

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

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authority of
The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Ninth Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, November 17, 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.

Speaker's Statement

Mr. Speaker: I have a statement for the House. I must inform the House that Kevin Lamoureux, the honourable member for Inkster, has resigned his seat in the House effective November 1st, 2010.

I am, therefore, tabling his resignation in my letter to the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council advising of the vacancy created in the House membership.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PETITIONS

PTH 15–Twinning

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

These are the reasons for this petition.

In 2004, the Province of Manitoba made a public commitment to the people of Springfield to twin PTH 15 and the floodway bridge on PTH 15, but then in 2006, the twinning was cancelled.

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

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

The current plan to replace the floodway bridge on PTH 15 does not include twinning and therefore

does not fulfill the current or future traffic demands cited by the Minister of Transportation.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Signed by C. Thagard, P. Buors, R. Smoeyluk 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.

RCMP Rural Service

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

Manitobans deserve to live in a safe environment and feel secure in their homes and their communities. Some regions of rural Manitoba have been hard hit by crime, including residential break and enters, property theft, vandalism and other offences that threaten people's security.

In some areas, RCMP detachments are not staffed on a 24-hour basis. Criminal elements capitalize on this, engaging in crimes at times when officers may not be readily available to respond to calls for service.

Some believe the current RCMP detachment boundaries need to be redrawn so that service delivery could be faster and more effective.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Justice to consider working with the RCMP, the federal government and the communities to develop strategies to address services–service challenges in rural Manitoba, such as the possibility of having response units that could be 'distatched' to regions affected by crime waves.

And to request the Minister of Justice to consider working with stakeholders to determine if the current RCMP detachment boundaries are designed to ensure the swiftest and most effective service delivery.

And this petition is signed by J. North, T. Campbell and K. Finndogosa.

Auto Theft–Court Order Breaches

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I wish to present the following petition.

The background to this petition is as follows:

On December 11th, 2009, in Winnipeg, Zdzislaw Andrzejczak was killed when the car he was driving collided with a stolen vehicle.

The death of Mr. Andrzejczak, a husband and a father, along with too many other deaths and injuries involving stolen vehicles, are a preventable tragedy.

Many of those accused in fatalities involving stolen vehicles were previously known to police and identified as chronic and high-risk car thieves who had court orders against them.

Chronic car thieves pose a risk to the safety of all Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To request the Minister of Justice to consider ensuring that all court orders for car thieves are vigorously monitored and enforced.

To request the Minister of Justice to consider ensuring all breaches of court orders on car thieves are reported to police and vigorously prosecuted.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by T. Andrzejczak, J. Andrzejczak, I. Piec and many, many others.

Multiple Sclerosis Treatment

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

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 are—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, Mr. Speaker, 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 petition is signed, Mr. Speaker, by T. Tremblay, M. Campbell, M. Hunter and many, many, many other very concerned Manitobans. Thank you.

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 that the utility would be proceeding with a west-side route.

* (13:40)

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, cost taxpayers at least an additional \$1.7 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 a 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 A. Chabot, R. Bouchard, K. Wood and many, many more Manitobans.

Multiple Sclerosis Treatment

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And 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 by 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 SM 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 clinic trials as soon as possible.

And this petition is signed by S. Pzio, L. Osalia, C. Zimmerman and many, many other Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

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 procedure 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.

And this is signed by L. Szwaluk, H. Kwasiuych, and M. Baniyas and many, many others, Mr. Speaker.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Crown Corporations Second Report

Ms. Sharon Blady (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the Second Report of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Crown Corporations presents the following as its Second Report—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on CROWN CORPORATIONS presents the following as its Second Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on the following occasions in the Legislative Building:

- November 7, 2007 (1st Session – 39th Legislature)
- August 28, 2008 (2nd Session – 39th Legislature)
- June 25, 2009 (3rd Session – 39th Legislature)
- September 21, 2010 (4th Session – 39th Legislature)

Matters under Consideration

- Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ending February 28, 2007
- Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ending February 29, 2008
- Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ending February 28, 2009
- Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ending February 28, 2010

Committee Membership

Committee Membership for the November 7, 2007 meeting:

- Hon. Mr. CHOMIAK
- Mr. CULLEN
- Mr. DERKACH
- Mr. GRAYDON
- Mr. JHA (Vice-Chairperson)
- Ms. KORZENIOWSKI
- Mr. MAGUIRE

- Ms. MARCELINO
- Mr. MARTINDALE (Chairperson)
- Mr. NEVAKSHONOFF
- Mr. SWAN

Committee Membership for the August 28, 2008 meeting:

