

Fifth Session - Thirty-Ninth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
Official Report
(Hansard)

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Ninth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
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ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
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BLAIKIE, Bill, Hon.	Elmwood	N.D.P.
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CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
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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.
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MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
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MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
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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.
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RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
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WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	N.D.P.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.
<i>Vacant</i>	Inkster	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, November 29, 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 10—The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Leave for Citizenship Ceremonies)

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Labour and Immigration): I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan), that Bill 10, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Leave for Citizenship Ceremonies); Loi modifiant le Code des normes d'emploi (congés relatifs aux cérémonies de citoyenneté), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. Howard: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce Bill 10, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Leave for Citizenship Ceremonies). This bill will enable employees to take up to four hours of unpaid leave for the purpose of attending their Canadian ceremony to receive their certificate of citizenship pursuant to the Citizenship Act. Before taking a leave, the employee would be required to give the employer at least 14 days notice.

Approximately 4,500 immigrants a year are currently sworn in as Canadian citizens in Manitoba at ceremonies administered by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. This amendment recognizes the significant of this occasion in the lives of new Canadians.

I want to thank the members of the Labour Management Review Committee, who have reviewed this proposal and have reached a consensus on this important amendment.

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

Bill 200—The Child and Family Services Amendment Act

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): I move, seconded by the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), that Bill 200, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, be now read for a first time.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Bill 200 amends The Child and Family Services Act to require that any decision to move a child when there are no child protection concerns contain a written reason from the Child and Family Services agency for this decision, including reference to the impact on the child, the appropriateness of the move in accordance with the child's stage of development, and the degree of attachment to the caregiver.

I would hope that all members of the House support this bill, Mr. Speaker.

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

PETITIONS

Bipole III Project

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background for this petition is as follows:

In September of 2007, the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro directed the utility to abandon an east-side route for its Bipole III project. Five days later, Manitoba Hydro announced that the utility would be proceeding with a west-side route.

Manitoba Hydro staff, technical experts and regular Manitobans have communicated to the provincial government that they would prefer an east-side route.

A west-side route will be almost 500 kilometres longer than an east-side route, less reliable, and cost taxpayers at least an additional \$1.75 billion.

The extra cost being forced on Manitoba Hydro and Manitobans by the provincial government will mean that every Manitoba family will end up paying \$7,000 for this decision.

Since the current provincial government has come into power, hydro rates have already increased by almost 20 per cent. If this decision is not reversed, it will result in further rate increases for Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the provincial government to allow Manitoba Hydro to proceed with the shorter, cheaper and greener east-side route, subject to the necessary regulatory approvals, enabling the utility to keep our hydro bills lower and to ensure a more reliable electricity system.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by J. Hiebert, N. Hiebert, H. Hiebert and many, many other Manitobans.

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

Multiple Sclerosis Treatment

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

More than 3,000 Manitobans and their families are impacted by multiple sclerosis, and Manitoba has one of the highest rates of MS in the world.

New research indicates that there may be a link between a condition known as chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency and multiple sclerosis. Preliminary studies indicate that many MS symptoms can be relieved with angioplasty, a common procedure.

In order to test this procedure for safety and effectiveness, additional research and clinical trials are needed. Manitoba is not testing for CCSVI, conducting research or conducting clinical trials.

The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador will be monitoring MS patients who have undergone the liberation treatment and studying its impact. Saskatchewan has announced that it will move forward with a clinical trial when their research community presents a proposal and has invited other provinces to join them. Meanwhile, Manitoba's

provincial government has not taken up this initiative nor shown leadership on this issue.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Health to consider making the province of Manitoba a leader in CCSVI research and to move forward with clinical trials as soon as possible.

This is signed by A. Landygo, A. Shek, C. Garlinski and many, many others, Mr. Speaker.

PTH 16 and PTH 5 North—Traffic Signals

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

The junction of PTH 16 and PTH 5 north is an increasingly busy intersection which is used by motorists and pedestrians alike.

The Town of Neepawa has raised concerns with the Highway Traffic Board about safety levels at this intersection.

The Town of Neepawa has also passed a resolution requesting that Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation install traffic lights at this intersection in order to increase safety.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation to consider making the installation of traffic lights at the intersection of PTH 16 and PTH 5 north a priority project in order to help protect the safety of the motorists and pedestrians who use it.

* (13:40)

This petition is signed by T. Kelly, B. Hares, L. Little and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Bipole III Project

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Carman): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

In September of 2007, the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro directed the utility to abandon an east-side route for its Bipole III project. Five days later, Manitoba Hydro announced the utility will be—would be proceeding with a west-side route.

Manitoba Hydro staff, technical experts and regular Manitobans have communicated to the provincial government that they would prefer an east-side route.

A west-side route will be almost 500 kilometres longer than an east-side route, less reliable and cost taxpayers at least an additional \$1.75 billion.

The extra cost being forced on Manitoba Hydro and Manitobans by the provincial government will mean that every Manitoba family will end up paying \$7,000 for this decision.

Since the current provincial government has come into power, hydro rates have already increased by almost 20 per cent. If this decision is not reversed, it will result in further rate increases for Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to allow Manitoba Hydro to proceed with the shorter, cheaper and greener east-side route, subject to necessary regulatory approvals, enabling the utility to keep our hydro bills lower and to ensure a more reliable electricity system.

And this petition is signed by C. Bonnee, L. Berube, E. Henderson and many, many more fine Manitobans.

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

In September of 2007, the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro directed the utility to abandon an east-side route for its Bipole III project. Five days later, Manitoba Hydro announced that the utility would be proceeding with a west-side route.

Manitoba Hydro staff, technical experts and regular Manitobans have communicated to the provincial government that they would prefer an east-side route.

A west-side route will be almost 500 kilometres longer than an east-side route, less reliable and cost ratepayers at least an additional \$1.75 billion.

The extra cost being forced on Manitoba Hydro and Manitobans by the provincial government will mean that every Manitoba family will end up paying \$7,000 for this decision.

Since the current provincial government has come into power, hydro rates have already increased by almost 20 per cent. If this decision is not reversed, it will result in further rate increases for Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to allow Manitoba Hydro to proceed with the shorter, cheaper and greener east-side route, subject to necessary regulatory approvals, enabling the utility to keep our hydro bills lower and to ensure a more reliable electricity system.

And this petition is signed by M. Doerksen, A. Doell, G. Theroux and many others, Mr. Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I would like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today from Swan River, we have Vicky Kereluk, Rose Atamanchuk and Karla Skulmoski, who are the guests of the honourable Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk).

And also in the public gallery we have from Murdoch MacKay Collegiate, we have 28 grade 9 students under the direction of Ms. Kim Dudek. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Phoenix Sinclair Death Public Inquiry

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it's now been over 180 days since the deadline expired on the appeal application for the convicted killer of Phoenix Sinclair.

I wonder if the Premier can indicate how much longer is he going to allow this convicted killer to hijack the start of this important inquiry.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, as we've said before, we will not do anything to compromise the conviction in this case that would in any way create the possibility that this heinous crime would go unpunished and the killers be released. And it is for that reason that we will call the inquiry

which we have promised, a comprehensive inquiry, once that risk period is over.

Mr. McFadyen: I—the Premier has talked about a risk period. The killers went to trial and they were convicted beyond a reasonable doubt. They appealed to the Manitoba Court of Appeal. Their appeal was rejected unanimously by the three judges of the Manitoba Court of Appeal. There was a 60-day period to file an appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada. That 60-day period expired more than 180 days ago.

Would the Premier please identify whether the risk period he is referring to is the risk period with respect to the convicted killer or a risk period with respect to his desperate NDP government?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, for the last several years we have committed to a full inquiry that will look at all facets of this case and identify what the learnings are to prevent these kinds of tragic situations from occurring again. But it's also the case that there is the possibility of the Supreme Court considering an appeal, and we do not want the inquiry in any way to jeopardize the conviction which has occurred here and the conviction which has properly convicted those that have perpetrated this heinous crime. We want to ensure that those people do not go free on the streets. The members opposite may wish to take that risk. We do not.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, the period for filing an appeal ended more than 180 days ago. There's been no application to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court has nothing before it to even consider. The only person who is defining whether or not an appeal remains a possibility is the convicted killer who's already exhausted his appeal at the Court of Appeal.

I wonder if the Premier can justify how he can allow the passage of time to continue to put in jeopardy this inquiry, to result in loss of evidence, to result in other things that will negatively impact the quality of the inquiry.

Why is he allowing the inquiry to be compromised simply because he doesn't have the political courage to make a decision?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the member full well knows that in the—as recently as the third week of November, the lawyer for the accused was suggesting that an appeal was under consideration, and we do not in any way want to jeopardize the

conviction which has been achieved here, the conviction which is keeping this individual off the streets, this conviction which has not allowed this person who has committed this heinous crime to be back in the community. The members opposite may want to risk that. We do not.

We will do a full public inquiry as has been committed to. We will do a full public inquiry, but we will not do it in such a way that it risks releasing this individual.

Child Welfare System Children-in-Care Fatalities

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): A pretty weak answer from a government that has been overseeing a Child and Family Services system that's in chaos, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, far too many children have died as a direct result of this NDP government's failed implementation of devolution, review after review, recommendation after recommendation, piles of money being poured into a child welfare system in chaos that is failing children who cannot protect themselves.

How can the minister say that safety is job one, when children continue to die under his watch?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs): Well, I will ask the member once again, that there were—Mr. Speaker, when the member gets up and—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

The honourable minister has the floor.

Mr. Mackintosh: The member repeatedly gets up in this House and blames devolution for the death of children when there was a far higher rate of children in care dying of non-natural causes under her watch, and before devolution, who did she blame? Mr. Speaker, you can see how—the politics for the member opposite.

*(13:50)

But, in terms of the allegation, there was a full independent review of child welfare done following the tragic death of Phoenix Sinclair. And as a result of the reviews by the Children's Advocate and the Ombudsman and other outside experts, the conclusion was that no child died as a direct result of the breakdown of the provision of child welfare

services in Manitoba. That's the independent view, not her partisan view.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Well, Mr. Speaker, since Phoenix Sinclair and Gage Guimond, children continue to die in our child welfare system, but there's no transparency, there's no accountability from this NDP government. The minister has to stop hiding behind confidentiality and release full reports to start providing real answers.

Mr. Speaker, why wasn't safety job one for Jaylene Sanderson-Redhead? Will he provide the answers today?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, the misunderstanding of the criminal justice system continues today, Mr. Speaker. That, of course, is a matter that subject to the, of course, sub judice convention of this House, but members surely understand that a matter that's going to sentencing is a matter that should be left to the courts at this particular time. It's the most sensitive timing to be making allegations that can just play into a defence counsel's arguments.

In terms of the accountability in Manitoba, we're always looking to enhance accountability, Mr. Speaker, and, as early as today, we were looking to see how we can better strengthen accountability measures in child welfare, building on the accountability measures that do flow from enhanced transparency. For example, when the Children's Advocate is given the ability to make findings public in—at her discretion, and, as well, of course, the enhanced powers for the Ombudsman and Children's Advocate.

Awasis Child and Family Services Agency Accountability

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, Jaylene Sanderson-Redhead is dead, murdered at the hands of her mother, returned to her mother's care by this minister's child welfare system. We can't keep her safe now, but we can demand answers about why he failed to protect her.

Can the minister tell us today, does he have any faith in the Awasis Agency and its ability to make safety a priority?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs): I know that members opposite, the member in question who knows better because she was the minister, they always want to blame a child welfare worker who has been sent in to help a family; that's what they do.

And, you know, Mr. Speaker, they—these child welfare workers, they save hundreds of children every month from death and abuse.

But even when there is a case that raises serious questions, as this has raised, that is why this Legislature, as a result of the death, the tragic death of Phoenix Sinclair, passed legislation, no thanks to members opposite, to enhance the independent review mechanisms that are in place to make it unlike any other province in Canada where the Children's Advocate has full powers to report and the Ombudsman follows up on the recommendations. We can always look to build on that, and we are looking at options to build on that.

Emergency Health-Care Services Crime-related Trauma Cases

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, Manitobans know that this government's soft-on-crime approach comes with many, many costs. It comes with a cost to victims, both financially and psychologically. We know that it comes with a cost to the reputation of the city and to the province, a cost that's almost impossible to put in dollar figures. And we saw with a recent report that it comes at a cost to Manitobans who are trying to access emergency care because of the increase of work in the ER because of gunshot wounds, people reporting with other trauma related to the crime and stabbings.

Will this minister acknowledge that his failure to reduce crime now comes at a cost of those who are trying to access care in our health-care system?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I'm pleased to talk about what our government has done in partnership with the Winnipeg Police Service, in partnership with other municipal police services and in partnership with the RCMP, who provide law enforcement across the province. I can talk, I'm not sure if the member will listen, but I can talk about the additional resources we put into our Crown attorneys, hiring 48 Crown attorneys already since 1999, making a long-term commitment to add another 53 Crown attorneys to our system, as well as passing laws we can within our control and being an effective and strong voice nationally to work with the federal government so that tougher laws are passed in the Criminal Code and the Youth Criminal Justice Act to make sure those who do commit crimes are brought to justice and have an appropriate punishment, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Goertzen: Mr. Speaker, we know that the minister can talk, and it's all talk, because, ultimately, the results aren't there.

And the other people that are talking are the health-care officials, and they're saying that on record numbers, over and over, they're seeing more and more people with stab wounds, more and more people with gunshot wounds, more and more people with crime-related trauma. That's what they are saying.

You know, victims know the truth. We know that the police know the truth. We know that those who are in our emergency rooms know the truth, and they're saying that the longer this government is in power, the worse the problem gets.

Can this minister explain why it is that those who are looking for health-care treatment have a harder time getting that access because this government has failed on crime, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Swan: Well, I know the member may not trust Statistics Canada, but the fact is, Mr. Speaker, since 1999, violent crime and all crimes have decreased in the province of Manitoba, and it hasn't happened by accident. That's happened because of investments. It's happened because of partnerships.

And I'll give an example on the auto theft front: Auto theft, which rose in the 1990s—the government of the day did nothing. Auto theft doubled in 1993, continued to increase every year the government of the day stood around and did nothing. Our government has partnered with Manitoba Public Insurance, with law enforcement. We've invested in Crown attorneys, probation services. And now auto theft, which everybody in this House can agree can have tragic consequences, is not only lower than it was in 1999, it's lower than any year since 1992 because of this—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Goertzen: Mr. Speaker, the report shows clearly what Progressive Conservatives have always known: that violent crime is something that doesn't just affect one particular area or one particular sector, but that when you have an increase of violent crime, in fact, there are ripple effects and it impacts many different far-reaching areas with many different far-reaching ramifications.

And one of those is the ability for people to get timely care in our emergency rooms. Now, the doctors are saying—and I know the minister wants to

try to muddy the waters—but if the doctors are saying, the nurses are saying, that they are seeing more and more people with stab wounds, with gunshot wounds and with crime-related trauma coming through the doors, and that's making it harder to help those who need to get timely care in our ERs.

