seven years of famine. During the 10 years of plenty, they should have been planning, but they didn't plan—quite the opposite. They spent on photo ops and cheque presentations and they're good at it. Make no mistake about it, they're great at photo ops and cheque presentations. But what they aren't good at is planning for the days when we are going to have the famine. And we're in the famine right now. Four years of extended deficits in the Province of Manitoba.

*Ms. Marilyn Brick, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

What we should be doing as Manitobans is looking forward to the future with optimism, not with debt, not with micromanaging corporations that don't need any micromanaging and waste, not with, Madam Deputy Speaker, a sense of entitlement that this government has, to spend our money recklessly.

We should be looking at trying to be a have-province. We should look forward to the ability of developing our resources, of having private sector development, not just simply public sector development, increasing our GDP.

I had the opportunity of being in Calgary in the not too past distant, or distant past, and I saw on the horizon 15 building cranes. Calgary, 15 building cranes, downtown Calgary. Edmonton, I'm told, from a colleague of mine, has the equal amount of building cranes in the downtown Edmonton. St. Albert, community the size of Brandon, has four or five building cranes on the horizon. If you go out here right now and look in Winnipeg, I question whether you will see a building crane, or I question when will we next see a building crane that wasn't a public sector capital finance.

Manitoba Hydro was the only one I can think of that had a building crane on it recently and that was a \$283-million boondoggle that was managed, again, by this government, forced by this government to put capital into downtown Winnipeg, so that they can say that they have a building crane and an increase in GDP. But it's not sustainable.

This government must recognize that their borrowings and their expenditures, their wasteful expenditures, their inefficiencies, is not sustainable. And the sooner Manitobans realize that—and I think they're coming to that realization, I really do. I've read the comments about this budget, and as much as the spin doctors from the NDP want to say that this is the best thing that's ever happened—four years of deficit financing; wow, boy, isn't it wonderful that we can deficit finance for four years in a row, up to \$500 million a year. That's outstanding.

I didn't hear any of those comments. I heard, wow, are we heading in the wrong direction.

And it doesn't seem that this government has the ability to be able to turn that direction around.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I am extremely concerned about the direction that we're heading in Manitoba, the fiscal irresponsibility, the lack of credibility, the fact that they are now going to change balanced budget legislation to suit themselves because they can't control their out-of-control spending is the wrong way to go. So, I can assure you that members of my party will not condone an irresponsible budget, will not condone irresponsible spending, will not condone irresponsible borrowings, will not condone a legacy of debt and debt

repayments that this government is going to leave to our children and our grandchildren.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I hope beyond hope that even members on that side will recognize the folly of their fiscal ways and change it as soon as they possibly can. Thank you.

**Ms. Sharon Blady (Kirkfield Park):** Madam Deputy Speaker, it is a privilege to rise today in support of the budget presented by the Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk).

I would like to begin, however, by welcoming the new member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) to the House and extending greetings and congratulations to him for the excellent work he has done which has brought him to this Chamber. The people of Concordia will continue to be well-served by his hard work and passionate community involvement as he moves into his new role as their MLA. It is refreshing to see another young person enter into this Chamber with fresh ideas and devoted to maintaining the decade-long tradition of this government to look after all Manitobans by innovating and investing in our collective future.

So, welcome to the Chamber and welcome to a team that continues to adapt to a changing world, by maintaining investments and practices that have ensured this province's growth and success over the past decade, and welcome to a team that faces such a changing economic world with long-term planning that builds towards a strong future.

\* (16:10)

J'espère que votre teneur dans cette chambre va durer longtemps et sera bénéfique pour votre conscription et les citoyens et les citoyennes du Manitoba. Comme le nouvel député pour Concordia, vous avez un prédécesseur qui a succédé à faire plusieurs grands accomplissements pour Concordia et pour toute la Province du Manitoba. Ne sera pas intimidé par lui, mais prenez l'exemple de Gary Doer comme modèle et savez que vous êtes très respecté par les députés de cette chambre pour tenir Concordia pour une conscription représentée par le gouvernement. Bienvenue.