- Ms. BRICK (Chairperson)
- Hon. Mr. CHOMIAK
- Mr. CULLEN
- Mr. DEWAR
- Mr. FAURSCHOU
- Mr. GRAYDON
- Ms. HOWARD (Vice-Chairperson)
- Ms. KORZENIOWSKI
- Mr. REID
- Hon. Mr. SWAN
- Mrs. TAILLIEU

Committee Membership for the June 25, 2009 meeting:

- Mr. ALTEMEYER
- Mr. BOROTSIK
- Ms. BRICK (Chairperson)
- Hon. Mr. CHOMIAK
- Mr. FAURSCHOU
- Mr. GRAYDON
- Ms. MARCELINO (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mr. PEDERSON
- Mr. SARAN
- Ms. SELBY
- Hon. Mr. SWAN

Committee Membership for the September 21, 2010 meeting:

- Ms. BLADY
- Mr. CULLEN
- Mr. DEWAR
- Mr. FAURSCHOU
- Mr. GRAYDON
- Mr. JHA
- Hon. Mr. LEMIEUX
- Mr. MARTINDALE
- Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS
- Hon. Mr. SWAN
- Mrs. TAILLIEU

Your Committee elected Ms. BLADY as the Chairperson at the September 21, 2010 meeting.

Your Committee elected Mr. JHA as the Vice-Chairperson at the September 21, 2010 meeting.

Officials Speaking on Record

Officials speaking on the record at the November 7, 2007 meeting:

- Ms. Marilyn McLaren, President and Chief Executive Officer
- Ms. Shari Decter Hirst, Board Chairperson

Officials speaking on the record at the August 28, 2008 meeting:

- Ms. Marilyn McLaren, President and Chief Executive Officer

Officials speaking on the record at the June 25, 2009 meeting:

- Ms. Marilyn McLaren, President and Chief Executive Officer

Officials speaking on the record at the September 21, 2010 meeting:

- Ms. Marilyn McLaren, President and Chief Executive Officer
- Mr. Jake Janzen, Board Chairperson

Report Considered and Passed

Your Committee considered and passed the following report as presented:

- Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ending February 28, 2007

Reports Considered but not Passed

Your Committee considered the following reports but did not pass them:

- Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ending February 29, 2008
- Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ending February 28, 2009
- Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ending February 28, 2010

Ms. Blady: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Radisson (Mr. Jha), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

**Standing Committee on Crown Corporations
Third Report**

Mr. Daryl Reid (Chairperson): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to have you back with us, sir.

I wish to present the Third Report of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Crown Corporations presents the following—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on CROWN CORPORATIONS presents the following as its Third Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on the following occasions in the Legislative Building:

- December 5, 2007 (2nd Session – 39th Legislature)
- May 4, 2009 (3rd Session – 39th Legislature)
- September 29, 2010 (4th Session – 39th Legislature)

Matters under Consideration

- The Annual Report of the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission for the year ended March 31, 2006
- The Annual Report of the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission for the year ended March 31, 2007
- The Annual Report of the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission for the year ended March 31, 2008
- The Annual Report of the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission for the year ended March 31, 2009

Committee Membership

Committee Membership for the December 5, 2007 meeting:

- Mr. BOROTSIK
- Ms. BRICK
- Mr. DEWAR
- Mr. GRAYDON
- Ms. HOWARD
- Mr. MAGUIRE
- Ms. MARCELINO (Vice-Chairperson)

- *Mr. REID (Chairperson)*
- *Mr. SARAN*
- *Hon. Mr. SELINGER*
- *Mrs. TAILLIEU*

Committee Membership for the May 4, 2009 meeting:

- *Mr. BOROTSIK*
- *Ms. BRICK*
- *Mr. CULLEN*
- *Mr. DEWAR*
- *Mr. GRAYDON*
- *Mr. JHA (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Ms. MARCELINO*
- *Mr. REID (Chairperson)*
- *Hon. Mr. SWAN*
- *Hon. Ms. WOWCHUK*
- *Mrs. TAILLIEU*

Committee Membership for the September 29, 2010 meeting:

- *Mr. BOROTSIK*
- *Ms. BRICK*
- *Mr. GOERTZEN*
- *Mr. GRAYDON*
- *Mr. JHA (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Hon. Mr. MACKINTOSH*
- *Hon. Ms. MCGIFFORD*
- *Mr. PEDERSEN*
- *Mr. SARAN*
- *Hon. Mr. SWAN*
- *Mr. REID*

Your Committee elected Mr. REID as the Chairperson.