Can this minister explain why it is the longer he's in government, the longer the NDP are government, the more he talks, the worse this problem gets, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Swan: Well, we can talk about the justice system, we can talk with the health-care system, and if we really want to clear the waters, we can talk about what the member from Steinbach and his leader and every other member of that caucus would do.

We saw it when they introduced the motion last spring, Mr. Speaker, that would have cut \$500 million out of the provincial budget. So it's true it would affect everybody, not just telling the City to lay off police officers, not just telling our health system again to let doctors and nurses go, as happened in the 1990s, to let teachers go, to let social workers go, and to let our front-line services fall apart.

They can talk all they want; this government invests. But they won't talk about exactly where those cuts would happen, and there's a reason for that: because they know that Manitobans will not agree with their plan to take this province apart, Mr. Speaker.

Agriculture Industry

Supply Management Commodities Quota Tax

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): And the east-side member for Minto and his failed campaign against Harvey Smith isn't convincing anybody either in this House or in Manitoba on anything he says, Mr. Speaker.

The reality, Mr. Speaker, is that this is a government—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. A little decorum, please.

Mr. McFadyen: That this government, in its desperate efforts to try to get its hands in the pockets of as many Manitobans as possible, did something in March that has never been done anywhere in Canada before, they brought in a tax on milk, Mr. Speaker. Now they run around to try to say that they're not

going to raise taxes after the election; Manitobans know better, because if you're going to tax milk, you'll tax pretty much anything.

Mr. Speaker, producers in Manitoba are still waiting after all this time to find out how it is that they plan to move ahead with this tax on milk and other supply managed products. And yet, at the end of the day, nothing is coming forward from the government. Producers are uncertain. Consumers are uncertain.

* (14:00)

When is the Premier going to get to the bottom of this issue of how he plans to move forward with his new tax on milk, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, there is no tax on milk. The members opposite don't even believe in supply side managements. They wouldn't even support it. They would crack it open and let the producers be at the risk of international market forces.

We support the supply management system with respect to milk in this province. The members opposite would abolish the Wheat Board so there'd be no protection for farmers who are selling wheat on the international markets.

If anybody is at risk of policies in this Chamber, it's farmers who are at risk of the members opposite gutting the protections they've got in our system.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, it's reported in the *Co-operator*, and I quote: Confusion still reigns over a new surcharge on quota sales for milk, eggs and poultry six months after the Manitoba government announced it.

I want to ask the Premier: Will he clear up the confusion so our producers of milk, eggs and poultry will have certainty about their operations going forward and those people who consume milk, eggs and poultry, and other good products made by our great Manitoba farmers, will know that they don't have a meddling NDP government getting between their milk producers and their shelves at home, Mr. Speaker, proposing new taxes on their groceries.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, producers know, farmers know that the members opposite would take away the supply management system that protects their ability to get a regular, consistent, predictable price for eggs, for poultry, for milk. Members opposite would get rid of that system, just like they'd get rid of the Wheat Board if they could do it.

And it's this side of the House that supports producers having the ability to have predictable prices for their products. That's the difference here. They would destroy the system. We will ensure that it functions on behalf of producers and consumers to ensure that both consumers and producers have a consistent ability to know what they will pay for food, and we have some of the best food products in the world, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, the government official, quoted in the same story, makes it very clear that the only purpose of the new tax on milk, eggs and poultry is to increase revenue to government in its time of financial mismanagement and waste and rising deficits and debt.

Mr. Speaker, rather than blaming Manitoba families and farmers for their inability to manage money here in government, why don't they just do the right thing, repeal the tax on milk for Manitoba families.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, we will do the right thing. We will continue to support a supply management system for milk, for poultry, for eggs, for—we will continue to support the Canadian Wheat Board as a collective marketing agent for producers in Manitoba.

The members opposite have been totally silent on protecting the Wheat Board. They have been deathly silent because they want to kill the Wheat Board. They have never stood up for supply management for eggs, poultry and dairy. Producers know we support a consistent price regime for them and we also support good value for consumers. And we know that our producers are among the best in the world at providing these high quality products, not only to Manitobans but to Canadians and to people around the world.

Second-Quarter Financial Report Tabling of Document

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, it's been almost two months since the completion of the second quarter for this fiscal year, and I'm wondering if the Minister of Finance would be so kind today as to table those financial results for us.

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question on the second quarter.

The second quarter is normally tabled in the month of December and I can assure the member that

when those numbers are finalized that they will be tabled. But I also want to assure the member that although she portrays doom and gloom, I remembered her comments when we were doing the Estimates.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba is doing reasonably well as we ride through and come out of this recession, and I will be very happy to table those numbers when they are ready, and that normally happens in December and, in some cases, it has happened as late as January.

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia all announced their second-quarter financial results last week.

So I'd like to ask the minister, what is—what is she—why is she holding back, and why is she refusing to table those numbers today?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is trying to mislead the House. She's implying that these numbers should have been released earlier. I've already said to her, and the member opposite knows that is a tradition in Manitoba that the quarterly reports are released in December. And I can assure the member that they will be released in the regular time frame. When they are released—it doesn't matter when Saskatchewan and Alberta release theirs, we have a tradition in Manitoba, and we will follow that tradition.

But I can assure the member opposite, despite all her doom and gloom, because she has to try to portray doom and gloom, she said we wouldn't be able to pay the interest payments. She was wrong on that, and I can tell you she's going to be very pleased with the numbers that come forward.

Mrs. Stefanson: The only tradition for this NDP government is to make us dead last in western Canada, and I say shame on them. Once again, we're dead last.

Mr. Speaker, according to the *Winnipeg Free Press*, only a few months ago, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) sent a memo to all his ministers and deputies reminding them of the importance of openness and the need to respond quickly to requests for information. He wrote, and I quote: "Transparency in government is a significant factor in building and maintaining public confidence in the work we do together."

Well, Mr. Speaker, does this Minister of Finance agree with her Premier, and will she table the second-quarter financials today?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, of course, I will table the second quarterly reports, of course, I will table them. I said that in my last two questions and I will say it again: yes, I will table the second quarterly report when all of the information is ready.

It is the tradition in Manitoba that this report is tabled in December. It's not quite December yet and the numbers aren't finalized, but I can assure the member that Manitoba is doing reasonably well as we come through this recession and those numbers will be available shortly.

Orthopedic Diagnostic Tests and Surgeries Wait Times

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): A constituent of mine, Liz Markwart, has been told that she needs knee surgery and an MRI, but the wait-list—she's been told she's going to have to wait at least 20 weeks for an MRI and then one and a half to two years for the knee surgery following that.

Can the minister confirm today: Is this the wait time for MRIs and knee surgery in this province?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): I thank the member for the question, and I'll say first, if she's having particular concerns about a constituent, you know, I'd be very pleased to speak with her afterwards to endeavour to get support as appropriate.

We publish wait times for MRI and for other issues on the website. Those times are available. The—I believe the wait time right now for a non-urgent MRI is in the neighbourhood of about 17 weeks. I'll double-check that on the website. We know that urgent cases, of course, go more quickly than that.

We think that wait time is longer than it should be, and we're working very hard with the regional health authority to bring that time down.

I might also note, Mr. Speaker, it is 10 weeks shorter than when the members opposite were in power in 1998.

Mrs. Taillieu: Well, Mr. Speaker, Liz Markwart is the owner and sole instructor of a dance studio, and it's her second year of business. She has about 20 dance classes a week, and this business is her

livelihood, and she feels that she is going to lose her income and lose her business.

* (14:10)

And I know the minister said that urgent cases can go more quickly. This government has said that they want to get workers back to work as soon as possible after injuries.

So can the minister tell Ms. Markwart: What options does she have?

Ms. Oswald: And, again, I'll commit to the member to speak with her and, indeed, to make sure that contact is made with this individual to discuss these options.

We know, of course, Mr. Speaker, that doctors make medical assessments, and they do the triage and place individuals in the queue for MRI based on medical need. I'm not suggesting that the member opposite is suggesting otherwise, I'm just stating that fact that doctors will do that triage.

But I will commit to the member to work with her and with her constituent and the doctors involved to see the best possible path for this individual.

Mrs. Taillieu: Well, Mr. Speaker, Liz Markwart's doctor has advised her to go to North Dakota for the surgery, but she's not in a position to handle the cost of that, and this government claims that they expedite injured workers back to work.

Ms. Markwart needs to get back to work to protect and support her family and to maintain her business, otherwise she's going to lose her income, she's going to lose her business.

Can the minister tell Ms. Markwart what she should do when she cannot get timely access to the health-care system and risks losing her livelihood and her business?

Ms. Oswald: Yes, again, Mr. Speaker, as I said in the previous two answers, we will work with this individual absolutely. We don't want anybody's quality of life to be reduced as a result of a wait time. We know that when we came into power we began our work on life-saving wait times, bringing down dangerously long wait times for radiation therapy for cancer down to the best times in the country. We moved on to working on quality-of-life wait times, and while we have brought those wait times down to less than half that what they were, we know that in some cases—such as the one raised by the member

opposite—that the time is still too long, and we're going to endeavour to work with that individual.

What I do know, Mr. Speaker, is that making a decision to cut a half a billion dollars out of the health system in one year, that's not going to help.

Brandon Affordable Housing Government Priority

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, recently I was in Brandon hosting a forum on affordable housing. I was shocked to find the indifference that Brandonites said they'd experienced from this government in dealing with the affordable housing crisis in Brandon. In Brandon there's a severe shortage of affordable housing for students, a shortage of affordable housing for seniors, a shortage of affordable housing for new Canadians.

You know, I know that the Premier can find time in his schedule for a photo op in Brandon to announce money, but, you know, there's been a long-term crisis here. Why is this government not addressing the crisis and made sure it didn't happen? Is it indifference or inaction?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): We have been in Brandon to do many important projects, several of them have been housing projects. In April we announced the \$6.5-million construction project of a 24-unit family housing project on 15th Street north. The project is proceeding as planned. These units will be—that many of these units will be rented at or below median market rents for the community. At least half the units will have rent geared to income ratios attached to them so that people can afford them, and this is just one of many projects we're doing in Brandon.

As well, in Brandon, we're doing \$14.5 million to build 98 additional new, affordable housing units, 48 of which will be rent geared to income as well so that people can afford them.

And in my next question I'll tell him other housing projects that we are doing in Brandon.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, you know, it doesn't surprise me, given the Premier's track record, that all he can do is point to the millions and millions of dollars he's spending, but the problem is that there's a housing crisis—there's a housing crisis—in Brandon. You don't just solve it by throwing money all over the place.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Let's have a little decorum. I need to hear the questions and the answers.

The honourable member for River Heights has the floor.

Mr. Gerrard: The fact of the matter is that this government has planned so badly that there's an affordable housing crisis in Brandon, the lowest vacancy in Canada, virtually zero per cent. And after 11 years in power, the NDP—all we've got to show for it is seniors, students, new Canadians looking for houses which aren't there.

When will the Premier admit that his planning and his framework hasn't worked, that there's too many people who are without housing?

Mr. Selinger: As I indicated, \$6.5 million, 24 housing units; half will be rent geared to income. I also indicated \$14.5 million, 98 units; just about half of them rent geared to income so they're affordable. I did not yet mention the Massey warehouse project which I had the privilege of visiting: \$2.5 million, complete renovation of the Massey Building downtown. Many of those units will be affordable for the people of the most modest means in Brandon.

In addition, we're renovating 490 households in the public housing projects there to bring them back up to speed. We have another project there, which is hiring Aboriginal people and going around helping people retrofit their homes and ensure that they're energy efficient for water and electricity.

Yes, Brandon is booming. Our immigration program is showing results. Young people want to live in Brandon. Young people want to go to school in Brandon. And the private market is building housing as well. We are building housing in Brandon, and the member opposite votes against it.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I personally visited the Manitoba housing renewal corporation project on 15th Street in Brandon, and I was shocked to learn that each of these small units cost \$270,000.

Mr. Speaker, if the Premier really cared about Brandonites being left in the cold then he would've used this money much more efficiently to have many more than 24 housing units for Brandonites for this \$6.5 million.

Will the Premier finally be accountable for the fact that he has left too many Brandonites out in the cold, that he's wasting money because of poor management and that he's spending money

inefficiently in order to get affordable housing in Brandon?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, I did not mention we're also putting \$3 million into two Aboriginal housing initiatives, including a condominium with 14 two-bedroom affordable housing units, a triplex, a duplex and single-family housing units for low to moderate income tenants. That's on top of the \$2.5 million, money that's going into the Massey Building. That's on top of the \$14.5 million going into 98 new additional affordable housing units. That's on top of the \$6.5 million for the 24-unit complex. And that's on top of the 70–\$7 million for the 490 upgrades. And that's on top of the BEEP program, which is renovating housing for energy efficiency.

And then there's the private market which is building housing as well. And we have conveyed more land to the people of Brandon to build housing as well. And we're doing the—fixing up the Assiniboine Community College, which is bringing more students to Brandon, and we're investing in the university, which is bringing more students to Brandon.

And, yes, our immigration program has brought a record number of people to Manitoba this year, which is lifting housing prices in the private sector. We are building housing in Brandon, and Brandon is booming because of our policies.

Renal Health Centre Project Status (Berens River)

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, our government, more than any other, has been committed to bringing health services closer to northern and rural Manitobans. I know what this has meant to people in my own region where the number of dialysis units at the Flin Flon General Hospital has doubled.

Can the minister update the House on further expansions of renal health dialysis treatment at other centres?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of travelling with the Deputy Premier, the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson), to Berens River last week to celebrate the construction start of the \$5-million renal health centre.

And I want to pay tribute to the good people at Berens River, to individuals in the North Eastman

Regional Health Authority, the Manitoba Renal Program, for all the work that they've done in bringing together what can sometimes be a complex jurisdictional issue, going through all of those barriers to create this renal health centre that will not only provide dialysis for the people of Berens River, but will provide a very important education centre to work on prevention so that no new individuals need to receive dialysis or perhaps may receive home hemodialysis there. Good work, people at Berens River.

* (14:20)

**Child and Family Services Agencies
Child Fatality (Leaf Rapids)**

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): The RCMP is investigating a suspicious death of a seven-month-old baby boy in Leaf Rapids last week.

Can the minister indicate whether the child's family has a history with the child welfare system?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs): Well, Mr. Speaker, as the member prefaced the question, the matter is under police investigation, and it's my understanding that, in fact, that there are—there have not been any charges laid, but I'm very reluctant to speak to this. But it's my understanding that the child was not in care, nor has the child been in care.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, but my question was, because I'm sure that the minister would want to know, he says, that the child in question was not in care.

Has the family had a history with Child and Family Services, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Mackintosh: First of all, I think it's—we have to—it's a profound tragedy when any Manitoban dies prematurely, particularly so when it is a child. And I'm very sorry to hear of this death, and our sympathies go to the family. And our sympathies go to the family whether the child would be in care, receiving services or not, Mr. Speaker. It's very important that when there are families that are in need that others let authorities know about their concerns, and if there are those kinds of abuse allegations, then it's our expectation and hope that child welfare would become involved.