**Translation**

*I hope that your tenure in this Chamber will last a long time and will be beneficial for your riding and the citizens of Manitoba. As the new MLA for Concordia you have a predecessor who succeeded in making a number of great accomplishments for*

*Concordia and for the entire province of Manitoba. Do not be intimidated by him, but take Gary Doer's example as a model and know that you are greatly respected by the MLAs of this Chamber for keeping Concordia a riding that is represented by the government. So welcome.*

### **English**

Madam Deputy Speaker, when I was considering—pardon—Madam Deputy Speaker, when I was considering how I might prepare my notes for this debate there were so many considerations. In looking back at the Throne Speech debates of the fall, I recall that my reference to the words of Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr, plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose [*the more things change, the more they stay the same*], seemed to strike a particular chord with some in this House and a rather sore spot with others.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it would seem that I could easily follow that line of argument now, as the responses to this budget, both inside and outside of this Chamber, continue to confirm the veracity of the axiom. Whether it is in the commitment of this government to a five-year, five-part plan to address the consequences of the economic downturn or the partisan mailer sent into Kirkfield Park by the Conservative caucus, it seems our commitment to investment and planning, along with their commitment to naysaying and fear-mongering, remains the same.

We are all familiar with the consequences of the Conservative government policy and practice of the 1990s and the rebuilding of this province's economy and essential services under this government for the past decade. So I will spare members opposite the discomfort of reliving their disgraces and our accomplishments.

There have been and will continue to be ample comparative historical examples provided in other budget responses that demonstrate the axiom that the best indicator of future behaviour is past behaviour.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, we have already gone down such a path in the fall, and there is really no need to continue beating a dead horse. So I will leave such practices for the resident experts in that sport, the members opposite.

M. le Prés... – Mme la Vice-présidente, au lieu de cela, je peux comparer notre plan économique quinquennal avec une époque sous le régime d'un gouvernement conservateur, mais encore, cette

comparaison-cela deviendra un exercice comme l'autre: une répétition sur l'histoire de un gouvernement qui garde les services essentiels et un autre gouvernement qui les détruit.

### **Translation**

*Mr.—Madam Deputy Speaker, instead of that, I can compare our five-year economic plan with a time when a Conservative government was in power, but again, that comparison will become an exercise like the other one: a repetition of the story of one government that maintains essential services and another government that destroys them.*

### **English**

Madam Deputy Speaker, as a result, I have chosen to compare our vision of the future with that of members opposite. So, I will contrast the five key areas of our long-term plan, which is embodied in this budget, with the election platforms proposed by members opposite this spring in Carman.

I will also consider those areas that they mentioned as not being significant to their vision of the future and contrast those to the values of our government, the values of Manitobans and, specifically, the values of those in Kirkfield Park. I know that they long to possess the constituency of Kirkfield Park again, as this loss was a particular blow to them. But, again, I remind them, it was the irrelevance of their platform in 2007 that saw the people of Kirkfield Park move forward to be represented by a government that shared their values rather than embrace tired rhetoric, fear-mongering over our beloved Grace Hospital and the promise of the return of the Jets.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, let us begin the comparison of the future of Manitoba as seen by this side of the House and members opposite.

Our five-year plan entails five main goals: invest in front-line services essential to all Manitobans; stimulate economic growth by investing in infrastructure; manage government spending, demonstrating the same belt-tightening that Manitobans are exercising in their own households; restore balance by returning to surplus in five years and paying down debt; all of which serves to keep Manitoba affordable to retain and grow our population.

I would like to note, Madam Deputy Speaker, that these goals are based on the input and feedback received from Manitobans from across the province

at pre-budget consultations. So this is not just the vision of the Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) and the 34 other members of the Chamber on this side of the House, but rather the vision of the Manitobans that shared their priorities with us to shape this budget.

Let us now compare this to the Conservative vision put forth this winter, and as articulated by the member for Carman (Mr. Pedersen) while seeking to be the future member for Midland in 2011. He said, as was written in the *Valley Leader*, that their vision is based on their election platform, specifically pertaining to crime and safety, debt and finances, education, Manitoba Hydro and Elections Manitoba. The member for Carman is quoted as saying: We have to pick the issues that we're going to win an election on, and those five are what we're going to win it on.

It was then noted that the Tories will put less focus on other issues, such as health care, roads, social services, agriculture, rural depopulation, and the First Nations.

The member for Carman went on to say: We're not going to win an election based on those issues. They're important and I don't mean to downplay any of them, but we're not going to win an election.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, to begin this exercise in compare and contrast, we see one side of the House focussing on what is in the best interests of all Manitobans, as expressed by Manitobans, and delivered in this budget and five-year plan, and on the other side of the House, we see members opposite preoccupied with an election a year and a half away, no long-term vision beyond 18 months and no concern for anyone's future but their own. Shame.