But whether or not, it's—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

**Trans-Canada Highway Twinning
Project Status**

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Mr. Speaker, last November, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) announced that the—to the—that the Province would be cost sharing the twinning of a dangerous 1.7-kilometre stretch of the Trans-Canada Highway through Headingley.

Multiple media reports stated the project would commence in the spring of 2011 and be completed in 2012. However, I note that this project isn't listed in the 2011 construction season advertising schedule the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation put out last week.

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell this House whether the highway upgrades will start in 2011, as originally promised by his government?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): I'm really glad that the member opposite was paying attention to the highway capital program because I want—I would have thought she would have put on the record that she appreciates the fact that this government, again, for the second year running, has a record investment in our highway system in this province.

To put it in perspective, we've gone from about 85 to 90 million dollars in the 1990s for capital; it's over \$360 million this year.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you would have also thought that the member opposite would have got up and said that she supported that but, of course, she doesn't, her party doesn't. They voted against it. So her question lacks a very single element here, but it's very important with any question, and that is support for highways in this province, because that caucus does not support highway construction in this province.

Mrs. Taillieu: Well, Mr. Speaker, he made a promise to the cameras and he broke it for Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, thousands of vehicles—18,000 to be exact—use this road daily. This is a considerable—there's considerable growth in the region, funnelling traffic onto that highway. The federal government and the RCMP recognize this section of the highway is dangerous. Local people won't even travel on that section because it's just too dangerous. I can't impress on this government strongly enough how important it is to upgrade this stretch of road which has seen dozens of accidents, and some of them fatal.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier today assure the motoring public that this project will be completed in 2012, as he promised last November, or was he just there for the photo op?

Mr. Ashton: Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, once again, the member had the option to get up and say that she actually agrees with our record highway construction projects. She didn't—and it just goes to show you, her constituency has seen some of the most significant expenditures to further our highways in the province.

Highway 75, I mean, when the Tories were in power, it was an embarrassment when you hit the Manitoba border. We're now upgrading it to interstate standards. We're moving in terms of Morris, in terms of flood protection, and she talks about Highway 1. We're the one that undertook the difficult task of dealing with a lot of those traffic flows. But dare I say [*inaudible*] about Highway 1. I invite her to talk to the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire), because it's this government that has paved Highway 1 all the way to the Saskatchewan border. That's the NDP difference.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Equal Opportunities West

Ms. Sharon Blady (Kirkfield Park): Mr. Speaker, I'm proud of the great work that is being done by community organizations in Kirkfield Park, and one such group that I have come to work with recently is Equal Opportunities West, a non-profit group that not only helps people find jobs but also find dignity in their workplace.

This organization assists intellectually challenged adults to find jobs of their choice that benefit them and their employers. This program empowers adults with disabilities to know that they can contribute to society instead of simply live in it.

Equal Opportunities West, formally known as the St. James-Assiniboia Industries, began in 1979 and provides persons with disabilities with individualized support services. These include training opportunities and employment matching, so both participants' and employers' needs are met. These opportunities can have a big impact on individuals' lives. People develop real skills in the community but, most importantly, these individuals gain independence and dignity through their work.

One of Equal Opportunities West's newest ventures is an e-waste recycling program. This organization collects old electronics and strips them down, reusing the scrap metal and sending the boards to be smelted outside of the province. Since the program began in July, they have saved four tonnes of scrap metal from the landfill.

Another positive aspect of the program is the mentorship it fosters between participants. Many of the supported employment people are, in turn, mentoring some of the higher needs participants who work in the e-waste recycling program. These services help people take ownership of their lives in many different ways.

Equal Opportunities West hopes to expand its pre-employment program to 50 participants over the next two years.

Thank you, Equal Opportunities West, for recognizing the valuable contributions people with disabilities make to our society. Your passion and vision should inspire us all and I wish you the best of luck as your organization continues to grow. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Métisfest

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, this summer the second international Métisfest was held at the International Peace Gardens, as was—and was open to all visitors from August 26th to the 29th. The festival was a celebration of Métis culture and heritage, and the International Peace Garden was the perfect location for a tribute to the unique cross-border history of the Métis people.

After the success of the first Métisfest held in 2009, organizers aspired to put together a bigger and better festival this year. Local organizer Daniel Goodon travelled extensively to promote this event. He was at the Vancouver Olympics, the Batoche 125 anniversary celebrations in July, and many other events in the provinces and states throughout North America promoting the festival.

Visitors to the festival came from all over Canada and the United States and as far away as the Northwest Territories, New York and southern California. There was also international representation at the festival with visitors arriving from Sierra Leone, Germany, the Netherlands, Russia and Australia.

Music and dancing are essential to the Métis and are core aspects of Métisfest. Two stages, the Burdick Centre of the Arts and the Masonic Hall, hosted constant fiddling, jigging and square dancing throughout the days and into the evenings. The concert series on Friday and Saturday evenings featured Darren Lavallee, Johnny Dietrich, Krista Rey, the Gaudry Boys, Melissa St. Goddard, Ray St. Germain, the Métis Steppers and many other talented musicians.

Workshops exploring essential aspects of Métis culture took place in Heritage Hall, including Métis dancing, speaking Michif, beadwork and decorative arts, sewing traditional Métis jackets made of wool blankets as well as information sessions around—about Red River carts, the 1885 Resistance, Métis veterans and the 49th Rangers of the Boundary Commission.

Another highlight was the performance of *The Trial of Louis Riel*. The famous play dramatizes Louis Riel's trial after the Northwest Resistance and really brings to life the admirable and more controversial aspects of Riel and his legacy.

I want to thank Daniel Goodon and all the organizers and volunteers involved for their hard work in making Métisfest 2010 another success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (14:30)

Deer Lodge Community Centre Playground

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski (St. James): Mr. Speaker, the Deer Lodge Community Centre and the Linwood School Child Centre are both sharing a project to improve the play areas in the St. James area. This fall, they unveiled the first of four phases of improvements to this beautiful new playground. The Deer Lodge Community Centre held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on a sunny fall day, and kids from the neighbourhood enjoyed the brand new outdoor play area and were excited to be able to cut the ribbon themselves. The official opening for the Linwood Child Centre will be held this spring.

The benefits of children playing outside in nature are well known, which is why staff and parents have been working hard fundraising and planning to get this project off the ground for over five years. In fact, many of the parents and staff appear to be just as excited as the kids to see the new additions. The first phase of the renovations gave the community centre new play equipment accessible for children of all ages, a new seating area and a

footbridge. The second phases—the next phases of the project will see even more improvements.

Marian Rands, the executive director of the Linwood Child Centre, says the improvements, quote, will be used to enhance the Deer Lodge neighbourhood and will benefit the families in this community for many years to come. End quote.

These two fantastic organizations have for years provided a safe, healthy and caring environment for children. This particular community's project saw four different organizations come together. Along with the Deer Lodge Community Centre and the Linwood Child Centre, the St. James-Assiniboia Parent-Child Coalition and the University of Manitoba Department of Occupational Therapy worked to develop a universally accessible community play space for the neighbourhood's children. The Linwood School has also been very supportive; some of its board members take the time to sit on the boards of all three organizations. The school's principal was also in attendance for the opening.

Thank you to these groups and our partners in government for making this project a reality. Funding came from the Recreational Infrastructure Canada program, the City of Winnipeg and the provincial government. I know that the children of the community will get a lot of use out of this playground and I'm so happy that it's finally come to be. Congratulations to the Linwood Child Centre and the Deer Lodge Community Centre on this new asset. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Darlene Gillies

Mr. Stuart Briese (St. Rose): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize one of my constituents Darlene Gillies for her admirable accomplishments. She was recently honoured by the United Commercial Travellers for her contributions to the organization as a Past Supreme Counsellor.

UCT is an international organization that promotes community betterment through good citizenship and volunteerism. Ms. Gillies has been a member of that organization for 20 years and during that time has taken on many different roles. For 17 years, she has been chair of membership and retention for her local UCT council.

She has also served at the regional level as a chairperson for several of the Manitoba-Saskatchewan Grand Council meetings and even was the Grand Counsellor regional

president. For six years, she has served on the Supreme Board of the UCT. In addition to being the first Supreme Counsellor from Canada, she is only the fourth woman to be awarded this 'pretigious'—prestigious position.

Ms. Gillies has demonstrated a willingness to go above and beyond for her community; yet she is also eager to help other communities and is willing to travel to assist any other area council.

Ms. Gillies has a long-time record of community involvement. In addition to her work with UCT, she has also been involved with: the Rebekah's Lodge; Eastview Lodge residential Family Council; agricultural conservation group called Farming for Tomorrow; Ducks Unlimited; Neepawa Palliative Care; Neepawa and District Chamber of Commerce; and the Neepawa and Area United Church. She has also worked in many capacities on federal, provincial and municipal elections and has done census work for Statistics Canada for many times.

In 2002, she was awarded the Neepawa Citizen of the Year award and in 2007 she was honoured by a—with a Paul Harris award from the Neepawa Rotary Club for her volunteer work.

Ms. Gillies's ties to the Neepawa area go back to her upbringing on a farm just southeast of Neepawa. After graduating from Neepawa Area Collegiate, Ms. Gillies worked for 19 years as a travel consultant in town. She then switched gears to manage a restaurant and catering business. In 1991, Ms. Gillies began working as a secretary-treasurer for a locally owned retail tire store in Neepawa.

Congratulations to Ms. Gillies on her commendable contributions and ongoing efforts to better her community as well as others. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Meghan Montgomery

Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate St. Norbert rower Meghan Montgomery for winning a gold medal at the World Rowing Championship in New Zealand earlier this month.

Her accomplishment is especially remarkable given that Meghan sustained whiplash in her neck and shoulders in a car accident shortly after she and her team finished in fourth place at the 2009 World Championships last year.

Meghan, who rows in the adaptive category due to her underdeveloped right hand, has been part of

the bronze-medal winning rowing teams in 2006 and 2007. St. Norbert residents are so pleased to see that this month she earned her first gold medal. She credits her coaches and the rest of her rowing team for contributing to her accomplishments in this long-held dream. The victory was especially sweet as the team had to come from behind to win. At the midway point of the 1,000-metre race they were trailing in third place. However, their training kicked in and gave them the strength to persevere in the last few strokes, leading them to a gold-medal finish.

The next World Championship opportunity will be in 2011, but the real goal for Montgomery is to represent Canada at the 2012 Paralympics in London. As Montgomery explains, it's the big year that we all work towards. Given her latest international experience, she is hoping to improve on her sixth-place finish in the 2008 Paralympics.

Meghan will be returning home soon to celebrate with her family and friends, but it will not be long before she commits herself, once again, to a rigorous training regime to prepare for her next rowing season.

Mr. Speaker, Meghan's dedication and perseverance to overcome adversity is especially inspiring. I wish her every success as she pursues her dream of representing Canada at the 2010 London Paralympics. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS THRONE SPEECH (Eighth Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: Resume adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen),

THAT the following address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor:

We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, thank Your Honour for the gracious speech addressed to us at this Fifth Session of the Thirty-Ninth Legislature of Manitoba, and standing in the name of the honourable member for Brandon West, who has nine minutes remaining.

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West): It's really a pleasure to be able to finish off on a Friday and come back on a Monday and recap where I was with respect to the very pathetic Throne Speech the—from a very tired and desperate government, quite frankly,

Mr. Speaker. So I would like to tell all Manitobans right now, who, in fact, may look at the Throne Speech, or listen to the Throne Speech, or exactly go through some the promises that were put in the Throne Speech, don't believe too much in the promises that are made by this very tired and desperate government. They're prepared to make any kinds of promises now, as they did in the past.

And, just to recap, back in 1999 this government, under the then-previous Premier Gary Doer, had said that he would end hallway medicine. Just a recap, he never ended hallway medicine, nor did the current Premier (Mr. Selinger). As a matter of fact, medicine, right now, and health care in the province of Manitoba is worse than it's ever been, with longer wait-lists and, certainly, with less services being provided to Manitobans, as we've now found out that 180,000 Manitobans don't even have a family doctor.

Then they wanted to talk about education back in 1999 and how they were going to renew hope, but now we find out that we've got the highest dropout rate of any province in the country. We've got the lowest graduation rate of any province in the country. But now, all of a sudden, they found this epiphany and they're going to now make more promises as to how they're going to improve education. So they failed miserably and desperately on health care. They failed miserably and pathetically on education. But I can only point to the education ministers that they've had why they failed so miserably.

And then they talked about how they were going to take Manitoba Hydro in a new direction. Well, they certainly have done that. In fact, Mr. Speaker, they're on the track right now to destroy Manitoba Hydro. If they would not interfere with the management of Manitoba Hydro, they wouldn't be expending an additional \$1.75 billion and probably more on a very wasteful west-side transmission line, and Manitoba Hydro wouldn't have to incur the huge amounts of debts that they're going to incur now and in the not-too-distant future so that ratepayers have to continue to pay more and more and more for hydro that we have here, yet, we send hydro now to the US, our export market, and they pay less and less and less. So that's not a very good business—sound business plan, but it seems to be the desperate business plan of this particular government.

* (14:40)

We also talked about now the fourth major plank in the 1999 election of this desperate government, and that was, and I quote: We will make our communities safer by tackling the causes of crime with improved youth programs by ensuring immediate consequences for gang violence. That was a promise made by this government and a promise broken back in 1999. It's the same promise they made in this Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, that they're going to tackle crime. Well, we all know that that hasn't worked for the last 11 years. They're soft on crime. They don't know how to handle it.

We now, in Canada, Mr. Speaker—and I'm embarrassed—but we're the violence capital of Canada. We are the murder capital of Canada. We have the highest car thefts in Canada and now, just recently, we found out that we have the highest child poverty in Canada. There's probably a connection there, but these desperate people over on that side of the House really don't make the connection. What they do, however, is make promises, promises that they made, promises that they broke.

Now, the last promise—and I don't have a lot of time, unfortunately, but the last promise they made—and this is a killer. This is the biggest promise that they made back in 1999, and I quote, we'll keep balanced budget legislation and lower property taxes. Well, I don't know if you're aware of this, but that promise was broken. They've actually not kept balanced budget legislation. In fact, they've changed it three different times. They went to a summary budget when they were having deficits in this government, Mr. Speaker. Then they did rolling averages so that they wouldn't have to have a balanced budget, and then they changed it all together, saying we no longer have to have balanced budgets at all, and that was to save their ministerial salaries. But, to be perfectly blunt, they made a promise, they broke the promise, and you know what? They made the promise again. They're saying they're going to put forward very strict financial limits and levels, that they're going to bring Manitoba out of the recession. We have more debt today than we've ever had in the history of this province.