Mme la Vice-présidente, le Budget de 2010 marque le lancement d'un plan économique quinquennal qui s'attaquera au déficit budgétaire tout en continuant de investir en faveur des services de première ligne dans les domaines de soins de santé, de l'éducation et de la formation, des services de police et des appuis aux familles.

Mais, les Conservateurs disent que les services de première ligne dans les domaines de soins de santé ne sont pas une priorité pour leur réélection. C'est dommage, Mme la Vice-présidente, parce que les Manitobains et les Manitobains nous disaient – nous disent que les services de première ligne dans les domaines de soins de santé sont leurs priorités

plus importants. Pour devenir réélu, est-ce que le député pour Carman pense que la terminaison du nouvel hôpital pour les femmes est une bonne idée?

Ou, peut-être la terminaison du nouveau centre de accouchement?

Je sais que les familles du Manitoba, les familles de Kirkfield Park, voulant les services offerts aux centres de santés comme lesquelles.

### **Translation**

*Madam Deputy Speaker, Budget 2010 marks the launch of a five-year economic plan that will attack the budget deficit while continuing to invest in front-line services in the areas of health care, education and training, police services and support for families.*

*However, the Conservatives say that front-line services in health care are not a priority for them in getting re-elected. That's unfortunate, Madam Deputy Speaker, because Manitobans told us—tell us that front-line services in health care are their top priority. To get re-elected, does the member for Carman (Mr. Pedersen) think that terminating the new women's hospital is a good idea?*

*Or terminating the new birth centre, perhaps?*

*I know that the families of Manitoba, the families of Kirkfield Park, want services provided in health-care centres like these.*

### **English**

Madam Deputy Speaker, this budget launches a larger, long-term economic plan that addresses budgetary deficit and balances that with maintaining the ongoing investments in front-line health care services, education and training, supports for families and public safety.

But, according to the priorities outlined by the members opposite, health care is not a priority for them in the 2011 election. That's unfortunate because Manitobans told us that front-line health care services were one of their greatest priorities.

So, in seeking re-election, does the member for Carman (Mr. Pedersen) suggest the termination of the new women's hospital, or would terminating the new birthing centre be better for him to get re-elected?

I know that the families throughout Manitoba and without—within Kirkfield Park want the kinds of

services, the front-line services, that these centres will provide.

Mme la Vice-présidente, le budget investit dans les domaines prioritaires, pour Kirkfield Park et pour les Manitoba. Il augmente le financement accordé à la formation d'une plus grande nombre de médecins et de personnel infirmier.

Ce budget améliorerait les services des soins d'urgence et modernise le service d'urgence du Centre des Sciences de la santé. Il investit dans la construction d'une centre de intervention de urgence en santé mentale et procédait à la planification du nouvel hôpital pour les femmes à Winnipeg.

Ce budget rassemble les services spécialisés pour les enfants et adolescents ayant des incapacités. Il continue la construction d'une centre anticancéreux et agrandir le Westman Regional Laboratory à Brandon.

Ce budget reflète la vision du futur de cet gouvernement, la vision du futur du Manitoba et la vision du futur de mes voisins à Kirkfield Park.

### **Translation**

*Madam Deputy Speaker, this budget invests in priority areas for Kirkfield Park and for Manitoba. It increases funding for training of more doctors and nursing staff.*

*This budget would improve emergency health care and provides for upgrades to the emergency department at Health Sciences Centre. It invests in the construction of a mental health crisis response centre and moved ahead with the planned women's hospital in Winnipeg.*

*This budget consolidates specialized services for children and youth with disabilities. It continues the construction of a cancer centre and the expansion of the Westman Regional Laboratory in Brandon.*

*This budget reflects the government's vision for the future, Manitoba's vision for the future, and the vision for the future of my neighbours in Kirkfield Park.*

### **English**

Madam Deputy Speaker, investment in front-line health-care services may not be part of the Conservative vision of the future but is a key part of our government's vision of the future, and it is a key part of my neighbourhood's vision of the future.

\* (16:20)

I know this because of the participation levels that we have had in the community consultations for the access centre and the rave reviews that the PRIME centre at Deer Lodge has received from its clients, including those from Kirkfield Park.

For example, Madam Deputy Speaker, in June of last year a wonderful couple from Kirkfield Park was interviewed by the *Free Press* at the official opening for the PRIME centre. According to their interview, this program of integrated managed care of the elderly centre, has allowed Kaye Beattie and her partner, Bob Markle to stay together by giving them the extra services they need and preventing Bob from having to move into a nursing home.

From their apartment in Kirkfield Park, Mr. Markle visits PRIME three times a week since beginning to go there a year ago. In the interview, Ms. Beattie reflected on how her partner went from being a virtual shut-in who spent a disproportionate amount of time seeking medical care to becoming what she called a social butterfly, and said that she now receives the supports she needs as a partner and caregiver, which also gives her time to look after herself in a way often lost to caregivers.

I've had the privilege of meeting this couple and their liveliness is an inspiration to all they meet. So Madam Deputy, I wonder, did the member for Carman (Mr. Pedersen) coach the guest speaker at his nomination meeting, the Conservative candidate for Kirkfield Park, to go speak to this couple and other PRIME clients from my neighbourhood about how funding for such front-line services as their PRIME centre are not part of the Conservative vision of the future for Manitoba? Will he have her explain to Ms. Beattie and Mr. Markle that the PRIME staff of 22, including a primary care physician, a nurse practitioner, social worker and other health-care professional and aides are important but not something that would win her the election. I'm sure that they will be impressed by a Conservative vision for the future where their quality of life, their health and their priorities are secondary to the election aspirations of a repeat electoral contender.

I'd also like to ask the members opposite, how well did the Conservative vision for health care work for her when she was their candidate in Assiniboia? Considering that the long-time member for Assiniboia sits a few seats down from me on this side of the House and that he's also the Minister for

Healthy Living (Mr. Rondeau), I presume that this was slightly less than a stellar success.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I can assure my neighbours in Kirkfield Park that such an abandonment of their needs, such an abandonment of their desire for these front-line services as outlined by the Conservative election platform, is not a part of our government's vision. Such abandonment is not a part of this budget. As a member of this government, as the person who is afforded the responsibility of representing my neighbours, my friends and my family in Kirkfield Park, I would like to assure them that they are not merely constituents within an electoral boundary whose needs will be subservient to election goals and platforms. Rather I assure my friends, family, colleagues and neighbours in Kirkfield Park that because they are the ones who I have grown up with, who I have gone to school with, worked with, survived cancer with, because they are those who educated me, those who employed me and mentored me, that they are the ones who I will continue to serve for the improvement of their lives and the strong vision of our collective future.

This budget reflects the goals, aspirations and visions for the future that have been brought forth by those from Kirkfield Park and from all around this magnificent province. This budget is their budget; this plan is their plan; this vision is their vision. I believe they know that, but I wonder if the members opposite have recognized this yet.

Mme la Vice-présidente, ce budget prévoit de bâtir et améliorer le infrastructure pour créer des emplois et investir dans l'innovation afin d'assurer un avenir prospère. Il investit 1,8 milliard de dollars dans le infrastructure, une augmentation de 90 pour cent par rapport à 2008, ce qui permettra de créer 29 000 emplois directs et indirects.

Ce budget allouait près de 600 millions de dollars pour les routes, notamment la RPGC n° 75 sud, la Transcanadien est, la RPGC n° 2 et la RPGC n° 6 nord. Il investit dans la construction de la voie CentrePort Canada, y compris un passage au-dessous de la ligne principale du Chemin de fer Canadien Pacifique et un échangeur au niveau de la route périphérique.

Ce budget fournit 148 millions de dollars pour remplacer et réparer des ponts, notamment le pont à Saint-Adolphe. Il investit dans étamer les travaux de construction d'une route toutes saisons sur la rive est du lac Winnipeg et investit dans les routes d'hiver.

Ce budget verse 30 millions de dollars additionnels au programme infrastructures Canada-Manitoba, portant le total de la contribution provinciale à 72 millions de dollars dans le budget.

### **Translation**

*Madam Deputy Speaker, this budget plans for the building and improvement of infrastructure to create jobs and invest in innovation to ensure a prosperous future. It invests \$1.8 billion dollars in infrastructure, a 90 percent increase over 2008, which will create 29,000 direct and indirect jobs.*

*This budget allocated nearly \$600 million for roads, particularly PTH 75 south, the Trans-Canada Highway east, PTH 2 and PTH 6 north. It invests in the construction of CentrePort Canada Way, including an overpass at Canadian Pacific Railway's main line and an interchange at the perimeter.*

*This budget provides \$148 million to replace and repair bridges, including the bridge in St. Adolphe. It invests in the start of construction of an all-season road on the east side of Lake Winnipeg and winter roads.*

*This budget contributes an additional \$30 million to the Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure program, bringing the total provincial contribution to \$72 million in the budget.*

### **English**

Madam Deputy Speaker, this budget also brings forth our vision to continue investing to stimulate economic growth. Such investments grew our economy in good times and gave it deep and stable roots to withstand the recent winds of economic change.