Mr. Speaker, we've got a \$600-million deficit this fiscal year. That's \$2 million—almost \$2 million a day just to keep the lights on because that's a core operating budget deficit. That's money that we spend for core operating that they don't have. But it doesn't matter. They can borrow more money. They're going to go out and borrow another \$600 million this year,

another \$500 million next year. They're going to keep on borrowing and borrowing and borrowing, but that's okay. Our children will pay for it. Our grandchildren will pay for it. But, in the meantime, they can go merrily on their way and spend money that we don't have.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the biggest failures of this government—and there are many of them. In fact, every time they try to put their signature on something, whether it be the stadium, or whether it be the balanced budget legislation, or whether it be—oh, what was that other thing—Spirited Energy. Everything they touch seems to turn to failure. But the biggest failure, in my opinion, is their inability to get a handle on the economy here in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, we are a trading province. We trade our goods and our services throughout the country and internationally. In order to be a trading province we should develop relationships with our trading partners. The biggest and the most fearful failure that this government has made is their inability to join the New West Partnership. We have three governments to the west of us—Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia are now involved in a New West Partnership. They not only didn't invite Manitoba, they don't want Manitoba because we don't have anything to bring to the table. We have a minister who doesn't understand entrepreneurship, training or trade, for that matter. But no, we're going to have pan-Canadian. We're going to worry about how we're going to have relationships and build partnerships with Atlantic Canada, because Ontario and Québec—they have a trading partnership, western Canada has a trading partnership, and we're just this island sitting out here where nobody wants us, because they can't develop trade relations with people that we should be developing trade relations.

Mr. Speaker, the other unfortunate problem that we have is our dependency on federal welfare payments: 38 per cent of our total budget in this province comes from equalization and transfer payments. That's not sustainable. However, this government's idea of economic development is going to Ottawa and asking for more.

Now, I would like to close, Mr. Speaker, with a statement from a lovely lady by the name of Margaret Thatcher. Now, remember, 38 per cent—38 per cent—of what we live on here in Manitoba comes from someplace else. We don't generate it. We don't have our sole source revenues

for that 38 per cent. It comes from some other people. It comes from other provinces. It comes from the federal government, and we depend on that, more so than depend on it, we want to expand on it because, quite frankly, we don't know how to generate anything ourselves.

And in closing, Mr. Speaker, I would leave this with the members opposite, and it's a quote from Margaret Thatcher, used to be the Prime Minister of England. And she said, and I quote: The problem with socialism is that eventually run out—is that you eventually run out of other people's money.

And that's what's happening here. The problem with socialism is that you eventually run out of other people's money.

We're quickly running out of other people's money. We have to make sure that we have policies in place, Mr. Speaker, that we can stand on our own two feet, we don't depend on others. That can't come from that government. It has to come from this side of the House and a change of government. Thank you very much.

Mr. Frank Whitehead (The Pas): First of all, Mr. Speaker, I just want to let you know that I was very happy to see you walk into this Chamber looking healthy and fit. Welcome back.

But I also want to recognize the Clerk and her staff and the pages, the Sergeant-at-Arms, and Hansard people, and everyone else in this Chamber that assists and help make this Legislative Assembly function. It is indeed an honour for me to speak in this legislation assembly and I want to thank my constituents for giving me this opportunity to represent them at this level.

Mr. Speaker, this weekend I had the opportunity to spend quality time with young adults talking about their future, talking about their families, their community. I was pleased and encouraged to know that they are more knowledgeable about their community and the region they live in than other people give them credit for.

There were excellent discussions about education, about health, about opportunities in the economic machinery in the north, the development throughout northern Manitoba. These are young adults that started up new businesses recently, taking full advantage of programs and services that are made available by this government.

Not only are they earning a living for themselves and their families, but they are employing people from the community. In addition, they are contributing to the local and regional economy. As the young adults spoke about their achievements, I could see the pride in their eyes and I could hear the excitement in their voices as they talked about their livelihoods. But they also talked about other related issues, such as infrastructure, public facilities, facilities that can provide more social and community development opportunities for young people and young families in their communities.

They talked about how the community can continue to grow and provide quality of life for all. These are young people excited about the future, energized to do more and provide more for their community. I was very proud to be sitting down with these young people and I will mention them: Chris Sinclair [*phonetic*], who started up businesses in the community in the food and catering industry; Brian Constant [*phonetic*] in the clothing industry; Ken Henderson, in the entertainment industry, and others in the service—these are all young people, young adults investing in the future in Manitoba. And the only reason why they've been able to do that successfully is because what we have provided for them, the tools for them to get started.

* (14:50)

Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak about the excellent Throne Speech that was presented to the House last week. I believe that the Throne Speech set out a bold vision for Manitoba, a vision that the young people that I talked to this weekend spoke about, and as a province of excellence, and as a province where all citizens have opportunities available to them, all citizens of all backgrounds, of all regions in Manitoba.

The Throne Speech outlines the agenda of the government to recognize the challenges. We know there's challenges. There's always challenges, but, in order for us to move forward and overcome those challenges we have to have vision, and this government has that vision, and reality that's faced all Manitobans especially those in northern Manitoba that are facing increasing challenges for economic and educational opportunities. But, when the going gets tough in northern Manitoba, the tough get going, and those young people are the ones I'm talking about that have that kind of attitude.

The Northern Development Strategy that was mentioned in the Throne Speech is a long-term plan

that identifies opportunities to develop the human and natural resources in the north. We have talked about this for several years. Many people from many different backgrounds of business, community development—people of all backgrounds talk about the north, how we can develop it to serve all people and to be, you know, a credit to all Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, there are challenges associated with northern development in Manitoba. There is isolation, isolated communities, semi-isolated communities, communities whose roads, you know—that require upgrading every year, which we've been able to do in recent years, highway 373, 374, 282 in my constituency, as an example.

The cost of moving goods and essential products to and from the communities has always been a challenge, but this government here has always had the good sense to look at those challenges and come up with solutions. We don't just talk about problems; we solve the problems with partnership with people from those regions and through those communities.

The new strategy represents changes that will benefit the people of northern Manitoba, and it's more than just building facility; it's more than just building infrastructure—roads and water sewer and those kinds of infrastructure. It's more than just building facilities for the people. It's all about building capacity in northern Manitoba as well. Through education, through training, our people in northern Manitoba have been able to go into industry, into business, into community development, because we have set aside opportunities for them to continue their education, to continue their training. A good example is that in recent years we have provided over 4,000 training opportunities in northern Manitoba through the programs provided by this government.

The Northern Development Strategy identifies the following priority areas: housing, which includes partnerships to improve housing in local jurisdictions in northern Manitoba; the issues of health—to improve health services and information—ongoing changes, ongoing developments in these areas; transportation—improving the roads and the airports, having more accessibility available to northern Manitobans for all types of transportation and services in Manitoba here; employment and training—improved opportunities for education and training, and because of the University College of the North situated in The Pas and Thompson and 12 satellite facilities throughout northern Manitoba, we've been

able to do this. We've been able to train people, to accommodate them, so they can enter into the private sector, into the public sector, and become productive citizens in Manitoba.

And much more can be said in the economic development areas where we have provided opportunities for our people in northern Manitoba, and Manitoba as a whole, to be involved in public and private partnerships in business and industry. And, I think, you know, Mr. Speaker, that's the kind of excitement those young people were talking about over the weekend; young people who have invested their time and their money and their future because they know that with this—working with this government, they are going to get places and they will reap the benefits from their efforts as well, and they will put back into the community.

We have also investment that benefits the entire province. Northern development is an investment in itself, an investment that benefits the entire province. The north has always been an important player in northern—in Manitoba economy. It's just that in recent years we've been more active in getting more partners in the overall development of Manitoba, including different jurisdictions, including the towns, including the reserves, including all taxpayers in northern Manitoba. These are the reasons why the people of northern Manitoba have always been, you know, coming up for—coming forward with ideas, with solutions to the problems that are before us, because of the ideas they come forward and we listen and we get action, we get results.

I want to say something about partnerships. The government of Manitoba is working with northern and Aboriginal communities very closely, very diligently, non-government organizations and the private sector alike, to build on existing strengths and to address the distinctive needs and priorities of northern people. Just recently, in The Pas, for example, an investment group signed an agreement with the town of The Pas to build new homes, to build new infrastructure in the town itself, close to 90 new homes. It takes a lot of commitment, I think, on a part of an investor to say: I'm going to come into your town, into your area, and build because I know your region, your area is growing, and I can accommodate, and we can work together, and we'll get things done together.

I'm very proud of that kind of opportunities that were being taken advantage of in our area.

But why is the Manitoba government pursuing the Northern Development Strategy now? Because, over the years, we've had discussions at all levels throughout northern Manitoba, all the towns, all the communities, all the non-government agencies. Over the years I've been talking about how we can build a stronger Manitoba if we build a stronger northern Manitoba with all its economic opportunities, with all its developments in mining industry, in forest industry, tourism industry, how we can put all of that together working with the towns, working with the communities, how we can make more for northern Manitoba which will build stronger, stronger Manitoba.

The Manitoba government believes that time—that now is the time to act in order to make a significant difference in the lives of northern Manitobans. After all the data has been gathered, after all the information has been brought together, we are putting together a plan that will make a huge difference in the lives of those young people that I was talking to this weekend. It will make a huge difference in their children and the children that'll follow after them. Many people have studied the north in the past, but now it's time for us to put this plan together after all the data has been gathered. It's all about timing and opportunity. We've done the right thing. We've included people from all walks of life, from all sectors. We've discussed these issues with them over the years to get things right. Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of this government for going that route, and taking that—making that decision.

I can tell you that the leadership, both the chiefs and councils, and the community councils, and the business community itself, are excited about this, because now they're going to see the fruits of their labours, now they're going to see what the results will be.

*(15:00)

I spoke to one businessman in The Pas just recently, very much in the area of property development, building homes, building apartments, how he plans to invest more in his community, how he plans to get more people in the community of The Pas and OCN and surrounding communities to take full advantage of those opportunities, housing opportunities, and he wants to do himself. Why? Because the north has given him that kind of wealth and he wants to put it back. Why? Because this government created those opportunities for him and he wants to give back.

The Northern Development Strategy is focused on a number of key objectives improving the quality of life for all northern Manitobans. And I can tell you that those young people I talked to this weekend talked about quality of life, talked about having a facility—for the first time in recent memory they want to establish their own arts centre and give back to the community. That's exciting for them to do that. It's a long-term investment because so much has been provided for them, now it's up to them, and they want to do this to provide more for the community and the people. I can say more, several more things about this Northern Development Strategy that will make a huge difference in the lives of Manitobans, but, at this time, I want to thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak on the throne.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): *[interjection]* He needs to lower expectations, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity on this last afternoon of debate to put a few words about the Throne Speech onto the record.

I want to welcome you back, Mr. Speaker, as many have already done here. I had the opportunity to attend the Midwest legislators forum and speak to those on the Canada-US relations committee, and I can tell you that the high reputation that you have here in the Legislature has extended to that committee and across North America. So congratulations, first on being back, and also for the good work that you do in the Chair here.

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

I also want to acknowledge the table officers, the pages who have joined us for this sitting of the Legislature, and all those who help to make our job a bit easier. We often rely on your advice and sometimes your admonition about some of the things that we've done here, but overall we are very thankful for all of the help that we get in ensuring that things here operate smoothly. And when they don't operate smoothly, of course, that's of no fault of those who are providing advice but those who are taking the advice.

I also—as I often do on these occasions, both with Throne Speeches and with the budget—want to thank the great constituents of the constituency of Steinbach which, of course, takes in the city of Steinbach but also the Rural Municipality of Hanover and the town of Niverville. And I often say how fortunate I am—and it's not just something I say

for the sake of saying it, it's true. Whenever I have the opportunity, as we will around the Christmas season, to spend some time with the individuals in the constituency—how fortunate I am to represent a riding that is strong in values, that is strong in entrepreneurial spirit and strong in family. And I never take that for granted, Madam Acting Speaker. I am very fortunate to have that opportunity, and none of us ever know how long those opportunities will continue to exist. We are creatures of the electoral system and so we should never take these things for granted, and so when we have the opportunity to recognize our constituents and our constituency, we should certainly do that.

I will, unfortunately, be losing—when we come to the election time next year—part of that constituency as I try to get re-elected, the portions of the constituency including the town of Niverville, the community of Grunthal, the community of Sarto, the community of Pansy and a few other places in between I'm going to be losing, as they get taken out of the riding, and that's to my disappointment, Madam Acting Speaker. I have many friends and some relatives in those communities, and I've enjoyed representing each of them over the last seven or so years. And I know that, well, I'm not going to be able to—regardless of the election outcome—be able to represent them here in the Legislature, I also know that the friendships that we've made will last a long time and I look forward to, whoever the new MLA is, working with that individual and representing those issues that come out of those particular areas.

And, of course, my own family, and my wife, Kim, my son, Malachi—my son is four years old and so at this stage of the game, he's not offering a lot of political advice, but he offers a lot of other advice that often keeps things in perspective. I know he started to take to watching some Disney movies and interesting pieces of advice come from that, and I appreciate the perspective that he brings to life and, of course, the support that my wife, Kim, brings which is often—in what's often a difficult job in terms of hours and the ability to be home with family.

I know that the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) also has a new one into his family. I want to congratulate him. We put aside our political differences when those sort of occasions come up, and they are special times. And I want to congratulate him and his wife, and perhaps we look forward for many more to come. I won't speculate on

that, but certainly the one that they've welcomed into their family, we congratulate him on that.

On the matters at hand, Madam Acting Speaker, in terms of the Throne Speech, I recognize that not every initiative that's mentioned is not going to be found its way into the Throne Speech. I was surprised a little bit that the Bethesda emergency room, which has been mentioned in a number of different places in the past over the last four years, and it's almost become a thing of folklore because I know members opposite—many of the NDP members who listen to the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) or others speak of this project—already talk as though it's done. They already include it in some of the list of things that they consider to be accomplishments.

But, in fact, Madam Acting Speaker, there is yet to be a blade of grass that's lost its life to that emergency room. It was about four years ago, shortly after the election, that the then-premier, Gary Doer, and I had a long discussion about this project and to his credit he took it seriously. And I didn't agree with everything that Mr. Doer did. I didn't agree with everything that Mr. Doer did, but I didn't disagree with everything, either. And one of the things that I appreciated was the fact that he took the issue of expanding the Bethesda emergency room to heart. And we had some consultation with doctors in the region, and he said this is something that we need to get done for the entire region, that it's important that it happens. And he said he was going to move it forward.

Well, that was four years ago, and it's been announced and reannounced and reannounced and speculated about and, yet, it's still not coming forward. And I know the Minister of Health, the member for Seine River (Ms. Oswald), has in the past talked about timelines and deadlines, and they've been missed and they've been passed.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

And I don't want to suggest that the Minister of Health doesn't care about the project, but for whatever reason, Mr. Speaker, it's not moving forward. And, ultimately, for the people of that region, and it's not just those who live in the city of Steinbach—it's really the southeast part of Manitoba—relying on that emergency room, they're not getting the service that they deserve. There simply isn't the room. The doctors are saying it's an unsafe condition. It's not something that they can continue to work.

And so I would implore the Minister of Health, because there is a suspicion—there's a suspicion among many in the region that the money that was supposed to be dedicated for this project is, instead, going into other areas of the province in a political direction, in a political way. And I would certainly hope that that isn't the case. I know—now I've sparked the attention of the Minister of Health, and I hope that the attention that I've sparked causes her to take some action to ensure that this project now moves forward.

It's been four years. It's not as though people haven't been patient. It's not as though they haven't given adequate time and due diligence for things to go forward. After four years, and we're on to our second premier—one elected and one unelected. But we're on to our second premier, Mr. Speaker, and this project still isn't moving forward.

And if, in fact, it's true that some of the money has been moved into other areas, and it's being done politically, that I would say that that is as low as a government could stoop. And I remember—*[interjection]* Well, the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) feels maybe the government could even stoop lower, and maybe they can, and we'll see, Mr. Speaker, if, in fact, the government can get lower than that. I hope that the member for Selkirk isn't encouraging the government to go even further down.

* (15:10)

But I remember when the announcement came forward and the anticipation that happened, and there's a lot of other things that need to happen. When we talk about the Bethesda Hospital, of course, the minister knows that the emergency—or that the surgical rooms need to be redone, and she's put up her finger, her—indicating either that that's her No. 1 project or that that's No. 1 on the list, I'm not sure what it is, Mr. Speaker. I hope that, in fact, that project is going to be shortly behind the ER, because that's another important one for the community and for the area and for the region.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that this is a government, I think, that has moved into a state of desperation. And I know that members opposite are getting tired of hearing that they are, in fact, a government in desperation, but you only have to look around at the actions to see what's happening.

We can see, you know, they started, of course, about a month ago to start running political ads, and

we saw the desperation in those political ads. And of course they have backfired, as I think anybody with a reasonable pulse of Manitobans and the feelings of Manitobans would have known that they would backfire. But I think that's what happens sometimes when a government gets long in the tooth, when they become insulated and sort of isolated among themselves. They start to believe the lies that they're propagating. They start to believe the things that they are saying. They think that it's clever, and sometimes it's almost too clever, too clever by half, Mr. Speaker, and I think that's what happened with these particular ads.

Now, I don't think that every member of the NDP caucus would have agreed with it. I suspect, for example, the member for Radisson (Mr. Jha), who I think is an honourable individual, I suspect he may have been one who would have said, this is above the pale, this is not something that we should be doing, it's not—not only is it not true, it's not reflective of what Manitobans think. But obviously his voice and probably the voice of a few others wasn't listened to, and it was decided by the Premier (Mr. Selinger), the member for St. Boniface, to move ahead on a desperate ad strategy to try to save on—to stave off any opposition, to try to stave off any more losses that they were feeling at the door or in the polls.

And if there was any other clearer indication that this isn't the party of Gary Doer, because I suspect that Mr. Doer—again, I had some mighty disagreements with the individual—I suspect that he wouldn't have participated in this kind of an ad campaign, that he had enough of a common touch to understand that that's not where Manitobans are, that Manitobans aren't going to support or believe that kind of Americanized attack ads, that kind of rhetoric from a political party, that they would see through it, that they would see what it was and that is that it was a desperate move by a desperate government.

And so I know, Mr. Speaker, that members opposite are probably sensitive about this. They expected quite a different result from this particular smear campaign than what they are actually getting. I'm sure that the media reports that they've gotten even recently, the ones that have admonished them for putting false information into the public, that makes fun of the ads in many ways, I'm sure that that is not what they were hoping for.

But again, it's a sign of a government that's sort of just talking amongst themselves, that they really aren't talking to Manitobans anymore—*[interjection]*—

that they are—they've lost touch, as the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) says. They've lost that sense of common touch, of where people are at, and that's certainly something that Gary Doer, I think, maintained, even though we didn't always agree with many of the things that he brought forward in terms of public policy.

And, Mr. Speaker, why they bear the consequences of that bad move, I would hope that they would start to listen in many other ways, because, ultimately, while we are political opponents, we, I think, hope that there'd be the best moves for Manitobans overall.

And in the Throne Speech, you know, it was interesting; you'd almost have thought that this was a Throne Speech from a government in its different—in a different tenure than what it is, because they identified so many problems. You know, they talked about how in education there were problems. They talked about how on the justice system so much more had to be done. They talked about how bad their—issues were in health care and how bad things were in different parts of the province. And yet with all the years that they've been in government, there were so many problems identified. You would think that some of these things they would have been onto a little bit earlier.

Well, you know, when I hear the former, former minister of Education, the minister—member for Gimli (Mr. Bjornson), just chattering away from his seat and, you know, he had the opportunity, when he was the minister for Education, to deal with some of these issues and he didn't do it. He didn't take that opportunity, but now they're saying, he and a host of other ministers who've been shuffled around to different portfolios, are saying, well, trust us this time. Oh, you know, it wasn't a priority to get you a family doctor in the last 11 years. No, it wasn't on top of our radar then, but now, trust us.

And, you know, for the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) now to stand up and say, as he often does, well, this time we're serious. This time we're really serious about getting tough on crime and on criminals. Well, I think Manitobans understand that this government has been there for 11 years, and if they really meant it they would've been doing it over the last 11 years. *[interjection]*

Well, you know, and I know that the member for Gimli is saying that they are creating such a mess. Well, and they are creating a mess. And I know they've created a great mess over the last 11 years

and it's going to be difficult for whoever succeeds them to clean up that mess, Mr. Speaker, but clearly we see that this is a government who identifies all of the problems that have grown under their watch. In that way I think that they do understand some things.

I suspect that when the member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady) is in her community, whenever that might be, she might hear from some of her constituents who are saying, well, there are so many issues around crime and why haven't you dealt with that particular issue? Why isn't your government getting serious about serious offenders? *[interjection]*

Well, that's coming yet. I've got lots of time. And I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that the member for Southdale (Ms. Selby), when she's going door to door, has been hearing from individuals who've been saying, well, you know, we have a difficult time finding a family doctor and after 11 years why haven't you done anything about it? And so now, miraculously, it's all of a sudden fallen on their radar screen and they're saying, trust us this time. This time we're going to take care of those particular issues.

You know, the only time I think that we've found some truth from this particular government over the last number of years was during the leadership campaign because then I think members were—individual members were speaking out on their own. They were off the party lines. They really were reflecting what others were saying. And so the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), I remember when he came out and said that crime was out of control in the province of Manitoba, the leader—or the would-be leader of the NDP government said that crime was out of control.

And he was correct. He was right. He absolutely knew that there was a tremendous problem that had grown under the NDP's watch but he didn't seem to have the solution in terms of what to do about it, or if he did have the solution he was keeping it to himself. He wasn't sharing it with other members of his caucus.

And, of course, we all remember now the infamous announcement by the member for Minto (Mr. Swan), who rightly said that the bipole line that was being built by Hydro, that they should consider putting it on the east side of the province instead of the longer, less environmentally route on the west side. And, you know, I think a number of us that—we

applauded him in the House just now, but I think many of us applauded him at the time and said, well, you know, maybe there is hope for this tired government. Maybe there is some hope that somebody recognizes that the decision that is being made to put the hydro line on the west side of the province is the wrong decision.

But that hope was evaporated. That hope was taken away when—and when maybe someday, you know, the member for Minto will be able to write a book, you know, tell us the truth about who it was that knocked on his door late at night and said, you need to change that decision. And that the individual will be revealed at that time about why it is that he had to give up his particular beliefs and principles at that particular time. And, in fact, I understand that it went so far that not only did he have to change his position but they had to put out an automated dialer, automated phone machine telling people that his position had been changed.

Who yields that kind of power, Mr. Speaker? Perhaps a tell-all book in the future will tell us who it was that made the member from Minto to change his mind. But it's not too late—it's not too late, perhaps he'll be able to now once again have his voice heard and have—and again lobby for the east side, as I know many of his constituents, and perhaps even members of his caucus, would want.

I suspect it and, in fact, I know for a fact that there are members of his caucus who were uncomfortable with that position, who are uncomfortable with putting the line on the west side, but they don't—they aren't able to speak about that publicly. They aren't able to speak about that in a way that could be publicly heard because they're clamped down by the NDP, and, ultimately, each of us are here and are elected here to bring voice to our constituents.

* (15:20)

And I think particular of the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Lemieux), Mr. Speaker, and, you know, I've said to the member for La Verendrye before, why is it that you're not speaking out against this line, because it's cutting right through your constituency. And he's told me that nobody has phoned him with concerns about the line.

Well, that's interesting because I know I've gotten calls from many of his constituents. I know the member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu) says she's gotten calls from many of his constituents. The

member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) has gotten calls and yet, apparently, they're not calling their own MLA, the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Lemieux). Those who are in the La Verendrye riding, the future Dawson Trail riding, apparently aren't calling their own MLA about this issue. Well, I'm not going to suggest that the member for La Verendrye is being less than truthful, although one would certainly think that that could be the case, Mr. Speaker.

Instead of bringing the views of Dawson Trail and of La Verendrye to Broadway, he instead is committed to bringing the views of Broadway over to Dawson Trail. He's trying to convince individuals why this is good for them, instead of coming back to his caucus and coming back to his members and saying my constituents don't believe in this; they think that this is a bad idea.

In fact, he's the Minister for Local Government. And what a clear signal was sent by the members of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, who last week said, now, you know—*[interjection]*

And now the member for Gimli (Mr. Bjornson) is badmouthing the reeves, the councillors and the mayors who are involved in the Association for Manitoba Municipalities. I think that's very unfortunate because these are individuals who were elected by Manitobans from across our great province. They were elected from the northern part of our province to the southern part, to the east and to the west. And yet the scorn that this member for Gimli heaps on them is very much unfounded. But ultimately, you know, we don't have high expectations for the member for Gimli, and so we sort of put that aside. We've already sort of lowered our expectations and we know that he's onto whatever number portfolio this is, Mr. Speaker. Most of us have lost count already.

But, you know, the member for La Verendrye, who, I suspect, is going to be wanting to try to represent the Dawson Trail riding at some future time, he's going to have to answer to the constituents who have said, we wanted you to come to the Legislature and to voice concern about the bipole line cutting through our farmland, cutting through our communities. And he would have had the additional support of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, a group that he as minister should be representing. After the vote he should have come directly to the Premier and said, Mr. Premier, we have a problem here, because individuals who

represent virtually every Manitoban in this province are saying that this is a bad decision, an overwhelming vote, Mr. Speaker. I don't even believe that it was close.

And I don't think that happened. I think the Minister of Local Government (Mr. Lemieux) sat at the head table and ate his food and drank his wine, and never said to the Premier this is something that needs to change, because we all saw the speech at AMM where the Premier went up and pounded the table and told everybody in that room why they were wrong.

The member for Springfield is correct; the Premier attacked the members for AMM and told them why they were all wrong, why every one of them from the north to the south, to the east to the west, where each of them who were elected as councillors, as reeves, as mayors, why they all just didn't get it. He doesn't think the reeves get it; he doesn't think the councillors get it; he doesn't think the mayors get it; he doesn't believe that engineers understand; he doesn't believe that Hydro officials understand; he doesn't believe anybody.

And so they hunker down, Mr. Speaker. They all hunker down, the NDP ministers and a few of the caucus members, and they say, well, let's just hang on, let's just weather the storm; we have no plausible explanation for why the hydro line is going down the west side. All of those excuses have fallen away. So we'll hunker down; we'll batten down the hatches; and we'll try to weather the storm.

And probably from that insular view, Mr. Speaker, is how they hatched the idea for the negative American-style attack ads. And that kind of insular view is not what Manitobans are looking for. They're looking for a government that has some vision. They're looking for a government that can get things done. *[interjection]* Well, we know what the—you know, the member for Gimli, what he's able to get done with his colleagues: a great big hole over at the University of Manitoba, and I know—

An Honourable Member: After he trashed the retired teachers.

Mr. Goertzen: —and, well, you know, my—the member for Springfield mentions the harm that the member for Gimli inflicted on retired teachers, and I still hear about that. I still hear from many retired teachers who felt betrayed, betrayed by what they thought was one of their own.

But going back to the issue of the minus—the m-i-n-u-s—the minus touch that the Premier (Mr. Selinger) has on different issues—and, certainly, the stadium is one of them. And, you know, as a self-professed football fan, I watched the Grey Cup on the weekend. I've gone—go to a number of Bomber games a year. I go to a number of other football games a year. I mean, this is something that could've been a rallying point where members of the city of Winnipeg and citizens of Winnipeg, citizens of Manitoba, could've come together with a rallying point, and instead this government turned it into a divisive issue, turned it into a hole in the ground where we don't know what's going to go in it, what it's going to look like or how much it's going to cost.

You know, Premier Gary Doer, before he left actually didn't have a bad deal. He had a pretty good idea about how this had to be lead by the private sector. And then the NDP, after they had their little meeting and tossed out the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) and isolated the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) and selected, as the least of three bad choices, the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger)—the deal went out the window. And now we don't have the kind of unity, the kind of common purpose for this project that we normally would see, because I think that Manitobans in Winnipeg are generally optimistic, that they actually, you know, have a positive view of the world. *[interjection]*

Well, you know, we hear the arrogance of the member for Gimli. He's already picked out his office after October 2011, and I ultimately say, I mean, Manitobans decide these things, and, I—you know, it's arrogant. I don't mind the arrogance on the other side. It's actually not a bad sign for opposition to see an arrogant government, even though I think it's not reflective and it's not respectful of the view of ordinary Manitobans, who, ultimately, will make that decision. But this is a government who divided this province and this city on a project that shouldn't have been so divisive. This is a project that was going, under Gary Doer, I think, in the right direction and now has gone in the wrong direction.

So, Mr. Speaker, we ultimately are left with a government, I think, that, you know, I know they don't like to hear the term "tired," but I find it hard to find a different way to describe it. When I look over there, I see a government who's brought forward many problems in a Throne Speech and said these are all the problems that have grown and festered under our government, under our watch. These are all the things that we didn't think were a priority for

the last 11 years, all the things that we decided to ignore. And then you see their day-to-day management of issues, how they divided the province and the city on the issue of the stadium.

You see the challenges that they have now in court on issues of Hecla Island and that particular development. We see Manitobans still fighting to try to get money out of Crocus after the Premier told them, don't worry, it's all strong, everything is okay.

We see a government that's hiding from an inquiry, an inquiry that Gary Doer called four years ago—and Mr. Doer did the right thing by calling that inquiry, and now under this government and under this Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) and Premier (Mr. Selinger), they're going to do everything they can to not have true justice brought to the family of Phoenix Sinclair by getting to the bottom of what happened in that situation and ensuring that others, that other young children aren't put at that risk.