This government's five-year plan not only sets up a strategy to eliminate the deficit and balance a budget over that time but will do so while investing in infrastructure and our province's economic growth. So often, from the other side of the House, we hear petitions and grievances demanding that roads and highways need repair and improvement, but, according to the member for Carman (Mr. Pedersen), roads are not a priority compared to debt and financing. But here's a question for him: Why can't both be priorities?

Madam Deputy Speaker, our vision on this side of the House isn't limited to having one at the expense of the other. We're investing \$1.8 billion on infrastructure spending, including \$600 million in

highway construction upgrading, particularly for PTH 75 south, the Trans-Canada Highway East, PTH 2 and PTH 6.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I wonder, if based on the priorities that the Conservatives have outlined, does this mean that the member for Carman has convinced the members from Morris and Pembina that to get themselves re-elected they need to let people know that such investments in provincial highways are not part of the Conservative vision for the future. Do members opposite see such infrastructure spending as being important but not something that's really going to win an election for them? I'm wondering how the folks in Morris and Emerson feel about that kind of vision, now, as the Red River crests, to know that their needs are important but not important enough to be election worthy to those they selected to be their voice in this House.

These vital economic corridors, these roads that people go to work on and to school on are not part of the Conservative vision of the future. How unfortunate. By contrast, Madam Deputy Speaker, part of our commitment to infrastructure investment in this budget, and in our long-term plan, is to continue to build CentrePort Canada Way as part of a larger vision to see to fruition CentrePort, Winnipeg's inland port.

We know the importance of working with our partners in other levels of government and with the business community on this vision of the future for Manitoba, to build our strength as a province, to further grow our economy, grow our population and tap into the global market in unprecedented ways for Manitoba businesses.

As the party that touts itself as the friends of business, I will spare the members opposite a recounting of the past successes of this government in working with the private sector, and also spare them a recounting of the demise of Winnport.

Instead, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would ask them, if the member for Carman is convinced his Finance critic, the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson), that the way to become Finance Minister in 2011 is to promise to pull the plug on CentrePort and all of the related infrastructure investment committed to in this budget in the five-year plan? Is that the vision of the future that they think will carry them into government?

And I would hope that, in having had their candidate for Kirkfield Park join the Assiniboia Chamber of Commerce, that members opposite briefed her on the successes that the ministers and premiers of this government have had in working with the executive and members of the Chamber, so that if she does follow the lead of the member for Carman (Mr. Pedersen) in reiterating how the—reiterating the low priority of roads and infrastructure in the Conservative election platform, that she's, you know, at least prepared to defend herself to a group of business people who share a vision with this government and who look forward to CentrePort's successful completion and the success it will afford their local enterprises.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it would seem that the Conservative vision of the future has no place for the infrastructure investments that support the economic advancement of so many companies that employ so many Manitobans. Again, Madam Deputy Speaker, rather unfortunate and out of touch in the small business—with the small businesses and large corporations that are a part of so many lives in Kirkfield Park and in the rest of Manitoba.

\*(16:30)

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

Mr. Speaker, as I look at the clock, I see that, were I to continue this exercise in comparing this government's vision for the future with that of members opposite, that my time would surely run out long before I got through all the comparisons that I had set out to do earlier in this response.

Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that I won't have the opportunity to discuss in great detail our vision of public safety and community through investments in front-line services like providing additional prosecutors in the courts and increasing Lighthouse programs to keep youth out of the justice system in the first place. I was quite looking forward to comparing our vision with that of the member of Carman's first election platform of crime and punishment. My apologies, I seem to have confused the Conservative election platform with a classic work of Russian literature, both of which can be equally dense, or possibly I confused it with the member for Steinbach's (Mr. Goertzen) vision of the future.

Most significantly, I will not have the chance to comment on how this budget supports agriculture in

Manitoba through such things as grants to encourage the local production of biofuels or the aid that this budget will provide to the farmers in the north Interlake who have been hard hit by flooding. The differing visions on the topic of agricultural investment alone could take quite a while to compare and contrast as the Conservative vision for this province doesn't see agriculture and rural depopulation as worthy of consideration moving towards the election in 2011. Again, this fact will probably be a great shock to the rural Manitobans represented by the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, in concluding my remarks in support of this budget, I would like to thank those Manitobans that took the time to participate in budget consultations and share with us their vision for the future in these times of economic recovery. I would also like to thank the Minister of Finance and those that worked with her in the task of listening to and responding to the direction given to us by these Manitobans to make this budget and this long-term plan a feasible and responsible reality that balances investment in Manitobans with fiscal responsibility for Manitoba's future growth and success.

Mr. Speaker, it seems that, regardless of whether one compares the past policies of this government to that of members opposite or compares our government's vision of the future to theirs, the words of M. Karr still ring true, plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose. *[The more things change, the more they stay the same.]*

**Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to rise this afternoon and participate in debate pertaining to the Throne, pardon me, the budget speech that was provided by this government a short time ago.

I listened very intently to honourable members opposite and their heralding of the budget and has been one of success and speaking well of the future, and I try and understand how anyone using any basis of common sense could effectively make statements that have been read into the record this afternoon. How can one feel good about looking our children in the faces and saying: I'm going to have a really, really good life; I'm going to have a really, really good time, and then when you grow up, you're going to have to pay for the good time that I had?

I honestly could not do that to my children, but the members of the New Democratic Party seem not to have any qualms in doing just that. They have their children's credit cards, and they're going out and they're spending lavishly so that they can make themselves feel really, really good. These comparisons that are being made about decades-old activities of government, we can all play that game. We all know though, how government effectively operates. When there is a change in government, it is perhaps two years between the full responsibility for budget of the new government versus the old government because there is overlap of commitments made through contract and negotiated arrangements that carry on, even though governments do change.

But we now are entering into the 12th year of the New Democratic Party government administration, and there is nothing going on today as an activity of government that cannot be attributed directly to this government.

One can say that it was back in the '90s that we are facing problems in health care. That's totally bogus, because the 1,700 vacancies currently in the nursing sector of our health-care system here in Manitoba are not of the former administration's doing; it is of the current administration's doing. We all know how many years it takes to train various medical personnel, and this shortage could very easily have been addressed if this government, indeed, wanted to address it. But the reason that they do is because they want to see Manitobans without service because of staff shorting, because it gives them good political fodder, and they can go to the media and make the statement that it is because of the administration back in the 1990s that we have a nursing shortage here. But that's not the truth, and I thought that when we came to this honourable Assembly, that we wanted to be reflective of those that voted for us, reflective of the values to which Manitobans want to see in their elected officials. And that is to speak the truth and to always do what—their level best, to represent and make their lives a better life.

This government does not intend to do that because it is not something that would be in their best political interest, and so they let the health-care system, they let our infrastructure, they let our schools decay, because it makes good political fodder. And that is the truth, and it's highly obvious.

Well, there is a situation just involved in this budget, and I will go right to the very, very bottom line. This budget is—does, indeed, forecast an increase in revenue for the government. Yet, this government has decided that it will not live within its means and is intentionally living beyond its means, and, in the very own words of the Finance Minister, do the same thing as I do in my own household. Obviously, the Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) believes in living beyond her means and letting the debt build up in her own household and asks her children to pay for it. And that's exactly what she's doing to all—the province of Manitoba and to all Manitobans.

And you wonder why that voters are getting increasingly upset and jaded towards the political system in not only our province, but others as well. It's because we don't look to the future and genuinely make the decisions that are in the best interest of the future. One particular issue that I have that brought me to the Legislative Assembly, and that is my belief in the importance in education. Indeed, it provides the skills, and, ultimately, the tools to provide not only for one's self, but, ultimately, one's family.

And with that vital importance placed upon education, I'm very, very saddened that this government has chosen to suspend the adult education program in Portage la Prairie. This is for persons that wanted to better themselves through education, and this government said that that is not a priority of theirs. They would rather the individual not get an education, and, hence, cancelling the program.

\* (16:40)

And this is the case that is, and I heard comment from one member opposite saying it is unbelievable. It really, truly is. It really is truly unbelievable that a government that has decided to cancel the adult education in a sizeable rural community such as Portage la Prairie is astonishing to me and to those that reside in Portage la Prairie, and wonder what truly is the focus of this government and what are its priorities.

And, then, to further confuse the public, statements are made as it pertains to our provincial parks that it now—this government wants to encourage Manitobans to attend to our beautiful provincial parks and that is why the park entrance fees have been suspended, but what they don't tell

people that will be attending our Manitoba parks—and I just heard a ministerial statement saying that, on the very first day of reservations, a new record was set. But, when those people do, indeed, attend to the parks in the province of Manitoba, they are going to be very, very surprised to learn of all of the increases that are going to be taking place within our provincial parks.