If that isn't the definition of a tired government, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what the definition is, a government that's let so many problems in crime, in education, in the health-care system, in the economy, fester for 11 years, a government that's divided communities on an issue that should be rallying people around a cause, a government that has a tin ear when it comes to things like the bipole line and which side of the province it should go on, where they ignore the advice of experts, where they ignore their own constituents and where they say to those who are elected officials across the province: We know best; you have no choice but to follow what we say. That isn't a government that has new ideas. That's not a government that has energy. That's a government that's been here for too long. That's a government that doesn't listen to Manitobans.

* (15:30)

Now, ultimately, Mr. Speaker, it'll be Manitobans who make that decision. It'll be Manitobans who make that judgment, but I hope—and I know, because I believe in Manitobans, that they'll look for a government that has an optimistic view, the one that is forward-looking, the one that has new ideas for Manitobans, and they won't vote for a government—I don't believe—that is desperate, tired and has to rely everything it has on an old, desperate, attack-style smear campaign.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I think I speak on behalf of all my colleagues that I hope the

member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) retains his job as campaign manager of the Conservative election campaign.

An Honourable Member: He's got a good track record.

Mr. Dewar: He has a very good track record, Mr. Speaker. "Honey, I shrunk the party"—I believe was his—"honey, I shrunk the party" was his motto after the last election.

But I want to, in the few moments I have today, Mr. Speaker, first of all, I welcome you back. It's great to see my old friend in the Chair, and I also want to just congratulate the member for St. Norbert (Ms. Brick)—[*interjection*] Great job the member for St. Norbert did, as a very capable job she did under very stressful conditions. And, of course, I welcome our pages and the table officers and all the staff, both here in the Assembly and our caucus who work so hard to make us look good. And some of us require extra work but—

An Honourable Member: Yes, you do.

Mr. Dewar: Thank you.

But I want to, of course, thank my constituents, and I have a—quite an interesting, diverse constituency. I represent grand—Victoria Beach, up there at the northern end of my constituency, and we're pleased that I recently were able to provide \$250,000 to that community to upgrade their sports complex. We also support the community of Grand Marais; we also provided them with \$250,000 for a community centre there. The—as well, it's going to provide tourism opportunities for that area.

And, of course, I have the Brokenhead First Nation, Ojibway First Nation, in my constituency. Members will know that is the location of the South Beach Casino, and it is our government that worked with First Nations, both in Brokenhead with the Southeast Tribal Council and in The Pas to fulfill that promise that we made to work with them on gaming opportunities. Now, whatever you think about gaming opportunities for First Nations' individuals, you have to admit that the South Beach Casino has been a success.

Mr. Speaker, I have the community—the small community of Libau in my constituency and they've—are enjoying some highway improvements in the area. I have the great community of East Selkirk, and members will know that our government, for the first time in 30 years, our—the community has

benefited from a new school—the East Selkirk Middle School—the first new school in 30 years in our community, the last time there was an NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, the—I have the community of Lockport, the—Gonor, Narol and, of course, my home community of Selkirk, which has benefited greatly from the up—from the investments of our government. We have the Tyndall Building at the Selkirk Mental Health Centre. Members will know that our government developed the waterfront in Selkirk. We've announced, with the federal government and the City of Selkirk, the doubling of the water capacity of our community. We expanded Neighbourhoods Alive! into Selkirk and into Flin Flon and into Portage. I want—and there's another thing, is that the—we recently announced that our government will be co-funding, with the City of Selkirk, a transit system, which I know my colleague from Flin Flon has in his community. There's—I believe there's also one in Thompson and Brandon and, of course, in the city of Winnipeg.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the biggest announcement of all, of course, is—what together was reiterated in the Speech from the Throne—is that Selkirk will be getting a new hospital, which is very welcome in our community. I believe the people in the area has been well-served by our government, and they know and they very much appreciate it.

You know what, Mr. Speaker? I think when you listen to the comments from my colleagues in the opposition, you realize that they've never offered up what is their vision. We've offered up ours to the Assembly and to the people of Manitoba. You never hear what their vision is. You know, they got together in Brandon a couple of weeks ago, and they brought the greatest minds of the Conservative Party together and they went into their closed-door meetings. And they had closed-door meetings and they had this big session, you know, and they came out, after spending hours and hours working on policy and working on, you know, debate for the next—and the only thing they came up with was to fire Bill Fraser off the Hydro board. The only thing they came up with was to fire Garry Leach on the Hydro board. The only thing they came up with after spending days and days and days in intensive meetings, they came up with one idea, and that was to fire the Hydro board.

As I said before, we put out our vision. We put out our vision for the people. The Tories, obviously,

have a secret agenda. We know that they want to cut over \$500 million out of the budget in one year, Mr. Speaker. You know what's quite interesting is that they expect—they're the only government in Canada that they feel—that they—they're the only government in Canada, if they were to form government, that could balance the budget in one year. There's no other government in Canada that's attempting to balance the budget in one year. The federal government is taking six years; Ontario is expecting to take eight years; New Brunswick is expecting to take five years, the same as Manitoba; BC, Québec, Nova Scotia, PEI in four years; and Alberta expects to return to surplus in three years. But, for some reason, somehow, this opposition, this Conservative opposition, has predicted that they could do it in one.

Well, how can it be done? It's impossible. The only way they could possibly do it is by massive cutbacks, and we witnessed that in the '90s. And it happened in our own community where they closed our school of nursing in Selkirk. They closed down the training plant. They did not build that new school. That new school was needed; they didn't do it. They had planned on doing a redevelopment of the Selkirk waterfront; they didn't do it. They—the Selkirk Mental Health Centre—the necessary improvements to that facility—wasn't done. All the highway work wasn't done. Highway 9 and Highway 27—I know my friend—Gimli will know—they promised to do that in 1995. It wasn't done until we formed government in 1999, and we completed the job in about 2003. Mr. Speaker, the only way they could possibly do that is to make those massive cuts. They're arguing, they're putting forward the position that they are the only political party in Canada that can return to a surplus in one year. Well, how can they possibly do that? It's impossible for them to do.

I want to talk a little bit more about the—a debate that's happening in this Chamber, and that is the position on the Bipole III. And, Mr. Speaker, what's becoming clearer and clearer to all of us is that there's a split in the Conservative caucus on this issue. There's a split in the Conservative caucus on the placement of this line. You've got the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Hawranik) and the member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler), they want this line to go down the west. We know that. They want the line to go down the west. And then you've got the western MLAs who would like to see this line go down the east. In fact, I remember the member for Springfield, when he was—just after the—after we—our government came to power—he stood up day in, day out, day in

and day out, and he presented petitions. I'll just want to read the bit of a—first of all, he was demanding that the Hydro—that he—that government interfere in the operations of Hydro, No. 1. But he demanded every day that we bring forward—that he was tabling a petition in this House, and he argued that power lines—that there was numerous study that have linked cancer to the proximity of power lines and that the government consider alternate routes for the additional lines running through East St. Paul. That was then. Now, apparently he's welcoming those same lines to go through, right through East St. Paul, right through Springfield, right through Birds Hill Park.

And I was at AMM and I talked to one of his councillors, and I asked him, I said, do you know that your member wants this line to go right through East St. Paul? What do you think? Well, he was—I tell you he was very disappointed, No. 1, with his member, and he also said, no, they don't want this line to go through East St. Paul. Do they want this line to go through Beausejour, right through Park Avenue, right through Garson? As I said, there is a clear split in the Conservative caucus. There is a clear split in the Conservative caucus on this issue. *[interjection]* What's that? So we can see that here in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker.

* (15:40)

As I said before, we talked a bit about the—what's the difference between the Conservatives and ourselves. Mr. Speaker, they're prepared to hack and slash their way through \$500 million—\$500 million out of the budget. You know, and what would that mean for our community? That'd probably mean that we wouldn't have that transit system. It would mean we wouldn't have that hospital. The member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) is getting a new school in Woodlands, but he's probably going to vote against it. He's probably going to vote against it. He's going to vote against that new school in Woodlands.

I listened to the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen). His first comment was spend, spend, spend. The first thing he said was he needed an expansion in his hospital. But we know if he did, he'd vote against it anyways.

The member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu) today stood up and wanted more highways in her riding. Spend, spend, spend. The member for Springfield, he wants a new bridge. The member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), she wants more personal care homes. The member for Portage (Mr. Fauschou),

just the other day, he wanted more money for his ER for his riding. He also wanted the women's prison.

But, you know, I could go on and on and on about the Conservatives, Mr. Speaker, but in my limited time that I have, I want to—I just want to urge all members—urge all members—and I plead with members to vote for the future and to vote for the Speech from the Throne. Thank you.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): I am pleased to rise today to put a few comments on the record with respect to the Throne Speech, and before I get to the Throne Speech itself, I, too, want to add my welcome to you after your surgery and certainly wish you well. And it's good to see you back in the Chair, Mr. Speaker, and we know that your difficulties are behind you, and it's good to see that you're looking in such good health.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to pay tribute to the pages who do incredible work in our Chamber, and it's—and I want to wish them well and thank them for the services they provide to all of us as MLAs. And also to the staff within our Chamber who from year to year continue to do, you know, work for us as members of the Legislature and, indeed, for the people of the province, and I want to say to them, thank you for the services that they provide to the elected people and to the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, to the community that I represent or the communities that I represent, I want to, first of all, wish them a merry Christmas and the best of the season as we enter the Christmas season and the holiday season. And I have to say that I am extremely proud of the people that I represent because they are the salt of the earth. They are the people who build our communities, who build our province, and they get up every morning and go to work to ensure that our province is a better place for not only them, but, indeed, for their children. And to them, I doff my hat to all the people within my constituency who have done—and supported me over the course of time and certainly have built our province and continue to build it from day to day.

Mr. Speaker, I've stood up on a number of Throne Speeches, but this one in particular is probably one that we sat through and was probably one of the longer Throne Speeches that I've heard in this Chamber, and it went on an on because, I think, what the government was trying to do was to somehow impress upon Manitobans that if the Throne Speech is long it's got to have something

good in it. Well, we listened long and hard, but we didn't hear anything that would suggest that there was any action that was going to take place on the part of the government to improve the quality of life for the people of Manitoba or to address some of those glaring inadequacies that we have seen emerge as a result of this government's lack of attention to issues that we have within our province.

And we have a number of them. And they've been growing in importance, they've been growing in severity, and today we have a province that is facing some real significant challenges. The government itself is facing some real serious issues, and they have failed to come up with any solutions or any course of action that would curb some of those serious issues that are facing Manitobans and are facing this government.

And one of the most glaring, Mr. Speaker, is crime. And, you know, I'm a little embarrassed when I listen to the television set and the news items that come forward. In every single weekend you find that there are more and more Manitobans losing their lives as a result of the crime that exists in this city. Now, you can't blame any individual in this House for the crime that is happening out on the streets, but, collectively, as a government, there is a responsibility not only on the minister's part, but on this government's part and, most importantly, on the Premier's (Mr. Selinger) part to address those issues of crime that exist on our streets.

But, Mr. Speaker, I've learned over the last couple of decades that I've been here that when you look at the justice issues and you look at the crime issues, one of the characteristics that this government and this party that is in government today is noted for is it's soft position on crime. And I hate to say that, but that's kind of the philosophy of the New Democrats. They are soft on crime.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's just the way they are. They can't help it. I don't think the NDP can help it. They are just soft on crime, and they don't have an ability to address those tough issues as they relate to crime on our streets and crime in our communities.

And, Mr. Speaker, I listen to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) when he gets up in his place, and the big issue before the House today is the inquiry, and when we look at the answers that we are given by either the Premier or the Minister of Justice, we realize that they can't help it. They don't have the ability to address those tough issues as they relate to crime. And so they flounder around; they flop

around. And I don't care who you talk to out there in Manitoba, they will tell you that, yeah, it's too bad that they can't address those issues, but they're known to be soft on crime. And that's a characteristic of the NDP; that's the characteristic of this government perpetuated by the Premier and his Minister of Justice.

How many times have we heard the minister—the critic for the Justice Department, our leader, stand up and plead with the government to show some spine, if you like, to show some course of action that it is going to take to address those very, very serious issues of crime as they exist in our city and in our communities. And they haven't been able to do that, Mr. Speaker. And, unfortunately, I think that the situation is going to continue as it is today, and this government just hasn't got the ability to be able to address those issues of crime.

It's not a matter of not knowing how to do it, but it's just a matter of having the ability, and they don't have the ability to address those issues. And so those issues will continue until Manitobans are fed up to the extent that they're going to boot this government out of office, and that will happen, Mr. Speaker, because Manitobans will not tolerate this for much longer.

Now, we've heard the leader, my leader, get up in the House and ask the government: what is their plan? What is the solution that they have? What is the course of action that they are going to take to address that issue? And, Mr. Speaker, we don't have any answers. All we have—all we have—from the Minister of Justice and his leader, the Premier, is going back to the 1990s and trying to fabricate—and I think today's *Winnipeg Sun*, you know, characterized it perfectly. You know, it's a myth that they continue to propagate, they continue to enunciate in the House here and to anybody who will listen.

And I think the media are getting tired of it, as all of us are. What we're trying to do—*[interjection]* Well, you know, for someone who took the pensions away on retired teachers, Mr. Speaker, we have the member from Gimli, who should from time to time—*[interjection]* Now, you see, remember it's not that wrong for me to say that he took the pensions away from retired teachers. He did—he did. What was owed to these retired teachers, he took it away.

* (15:50)

Well, Mr. Speaker, that's how he's characterized. That's how he's going to be known, and that's how

the people of Gimli will know him as well, when he gets back there.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to come back to the issue of crime, because that, today, is probably one of the most significant issues that Manitobans are concerned about, and we haven't heard anything from the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) that would give us any comfort that they have an ability to be able to deal with it. And so all we can come to the conclusion is that they do not have the ability to take any action and to solve those very important issues.

And, Mr. Speaker, I go from the Department of Justice to the Department of Family Services, and we have seen what a tragedy, what an utter tragedy it has been in dealing with issues in Family Services. Now, you know, we shouldn't try to make politics of that issue because it's too serious, but in this province we have children dying. Children are dying because of the mismanagement of the Department of Family Services, the family of—the Department of Justice and that is continuing. There have been too many deaths, too many innocent children have lost their lives and we want to prevent that. We want to make sure that in the future no more children are forced to die at the hands of their parents or at the hands of adults because we haven't got the management of the system in control.

Mr. Speaker, until we get control of that, that tragedy, that horror, will continue. When my leader, when the critic for Justice, the critic for Family Services, stand up in this House and they ask for an inquiry, they're not doing it just to make politics of a situation. They're doing it because it's time that we address the issue. It is time that we took the whole issue of justice seriously, and it starts at the top. It starts with the Premier (Mr. Selinger), and if he hasn't got the ability or he hasn't got the will to stand up to the people who are committing the crimes and say, enough is enough, then he does not deserve to be in that chair. This is a serious issue and a serious problem.

Mr. Speaker, as we listen to the Throne Speech, one of the other areas that is of concern to us, and I'm going to leave the Department of Justice alone now because my time is limited here and I do want to address some of the other issues. A person could spend the entire length of your address on crime and it still would not be enough but in the limited time I have, I want to address another issue, and that is the issue of the poor decision making that we have from this government.