They'll be looking at increases for the water, for the hydro, for the firewood. They'll be faced with increased charges for overnight rentals, substantially so that this government, even though the park entrance fees have been waived, are looking to increase the park revenues to the general treasury of this government by over \$80,000. So why, then, would this government make so much that they are wanting to make efforts to see people go to the parks? It's not for any other reason than to raise additional dollars for this particular government's insatiable appetite for spending money.

A lot is also made in members opposites' statements that is, indeed, very, very troubling. You know, to take an individual member's remarks and to make more of those remarks by lavishly making extensions to what's those remarks were otherwise intended, because I could do exactly the same thing for the member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer) when brought to this Chamber a resolution that wanted to make Manitoba the 10th province of Canada to have a deposit-return system in place for beverage containers, and his exact comment on the record was that it was a bonehead idea.

Does that mean, then, that all members opposite don't believe in recycling? They don't believe in keeping glass and plastic out of our landfills and could make use of those containers that we recognize our environment as an important element to the future generations that we must safeguard and preserve? But that was a statement made by a New Democratic Party member who sits on the government side of the House, believing that it is a bonehead idea to recycle. My goodness gracious, I'd like to campaign door-to-door on candidates opposite going door-to-door stating with everybody with their blue boxes or green boxes outside their homes, saying they're boneheads for recycling, but that's what a member of the New Democratic Party said, and so this is—so, if members want to take off-the-cuff remarks and try and say that they're policy of government, maybe we should be doing the same

thing over here, but I think that would not be the position of being an honourable member of this Legislative Assembly, and so I do not. I want to always take the high road because, at the end of the day, that's what we'll be remembered for.

Now, this government—the very next day I listened to our local radio station for the updated news and weather and sports reports and—oh, at this, maybe, this juncture in time, I might want to congratulate the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers), where the Dauphin Kings are now the celebrated junior hockey champions for the province. So I don't, didn't see any off-colour jerseys around here today so maybe there wasn't any bets made this year as years in past that the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) and the member for Portage la Prairie exchanged jerseys here after the finals.

But it is very important that we look to the future and want to provide for that future, but this particular budget does not do that. In fact, the local radio station on-air commentator asked the question and for persons to phone in to try and answer the question. If we break the law, does that give us the right to change the law, so thereby keeping us from paying a fine or keeping us out of jail? And then he spoke of this—the government changing the balanced budget legislation because they did not want to pay the fine, the penalty of budgeting for a deficit.

It was quite interesting to listen to the comments of persons phoning in that said, perhaps, maybe when I was speeding down the highway and I got caught for being 10 kilometres over, would then that mean that I can now go to the minister's office and ask the minister to change the law so I don't have to then pay the fine? An example after example came forward, you know, that really shed light on this particular government's budget. It is, it was actually quite entertaining, but the New Democratic Party obviously was not looked upon with great favour, because that's precisely what was contained in the budget speech, that this government fully intends to change the law because they cannot abide by the law. And that, for a legislator, is about the lowest rung on the ladder one can stand on.

This particular budget continues to, what I believe, leave the very fundamentals of what this province was built upon, and I'm going to speak of the profession to which I spent most of my working career, and that's in agriculture. The term, the word,

agriculture, was not even mentioned in the entire budget delivery speech, and this is coming from the former minister of Agriculture. Is agriculture not important to this province any more? Obviously not in the budgetary expenditures, that's for certain. But, at the very least, one could acknowledge the importance of agriculture to the economy, and it—which is extremely dismaying for someone that has enjoyed a career in agriculture, and for each and every person that resides in this province, that enjoys their breakfast, their lunch and their supper, should feel it rather important as well. And if that was to be truly realized, we would not be seeing the reduction of the priority of agriculture as dictated within this budget.

So, continuing on, we look at that expenditures in various areas, but a lot was made of infrastructure, especially by the honourable member that hails from Thompson, of how much we're spending on infrastructure. But you wonder where those expenditures are actually taking place, because I travel the Trans-Canada Highway, and it's federal dollars that are being placed on that roadway. It's federal dollars that have been going into the improved drainage system from the Red River Floodway. But we look at other areas that need upgrading and rejuvenating, and they're just not taking place.

\*(16:50)

A perfect example is the bridge to which the honourable member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Briese) referred to, where the actual area for water flow under the bridge is—could not be—accommodate a man on his hands and knees, and that tells a lot of when that watercourse was last renovated.