Ms. Erna Braun, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

Poor decision making, poor management, an inability to deal with issues that are important to Manitobans. You know, in haste to make a political statement and to get a photo op, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) went ahead and announced a new stadium for the city of Winnipeg. Now, it was kind of a surprise to many of us how quickly that announcement was made and the shovels were going to go into the ground almost immediately. Well, before the shovels got too far into the ground, the deal started to fall apart, Madam Acting Speaker. The costs started to escalate because the proper due diligence wasn't done and then the finger-pointing started and all of a sudden the Premier found himself with egg on his face, and today he is stuck with a situation where we don't really know whether we've got a stadium coming or not.

We know we've got a hole in the ground. The Premier tells us that he's going to be making another announcement shortly but, Madam Acting Speaker, we don't know the nature of that announcement and who is going to bear the cost of the new stadium. Is it going to be the taxpayer of Manitoba or are we going to bring to the table entrepreneurs, people who have the means, who have an ability to put their money together and to build a stadium in this city for the good of the province? Well, I fear—I fear—that the Premier hasn't had an ability to bring those players to the table and that's why he hasn't made the announcement.

And so, Madam Acting Speaker, I think that what is going to happen in the end is taxpayers are going to be on the hook again for millions of dollars for a stadium that should have been bringing together both private and public funds to bring a stadium to this community.

Madam Acting Speaker, we've seen, you know, the loss of confidence that there has been in what the Premier has said as it relates to this project, because people are backing away. People are not coming to the table. They're backing away. We've seen comments in the newspapers from people who were at the table who are now distancing themselves from this project and from this Premier, and so we're still waiting.

Now, there was some anxiety and there was some haste in putting this deal together and making sure that the stadium was going to be being built as we speak. And to date we see nothing but a hole in the ground. And we don't know whether or not the

construction is going to start, when it's going to start, who is going to do it, and who is going to pay for it. But we should have, legitimately, some fears about where this Premier is going to take this project, because we know he's going to dump it in the laps of taxpayers of this province, and then he's going to pride himself with having put a deal together to build a stadium in our city, and, Madam Acting Speaker, but the wrong people are going to be paying for it.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Mr. Speaker, it seems that anything our Premier touches turns bad. No matter where he goes, trouble follows him. He committed himself to living within his means to ensure that Manitoba would not be running a deficit, and now we see that he has not only changed his tune about all of that but he's had to change legislation to give him the right to run a deficit.

And, Mr. Speaker, who is going to pay for that deficit and that debt? Manitobans will. And he says, oh, well, it's the economic times. Yet, when the rest of the country was showing that it was going into a bit of a recession, what did our Premier do? He said Manitoba is doing better than any other province. We don't need to worry about going into a deficit.

Well, Mr. Speaker, how is this all going to be paid for? Now he says there's a five-year plan ahead of us to get out of this situation that he has put this Province into. He's giving himself five years to bail out of it. Well, I don't think he's going to be around long enough to see that bailout. And all we've seen from him is a deeper hole being dug in terms of the debt and the deficits that this Province is facing.

And I don't blame the Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) for not voting for her own budget last year. It wasn't worthy of a vote in favour of. And it's the first time in history in this province that a Minister of Finance refused to get up on a vote on her own budget. Now, Mr. Speaker, we can make light of that if we like but the reality is, that was the first time in the history of this province that laws had to be changed in order to accommodate the budget.

We didn't put the budget out before Manitobans and say, this is what our budget is, this is how we can live within our means. But instead the Minister of Finance had to bring a change in the law in order for her budget to be legitimate. And so laws don't mean too much to this bunch because they will change them as they go along in order to accommodate their agenda. But it's not the agenda of

the people, Mr. Speaker. Manitobans don't want to see deficits. Manitobans don't want to see their province dug into a hole.

And why is it, Mr. Speaker, that other jurisdictions are moving ahead of Manitoba? You know, I was—there was one time when we used to look upon our neighbour to the west, to Saskatchewan, and we used to think that we were lucky that we were managing our province well enough that we were ahead of that province. But today we look to the west, and we find that we are behind every other jurisdiction to the west of us. We're even behind jurisdictions to the east of us, and families that are living in our province are paying through their nose for the mistakes of this government.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about agriculture because most of my constituency—the foundation of my constituency is still in agriculture, as it is for this province. But what did we see in the Throne Speech as it relates to agriculture? Was there any hope given to people in agriculture Manitoba? Was there any hope given to the people who produce the products that we export?

* (16:00)

Over the course of the last number of Throne Speeches, we have seen a diminished amount of attention given to the agriculture producers in our province and, today, Mr. Speaker, we still have producers who are out there who have been facing some really desperate times as it relates to weather, but there has been no help coming to them from this government. Oh, there are words of optimism that the government—it will come to their attention and it will come to their help, but while the government talks, many of the ranchers, especially in our province, are going down.

Mr. Speaker, under this administration, we have seen nothing but more regulations being forced upon our producers; regulations that, in some instances, don't make any sense. But—and the interesting thing is that when you ask the minister some questions about it, he's really not sure, but he thinks it's good for the province in terms of the regulations that he puts forward.

Mr. Speaker, this government has no idea of how to help the producers that are in need of help today, and all we see is more regulation. We have seen this government kill or diminish the hog industry in our province. They put a moratorium on

it. The livestock industry, the cattle industry is moving out of this province. We see less cattle today than we did five years ago, and farmers are getting out of that business because there isn't very much hope being given by this government to them. We don't have a packing industry in this province anymore. It's gone. And I remember the minister, who is now the Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk), when she was the Minister of Agriculture standing up in this House and making a lot of promises in terms of where we would be as a processing province in beef. Well, that was in the years of BSE. BSE is now seven years behind us and we still don't have a packing industry and we won't have in this province because our cattle industry is leaving us.

So, Mr. Speaker, agriculture continues to suffer under this government, and now we see a new tax put on the supply managed sector that will mean that the tax is really a tax on food to the consumer. It's a tax on milk. It's a tax on the products that Manitobans need. I've never seen this before. And this government is simply wanting to get its hands on the revenues no matter which source they come from, and so they're doing a backdoor tax on food, a backdoor tax on milk. But they don't like to hear that, but it's really what it is that is happening in the province.

And, Mr. Speaker, I know that the time will come when this government will leave office and it'll be up to somebody else, it'll be up to this side of the House to clean up that mess and to ensure that we show the kind of support to our producers that we're supposed to show and that is our responsibility to show. We're going to stand shoulder to shoulder with them instead of forcing regulations upon them that impact on their industry and impact on their ability to make a living in this province and put them at a disadvantage as compared to other jurisdictions in Canada. If you look across this country, Manitoba has the most draconian regulations in agriculture that you're going to find anywhere in Canada, and it was done by this government and, at the same time, they tell you, oh, well, they support their producer. Well, a greater untruth cannot be spoken.

So, Mr. Speaker, we do have a problem in our province. We do have a problem with this government in terms of how it's managing the affairs of this Province.

Mr. Speaker, and I could speak about education, I could speak about a lot of issues as they relate to the budget, and let me just add one more where I

have a lot of concern. And I know that the Department of Health is probably one of the most difficult portfolios to handle that you have in any administration, but I have to say one thing, and that is that I've been fortunate in dealing with the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald), and we have had an issue ongoing for some time, and that is the dialysis unit in Russell has been promised 10 times in this House. Back in 1999, we turned—we actually turned sod for a new personal care home in my community and—when we were in government—and, unfortunately, that personal care home has not been built yet. At the same time, we had an announcement made about a dialysis unit. Well, it's 11 years-plus now, almost 12 years now, and I have to say that finally the dialysis unit is under construction. And I'm going to say thank you to the Minister of Health because this is an issue that has been important to that part of the province. And we have families who are calling me now saying, when is the dialysis unit going to be up and running in the community, because it is an important one for us.

But, Mr. Speaker, at the same time I have to say that the regional health authorities, although they have some responsibility for many—the management of the health regions, it is—it was this government that closed the emergency wards in many of our rural hospitals and they are still closed today.

I will never forget Gary Doer promising, standing on the steps of the hospital in Erickson, and promising to the people of Erickson, that their emergency hospital or their emergency ward would be open. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's about 10 years now since that promise was made and that emergency ward still remains closed, and I would dare say that it will probably never reopen again.

But on the west side of the province there are, I would say, there are four hospitals within my region that have closed their emergency wards. And Mr. Speaker, that, in a rural community, is a problem because today, if a citizen has a stroke or a heart attack in a rural community and they don't have that emergency access, their chances of survival are not very good.

Mr. Speaker, and we talk about the quality of health care, we have to remember that this province is served more than just by the city. This province has rural areas, northern areas, which require, perhaps, a little more attention and it's going to be a little more costly to deliver those services but those

are citizens of our province who deserve those services and need those services.

When I—I have to tell you that I was involved in an emergency situation where it took an ambulance 45 minutes to come nine miles and that is not acceptable in this day and age, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, that individual did not survive.

But, Mr. Speaker, it just shows you that we need to be thinking about those things and we need to do a better job at ensuring that people who live in these areas have access to those facilities. You can't take a heart attack patient or stroke patient 50 kilometres and think you're going to let that person survive. Because by the time that ambulance gets there, in most cases, it is too late unless it has been a minor incident.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's an area where I think the government has fallen short. We need to pay attention to rural health and rural health services. Yes, the city is a big place and we need to spend time and we need to spend effort there. But I say that in the rural areas, there is need.

We have the issue of doctors in rural communities. We have the issue of shortages of nurses in rural communities and that has to be paid some attention to, and, under this administration, not enough has been done to help those people to ensure that their services don't decline but, indeed, are kept in proper order.

So, Mr. Speaker, although the Throne Speech went on and on and on, there was little substance to it. There was little call for action in it. The Premier (Mr. Selinger) did not convince anybody that he has a good handle on where this Province is going in the future.

And, Mr. Speaker, we tried, as an opposition, my leader put forward an amendment to the Throne Speech that I think makes some sense, and he called on the government to support his motion but, of course, that would never happen. But without that amendment, there is no way that we can really support this Throne Speech or give it any kind of indication of support from this side of the House.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I regret to say, that this Throne Speech falls very far short of where we thought it should be and where the people of Manitoba believe it should be.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

* (16:10)

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech sets out a clear vision for the future of our province, the great province of Manitoba.

It reflects the values and priorities of Manitoba families. On quality health care, to make sure people have access to a family physician. On education and training, for the jobs of tomorrow, to ensure young people continue in school to 18 to get the education they need to provide them a prosperous future. To ensure that young families and young people have jobs that they can build their future around, with the lowest unemployment rate in this country. And to fight crime with prevention, policing, and consequences, not a one-shot approach but an approach that focuses on keeping people out of crime, an approach that ensures that there's proper, safe neighbourhoods, and an approach that has consequences appropriate and proportional to the crime that may be committed. An affordable and high-quality standard of living, one that allows Manitobans to have disposable income to maintain that high-quality life they have here in this province, and also a focus on things like infrastructure, innovation, and the kinds of investments that will make a long-term future in this province, one that is economically prosperous.

Our government is keeping Manitoba moving forward on the right track, unlike members opposite that want to drag us backwards into the dark, dark days of the '90s. Our approach is balanced, responsible, and meets the needs of Manitoba families. With our—while our Throne Speech builds on 11 years of progress, the response of the members opposite reveals just how risky and extreme their ideas are. The members opposite have made it clear they would take our province in a radically different direction.

If the members opposite had their way, health care for families would no longer be a priority. That's what they say. Protecting our water and our other natural resources for future generations would no longer be a priority. Fewer young people would receive the training they need to excel in the modern economy and there would be fewer community police officers on the streets of our Manitoba communities and, as well, they would gut the development of Manitoba Hydro. What many call Manitoba's oil would grind to a halt and the reliability of Manitoba's power supply would be put at risk, not to mention the attack on our pristine boreal forest.

We stand with Manitoba families and reject the risky, reckless whims of the members opposite. Did I mention the word "reckless"? It is unfortunate that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) has come out against our new bold plan to ensure that all Manitobans have access to a family doctor by 2015. How did the Leader of the Opposition react to our plan? He said that it would be just something he would trivialize, and he downplayed it, said it wasn't possible. Our plan to free up more family doctors' time through the innovative use of nurse practitioners is supported by the College of Registered Nurses and the College of Family Physicians.

Here is what Dr. Carey Isaac had to say, who is the president of the Family Physicians. He said, the benefit of each person having his own family doctor is indisputable. We stand by our record. We have 405 more doctors since 1999. And, whereas in 1999 there were no nurse practitioners, now we have 94 practising in Manitoba.

And no one should be surprised at the response of the members opposite. The last time they were in government, they thought there were too many doctors. They cut enrolment in the medical school. Unbelievable. They thought there were too many nurses so they fired over a thousand of them and the member from Fort Whyte still thinks firing nurses was the right policy then and the right policy today.

Mr. Speaker, we are on the side of Manitoba families and patients. We will defend our health-care system against the reckless plans of the members opposite, and the member for Fort Whyte and his colleagues are also opposed to protecting the pristine boreal forest on the east side of Lake Winnipeg.

An Honourable Member: Why do they hate trees?

Mr. Selinger: I don't know why they hate trees. And they are willing to put hydro reliability and future hydro development at risk. They're willing to put the local economy at risk by not having additional reliability. They do not want to build converter stations in Manitoba when Manitoba Hydro has been recommending for well over a decade that we need additional converter capacity in this province to go—to mitigate the risk of 75 per cent of our power coming into the Dorsey station. And they want to put our export markets at risk by refusing to build additional transmission and additional export capacity, which would result in an increase in our Hydro rates of at least 40 per cent if not higher. What can you say about an opposition that wants to roll the dice on that? Some would say they're reckless. We

endorse that. Some would say they're foolhardy. Some would say that they want to roll the dice on the future of the province of Manitoba, and we agree with them. That's exactly what they'd want to do.

Now, the members opposite oppose a new stadium in Manitoba, a stadium that would be used by young families, by university students, by the Bisons and the Bombers, just like they opposed the MTS Centre when it was built downtown. And we know that they will do everything they can to block it while we move forward and build it.

And the members opposite are also offside with our public plan, supported by educators and superintendents, supported by parents, supported by young people themselves, that would ensure young people stay in school until they're 18 or get an equivalent education in the trades, in work experience, things that will engage them in the labour market with the proper skills. They're going to vote against that bill. We know that, Mr. Speaker. This policy is about success and opportunities for young people.

Earlier this week, the MLA for Turtle Mountain criticized this important step in improving our education system. He called it window dressing, on November 22nd, window dressing. Here is another view from the president of the University of Winnipeg, Dr. Lloyd Axworthy: This could be a defining moment in resetting the concept of learning in Manitoba. A defining moment, and that's what we think it is, an opportunity to spend money and ensure that young people get an education when we fully engage them to at least the age of 18. That's something we could do; that's something we could do here in Manitoba, and the members opposite call it window dressing. Why do they hate young people, Mr. Speaker? That is the question that the member would ask if he was here from Concordia—if the member—

An Honourable Member: What?

Mr. Selinger: —Kildonan, if he were here. But members opposite have to answer that question.

Remember—you know, when you think about it their response is not surprising, because what did they do with education funding when they were in government? They froze it and they cut it every year, and the education graduation rate, when they were in office, dropped to about 70 per cent, fully 30 per cent of people weren't graduating from high school, they

were being pushed out of school, Mr. Speaker, pushed out of school. And our increase in education funding last year, in one year alone, was greater than the education—was 15 times greater than the increase in education that they provided during the 1990s. By providing resources and restoring respect for classroom teachers our graduation rate has increased from 72 per cent to 80 per cent, and now more young people than ever before are staying in Manitoba or returning to Manitoba, because they know they can get an education here and when they complete that education they can get a job.

Just last week, I was visiting Tec—the Tec Voc High School in Winnipeg and they saw with their investments that we've provided them resources for in the Technical Vocational Initiative they have world-class photography class there. They have a world-class industrial arts program there. Same thing at Sisler High School, one of the top 10 high schools in Canada, and the largest in Manitoba, they have a Technical Vocational Initiative there that teaches people how to produce new media productions, something that before you had to go to university and college to get. That is a program that they can graduate from in high school now, and many of those young people have already gotten jobs doing computer repair, creating new products, new intellectual property that can find its way into the marketplace and generate new jobs here in Manitoba.

You know, we are getting younger as a province in Manitoba. The average age of Manitobans is going down, and that's because young people are staying here, and that's because we have a world-class immigration program here. And, you know what, Mr. Speaker? The unemployment rate for young people in Manitoba is the lowest in the country, and the unemployment rate for Manitobans generally is the lowest in the country. And what would the members opposite do? They would slash the budget. They would put people on the unemployment rolls; public sector workers, private sector workers, young people would wind up on the unemployment rolls under the Member for Tuxedo's (Mrs. Stefanson) motion to slash the budget, which she introduced last June here in the province.

* (16:20)

Mr. Speaker, we are on the side of parents, which is why we're going to have a common report card, which is why we're going to have common in-service days. Those kinds of things will make a real difference.

And what about water quality in Lake Winnipeg? The Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) says he would get rid of The Water Protection Act. He would gut it. He would let the algae grow on Lake Winnipeg.

And the member for Tuxedo—investment to ensure waste-water treatment are properly done—wasting taxpayers' dollars in her opinion. That's her attitude towards clean water in Manitoba. Our government is committed to protecting water quality in Lake Winnipeg.

And, you know, Mr. Speaker, we will hold members accountable opposite for what they say. Manitobans, the more they learn about what the members opposite stand for, the more they will run very far away from them when it comes to voting for them.

You know what, Mr. Speaker? When it comes to growing this province, the members opposite knows that we're the ones growing this economy. We're performing above the Canadian average in four of the last five years, and during the recession we have actually generated more jobs. Other provinces have lost tens of thousands of jobs; in Manitoba, there's 19,000 more jobs that have been generated in this province over the last year.

And you know what? They can't hide from their record. When we came to putting money into child care in this province, they voted against it. When they came to putting money into roads and highways, they voted against it. When it came to putting money into home care for seniors, they voted against it; and, when it came to putting money into community policing and more prosecutors, they voted against it.

And, when it actually came down to the final decision on the budget, not only did they vote against our budget, but they brought a motion forward that would cut a half a billion dollars out of our budget. They tried to sneak it through the Legislature without the media noticing. We noticed, Mr. Speaker, and we had a recorded vote. The recorded vote showed they wanted to cut that half a billion dollars; the recorded vote showed that we refused to allow that to happen.

Mr. Speaker, we are on the side of families. We are on the side of young people. We are on the side of working people. When Vale Inco said they were going to lay off 500 employees, what did the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) say? Give them a tax cut—give them a tax cut. Reward them for wanting to lay off people in Manitoba.

And what about December 1st, Mr. Speaker? That date is coming extremely soon, and on that date Manitoba will be the first tax-free zone in Canada for small business. The tax rate will go to zero.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite didn't even want to reduce taxes for small business. This year the capital tax for business will be entirely eliminated in this province. They never budged on it once when they were in office.

So is there any doubt that I need to find seven minutes more of things to tell Manitobans about the good things we're doing in this province? Is there any doubt when it comes to doing things for young people that we're doing it? Is there any doubt when you look at the child welfare system and the members opposite vote against it? We're actually putting in money in there for prevention. We're putting money in for the Cybertip line. We're protecting people from online exploitation. We're ensuring that we have programs that allow young people to go to Lighthouses and have activities to do out of school. We've got a program for fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, and we have a program for suicide prevention, and all of those initiatives, which make such a difference for families and their children, are being chopped by the members opposite.

And we have a protected areas program in this province, and we are protecting more of our natural resources than has ever been done in the history of this province. And what do members opposite want to do? They want to run a hydro line right down the east side of Manitoba. They want to chop up the boreal forest. They want to put our export markets at risk. They want to put our domestic economy at risk, and they want to cancel the converter stations—the thing that would increase reliability in this province, that would generate more reliability for our hydroelectric resources.

And you know, Mr. Speaker? Ten years ago, we were laying off nurses. Now we have 2,500 more nurses practising in the province of Manitoba, 2,500 more nurses providing services to Manitobans. We now, for the first time, have 110 students entering medical school every year. When the members opposite were in power, they cut the medical school enrolment from 85 to 70, so every single year now, we have 40 more Manitobans being recruited to the medical school. They're being recruited from rural areas; they're being recruited from northern areas. They're being recruited in a way that when they

finish their training, they'll go practise in rural and northern areas, which is why we have 111 more doctors in rural areas and we have 223 more family doctors in Manitoba. And, when you combine the 223 more family doctors with the 94 nurse practitioners, you can see why we can have that potential to ensure Manitobans have access to a family physician, something the members opposite hadn't even imagined was possible during their time in office.

So, Mr. Speaker, as we move forward, on key wait times we're going to make improvements as well, such as cataract surgery. It's down 50 per cent from 22 weeks in the 1990s to 11 weeks now. And what about CT scan wait times? Five weeks, down 72 per cent since '98 when they were 18 weeks. And what about the CIHI information that shows that 98 per cent of all level 1, the most serious cardiac patients, receives surgery within the benchmark here in Manitoba. And we have the shortest wait times for radiation therapy in this country, and, yes, we're going to invest in a helicopter to allow people to get quicker access at a time of critical need in health care.

We put a gamma knife in place and we have that available for doing neurosurgery in this province. And we have expanded and modernized more than a hundred health-care facilities in this province, and we're proceeding with a mental health ER in this province; we're proceeding with a women's hospital. And you know what? We're going to also have a mental health court in Manitoba to complement the family court that we've put in place. And all of these things, which have made such a difference, are being rejected by the members opposite in our Throne Speech.

What's their vision for Manitoba? What is their vision? Is it the darkly veiled vision of privatizing Manitoba Hydro? Is it the darkly veiled vision of privatizing the Liquor Control Commission? Yes, it is, Mr. Speaker. Is it their vision of privatizing health care further and ensuring that that will happen? Yes, it is. We know that's where they want to take the province. They want to carve it up and put it in the hands of their friends just like they did with the Manitoba telephone centre. And now the rates for Manitoba telephone system, which used to be among the lowest in the country, are among the top three. They're among the highest in this country, and that's exactly what they would do with Manitoba Hydro if they had their chance as well. They would dice and

slice it, chop it up and privatize it and we'd see the hydro rates rise.

We're the government that brought in one standardized rate for Manitoba Hydro, one standardized rate for rural Manitobans, one standardized rate for northern Manitobans, one standardized rate for urban Manitobans, and the members opposite, in 11 years, all they did was crank up the rates for Manitoba Hydro just like they cranked up the rates for everything else in this province, including a special rate for interfacility transfer for patients. That rate was put there, including a northern rate. We've eliminated that rate. We treat all Manitobans the same [*inaudible*]

And, you know, Mr. Speaker, we have 170 more ambulances in this province serving rural and northern areas. They never existed before. We have an addictions treatment centre in Thompson, Manitoba, that never existed before and we're building Manitoba Hydro. The Wuskwatim project is proceeding. We're moving ahead with Keeyask. We're moving ahead with Conawapa. There's a wind-power project at St. Joseph that's worth over \$325 million, and the members opposite opposed that wind-power project. That's going to be 137 turbines built down there. It's going to generate over \$40,000 for every farmer in the area that exists within the wind-power project, and the members opposite, they didn't want to do it. They didn't want to do anything for rural Manitoba.

When we brought in a biodiesel mandate, they didn't want to do it. When we brought in an ethanol mandate, they didn't want to do it, and when we expanded geothermal so that we now have more geothermal installations than any part of the country, the members opposite opposed it.

* (16:30)

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hour being 4:30 p.m., pursuant to rule 45(5), I am interrupting the proceedings in order to put the question on the motion of the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), that is, the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the motion, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Ayes have it.

Formal Vote

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Official Opposition House Leader): A recorded vote, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: A recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

Order. The question before the House is the motion of the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), that is, the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. All those in favour of the motion, please rise. [*interjection*]

Order. We have pages that are new here and are doing their best to do the vote, so I ask co-operation of all honourable members please because it's—I'm sure it's very nerve-racking enough as it is, so I am asking the co-operation of all members, please.

Please proceed.

Division

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

Yeas

Allan, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Blaikie, Braun, Brick, Caldwell, Dewar, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Jennissen, Jha, Korzeniowski, Lemieux, Mackintosh, McGifford, Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Reid, Robinson, Rondeau, Selby, Selinger, Struthers, Swan, Whitehead, Wiebe, Wowchuk.

Nays

Borotsik, Briese, Cullen, Derkach, Driedger, Dyck, Eichler, Fauschou, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Hawranik, Maguire, McFadyen, Mitchelson, Pedersen, Schuler, Stefanson, Taillieu.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 30, Nay 19.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Point of Order

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: On a point of order. Okay.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, we have before this House a very important matter of the future of our children in care and a concern about the chaos, and I rise on a point of order because we had 20 members of the NDP MLAs who spoke on the Throne Speech and not one of them in their speeches on the Throne Speech spoke about the need for an inquiry to get to the bottom of what happened with Phoenix Sinclair and, with the exception of one line from the Premier (Mr. Selinger), all the other MLAs didn't even mention the need to improve the status of children in care in this province.

Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order. For the information of all honourable members, I appreciate all your concerns, but when a member is rising on a point of order or a matter of privilege, especially a point of order, it's to point out to the Speaker a breach of a rule or a departure from our practices of the House. It's not a time for debating, and also for matters of privilege it's to deal with a member's privileges of functioning as a member in this House that is being impeded upon by some action that has taken place.

So I appreciate the honourable member's concern, but I'll give you a chance to point out to me the rule or procedure that has been breached according to our dealings with points of order.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, it has been, for a long, long time, the unwritten rule of this Chamber that the Throne Speech debate is the opportunity for people, and the requirement for people, to bring up the issues which they believe are the critical priorities of the day. And the fact of the matter is that we had 20 MLAs who spoke but did not believe that the inquiry into what happened with Phoenix Sinclair was a critical issue of the day—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I'm trying to be as generous as I can to the honourable member. I respect all honourable members in this Chamber, and I hope that all members will respect our rules. Our rules are very clear on points of orders. It's to do with a breach of a rule or a departure from our practices, and, as Speaker, I mentioned many, many times, I do not have control over the content or what members say in their throne speeches or replies to debate. And I

ask the honourable member to point out to me where there—if there is a breach of a rule or what your point of order is.

The honourable member for River Heights, please.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I want to refer specifically to page 174 of *Beauchesne's*. This is phrased here that a motion should be neither argumentative, nor in the style of a speech, nor contain unnecessary provisions or objectionable words. It's usually expressed in the affirmative even when its purpose and effect are negative.

And so I believe that there is a valid issue here and a valid point of order, which needs to be brought forward. And this is not a matter of argument. It's a matter of the point of order that there is a tradition, which is an unwritten rule, that this critical issues of the day should be discussed in the remarks that are put forward by members in the Throne Speech and, in this case, this rule or unwritten rule, tradition, has been breached, and I believe that that's a valid point of order.

* (16:40)

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

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): I think even with the help of the Opposition House Leader he doesn't have a point of order, and I think he knows that. He had his opportunity to make a speech on the Throne Speech just like every other member in this House. He availed himself of that opportunity and everybody who spoke on this side of the House talked about many issues that help children and families, and I only wish that he'd listen more closely to those speeches and he would have heard that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on the same point of order.

Mr. Hawranik: On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, and I refer as the member from River Heights has, as well, to rule 565. The Throne Speech itself is a motion and the reality is it has to comply with the rules, as stated in *Beauchesne*. And rule 565 says the motion should not be argumentative, and the reality is that, obviously, the Throne Speech and the accompanying motion that accompanied the Throne Speech was argumentative in the sense that it didn't include what it probably should have included. And I

think we tried to make that point last week as well. But it should have included—there's no doubt it should have included reference to the fact that a public inquiry should be called in the Phoenix Sinclair matter. And it's not only what is included in the Throne Speech that breaches the rule, but it also is what is not included in the Throne Speech that breaches that rule. And I would submit that is a valid point of order, and I would ask that you rule accordingly. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable member for River Heights, I see it the honourable member is complaining about is the content of speeches in debate and the point of order that's raised by *Beauchesne* 565. The honourable member does not have a point of order. It's pretty clear in here that motions should be not argumentative and I think when members are making speeches, there will be disagreements. I don't think all—I don't expect all 56 members to agree on the speeches, so I have to say it's a dispute over the facts and the honourable member does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I challenge the ruling of the Chair.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, the honourable member would have to have support. Is there support? Would the members who support please rise. Okay, the honourable member—one, two, three, four. The honourable member does have support, so the ruling of the Speaker has been challenged.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in support of sustaining the ruling of the Chair, say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to sustaining the ruling of the Chair, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Ayes have it.

Formal Vote

Mr. Gerrard: A recorded vote.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member have support for a recorded vote? Okay, the honourable member does have support. Okay, a recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

* (17:40)

Order. The hour allotted for the division bells has expired. I am therefore directing that the bells be turned off and the vote to proceed.

The question before the House is shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained.

Division

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

Yeas

Allan, Ashton, Bjornson, Blady, Blaikie, Braun, Brick, Caldwell, Dewar, Howard, Jennissen, Jha, Korzeniowski, Lemieux, McGifford, Nevakshonoff,

Oswald, Robinson, Rondeau, Selby, Selinger, Struthers, Whitehead, Wiebe, Wowchuk.

Nays

Borotsik, Briese, Cullen, Derkach, Driedger, Dyck, Eichler, Faurschou, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Hawranik, Maguire, Mitchelson, Pedersen, Schuler, Stefanson, Taillieu.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 25, Nays 18.

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

The hour now being past 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, November 29, 2010

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