We have a lot of different areas of concern and I've related to agriculture, I've related to education, I've related to the health-care situation that we face, but I'm also going to refer to individuals that serve this Chamber, serve this province, serve Manitoba, and this government takes on negotiating the wage and benefits package through the media. That is a show of disrespect beyond any comprehension that I have of towards those that take on the honourable service, the public service.

This government does not, obviously, hold the civil service in very high regard, and it speaks volumes, and this budget once again 'reiterated' that

they that serve this province are not going to be looked upon with favour as far as increased benefits or wages that would at least even compensate for the change in inflation, the costs of goods and services. You know, when you talk about an increase—dollars of going to the park, an increased dollars at, for one, that if they're going to have a beer within that park, increased dollars if they're going to have a campground fire. You know, all of these are increasing. Even the vehicle one rides in going to the park is going to have an increase in vehicle registration fees of \$18 per vehicle, which is directly government policy. It has nothing to do with any other decision-making process other than the government themselves. So you're really lightening up the pocketbook of every Manitoban that wants to live here in the province and celebrate that life with their family.

This government is also all about making a statement and then not following through. I would like to once again bring up the very specific issue of legislation that protect our first responders as pertaining to allowance for blood sampling of the individuals that potentially could be carrying infectious disease and that transfer of blood and bodily fluids could be infectious to our first responders. The honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) brought forward legislation which was proven legislation as it had been adopted and passed into law in many other provinces, and yet this government refused to pass the legislation because it came from the opposition benches.

Yet this government, within a few months, brought forward legislation virtually word for word—word for word of the honourable member for Steinbach's legislation, and we all supported the legislation. It was passed by this Assembly, yet it was more than two years—two years before that legislation was proclaimed. It was all about this government's inaction after the glory of the press release and the headlines had passed, because that's when the work takes place to get the legislation into place and enforced. And so this government is all about making the announcements but very, very poor on the follow through.

We do recognize that there are—have been progresses made towards the initiatives that will help our economy such as CentrePort. I'm pleased to see the government's mention of that within the budget. I also am very pleased to see that the government

recognizes the importance of value-added processing and is partnering with the federal government to improve the food development centre that is located in my constituency of Portage la Prairie.

I do want to congratulate the government on some programs such as Neighbourhoods Alive! and Lighthouses that have been programs that have been very, very successful. I'd also like to congratulate the government on the basis that they have seen the merit in the immigration to our province of Manitoba and have supported the Nominee Program and seen a significant increase in new Manitobans, and would like to recognize the newly appointed citizen court judgeship to the former member for Minnedosa, Mr. Harold Gilleshammer.

But what I'd like—I know my time is very, very short, and so I will focus my last comments in regards to the government's mismanagement of our Crown corporations very, very quickly. If one will note within the government's published documents that they have effectively decimated our very proud, proud corporations, and now the government looks upon the Manitoba Hydro as generating no net income this year. They are looking that the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation will have no net income, even though years past, the government has heralded how well operated that particular Crown corporation is and very, very subtly has provided Manitobans with a rebate. Well, maybe not so subtly, it—I think the cheques came out in the mail during the last election writ period. I believe that, perhaps, might have been coincidence, though.

This government continues, though, as I made mention, to mismanage our Crown corporations, and that, speaking of Manitoba Hydro, not expected to make any money this year. Yet, this government has taken a dividend payment from the corporation on a number of occasions, but is now setting policy for that very proud corporation and providing directives, as was the terminology provided for at legislative committee, that the CEO of Manitoba Hydro received a directive from government to cease their study of a planned Bipole III project down the east side of Lake Winnipeg and to commence planning for the Bipole III project to take a route west of Lake Manitoba, in fact, even a lot farther west. One particular routing takes the Bipole III proposed line within eyesight of the Saskatchewan border. And we all know how much extra mileage that that is going to cost Manitoba taxpayers. And even Manitoba

Hydro officials believe that the figure to which we have been speaking about at 640 million is additional cost to Manitobans, is on the low end of the estimated scale. They believe that there will be close to 50 million dollars' worth of line 'lossage' when the line is complete at complete capacity.

So, Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the opportunity to speak in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly as it pertains to what this government is forecasting and plans to do for this province, and it is one very, very

sad day for Manitobans as we see outlined in this budget, that we will be relying on our grandchildren and great grandchildren to pay our—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have three minutes remaining.

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Tuesday, April 6, 2010**

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