Officials Speaking on Record at the December 5, 2007 meeting:

- *Don Lussier, President & CEO*
- *Carmen Neufeld, Chair, MLCC Board of Commissioners*

Officials Speaking on Record at the May 4, 2009 meeting:

- *Don Lussier, President & CEO*
- *Carmen Neufeld, Chair, MLCC Board of Commissioners*

Officials Speaking on Record at the September 29, 2010 meeting:

- *Ken Hildahl, President & CEO*

- *Carmen Neufeld, Chair, MLCC Board of Commissioners*

Reports Considered and Passed

Your Committee considered and passed the following reports as presented:

- *The Annual Report of the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission for the year ended March 31, 2006*
- *The Annual Report of the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission for the year ended March 31, 2007*
- *The Annual Report of the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission for the year ended March 31, 2008*

Report Considered but not Passed

Your Committee considered the following report but did not pass it:

- *The Annual Report of the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission for the year ended March 31, 2009*

Mr. Reid: I move, seconded by the honourable member for Radisson (Mr. Jha), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Standing Committee on Crown Corporations Fourth Report

Mr. Daryl Reid (Chairperson): I wish to present the Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Crown Corporations presents the following as its Fourth Report—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on CROWN CORPORATIONS presents the following as its Fourth Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on the following occasions in the Legislative Building:

- *October 6, 2005 (3rd Session – 38th Legislature)*
- *November 21, 2007 (2nd Session – 39th Legislature)*
- *March 16, 2009 (3rd Session – 39th Legislature)*

- *October 12, 2010 (4th Session – 39th Legislature)*

Matters under Consideration

- *The Annual Report of the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation for the year ended March 31, 2005*
- *The Annual Report of the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation for the year ended March 31, 2006*
- *The Annual Report of the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation for the year ended March 31, 2007*
- *The Annual Report of the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation for the year ended March 31, 2008*
- *The Annual Report of the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation for the year ended March 31, 2009*

Committee Membership

Committee Membership for the October 6, 2005 meeting:

- *Ms. BRICK (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Mr. DEWAR*
- *Mr. EICHLER*
- *Mr. FAURSCHOU*
- *Mr. JHA*
- *Mr. MARTINDALE (Chairperson)*
- *Mr. REID*
- *Mr. ROCAN*
- *Mr. SCHELLENBERG*
- *Mr. SCHULER*
- *Hon. Mr. SMITH*

Committee Membership for the November 21, 2007 meeting:

- *Mr. BOROTSIK*
- *Mr. DEWAR*
- *Mr. EICHLER*
- *Mr. FAURSCHOU*
- *Mr. GRAYDON*
- *Mr. JHA (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Ms. KORZENIOWSKI*
- *Ms. MARCELINO*
- *Mr. REID (Chairperson)*
- *Ms. SELBY*
- *Hon. Mr. SELINGER*

Committee Membership for the March 16, 2009 meeting:

- *Ms. BLADY*
- *Ms. BRICK*
- *Mr. CULLEN*
- *Mr. DEWAR*
- *Mr. GRAYDON*
- *Hon. Ms. IRVIN-ROSS*

- *Ms. MARCELINO (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Mr. REID (Chairperson)*
- *Mrs. ROWAT*
- *Hon. Mr. SWAN*
- *Mrs. TAILLIEU*

Committee Membership for the October 12, 2010 meeting:

- *Hon. Mr. ASHTON*
- *Mr. BJORNSON*
- *Mr. BRIESE*
- *Mr. EICHLER*
- *Mr. FAURSCHOU*
- *Mr. JHA (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Mr. KORZENIOWSKI*
- *Mr. MARTINDALE*
- *Mr. PEDERSEN*
- *Mr. REID (Chairperson)*
- *Mr. SARAN*

Officials Speaking on Record

Officials Speaking on Record at the October 6, 2005 meeting:

- *Winston Hodgins, MLC President & Chief Executive Officer*

Officials Speaking on Record at the November 21, 2007 meeting:

- *Winston Hodgins, MLC President & Chief Executive Officer*

Officials Speaking on Record at the March 16, 2009 meeting:

- *Winston Hodgins, MLC President & Chief Executive Officer*
- *Tim Valgardson, MLC Board Chairperson*

Officials Speaking on Record at the October 12, 2010 meeting:

- *Winston Hodgins, MLC President & Chief Executive Officer*
- *Tim Valgardson, MLC Board Chairperson*

Reports Considered and Passed

Your Committee considered and passed the following report as presented:

- *The Annual Report of the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation for the year ended March 31, 2005*
- *The Annual Report of the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation for the year ended March 31, 2006*

Reports Considered but not Passed

Your Committee considered the following reports but did not pass them:

- *The Annual Report of the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation for the year ended March 31, 2007*
- *The Annual Report of the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation for the year ended March 31, 2008*
- *The Annual Report of the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation for the year ended March 31, 2009*

Mr. Reid: I move, seconded by the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs Fifth Report

Mr. Daryl Reid (Chairperson): I wish to present the Fifth Report of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs presents the following—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS presents the following as its Fifth Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on October 8, 2010 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- *The appointment of the Information and Privacy Adjudicator*
- *The process for hiring a new Children's Advocate*

Committee Membership

Committee Membership for the October 8, 2010 meeting:

- *Hon. Mr. BLAIKIE*
- *Mr. BOROTSIK*
- *Ms. BRAUN (Vice-Chair)*
- *Mr. GOERTZEN*
- *Hon. Ms. IRVIN-ROSS*
- *Mrs. MITCHELSON*
- *Mr. SARAN*

- *Mrs. TAILLIEU*
- *Mr. REID (Chair)*
- *Hon. Mr. SWAN*
- *Mr. WIEBE*

Motions:

Your Committee agreed to the following motions:

- *THAT the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs recommend to the Lieutenant Governor in Council that Mr. Ron Perozzo be appointed as the Information and Privacy Adjudicator.*
- *THAT the subcommittee of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs be struck to manage the process of hiring a new Children's Advocate, under the terms and conditions as follows:*

(a) the subcommittee may only report back to the committee with a recommendation that has received a general level of acceptance by all members;

(b) the subcommittee consist of four government members, two official opposition members and one independent member;

(c) the subcommittee have the authority to call their own meetings, the ability to meet in camera, and be able to undertake duties it deems necessary in order to fulfil its responsibilities in the hiring process;

(d) the subcommittee appoint an expert advisory panel of three members to assist in the hiring process and ultimately provide the subcommittee with a prioritized list of candidates;

(e) the subcommittee establish the terms of reference for the expert advisory panel, and that Legislative Assembly staff may be authorized by the Chair to attend all meetings of the subcommittee and the expert advisory panel.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Rossmere (Ms. Braun), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Standing Committee on Public Accounts Sixth Report

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Chairperson): I wish to present the Sixth Report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts presents the following as its Sixth Report—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts presents the following as its Sixth Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on October 20, 2010.

Matters under Consideration

- Auditor General's Report – Audit of the Public Accounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008
- Public Accounts for the year ending March 31, 2008 (Volume 1)
- Public Accounts for the year ending March 31, 2008 (Volume 2)
- Public Accounts for the year ending March 31, 2008 (Volume 3)
- Public Accounts for the year ending March 31, 2008 (Volume 4)
- Auditor General's Report – Audit of the Public Accounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2009
- Public Accounts for the year ending March 31, 2009 (Volume 1)
- Public Accounts for the year ending March 31, 2009 (Volume 2)
- Public Accounts for the year ending March 31, 2009 (Volume 3)
- Public Accounts for the year ending March 31, 2009 (Volume 4)

Committee Membership

- Mr. BOROTSIK
- Ms. BRAUN
- Mr. DERKACH (Chairperson)
- Mr. DEWAR (VICE-Chairperson)
- Mrs. DRIEDGER
- Mr. JENNISSSEN
- Mr. JHA
- Mr. LAMOUREUX
- Mr. MARTINDALE
- Mrs. STEFANSON
- Hon. Ms. WOWCHUK

Officials Speaking on Record

- Carol Bellringer, Auditor General
- Mr. Hugh Eliasson, Deputy Minister of Finance
- Hon. Ms. WOWCHUK

Reports Considered and Passed

Your Committee considered and passed the following reports as presented:

- Auditor General's Report – Audit of the Public Accounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008
- Public Accounts for the year ending March 31, 2008 (Volume 1)
- Public Accounts for the year ending March 31, 2008 (Volume 2)
- Public Accounts for the year ending March 31, 2008 (Volume 3)
- Public Accounts for the year ending March 31, 2008 (Volume 4)
- Auditor General's Report – Audit of the Public Accounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2009
- Public Accounts for the year ending March 31, 2009 (Volume 1)
- Public Accounts for the year ending March 31, 2009 (Volume 2)
- Public Accounts for the year ending March 31, 2009 (Volume 3)
- Public Accounts for the year ending March 31, 2009 (Volume 4)

Mr. Derkach: I move, seconded by the honourable member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Mr. Speaker: In compliance with section 4 of the Members' Salaries, Allowances and Retirement Plans Disclosure Regulation, I am pleased to table the Reports of Amounts Claimed and Paid for members for the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

* (13:50)

Speaker's Statement

Mr. Speaker: I'd like to draw the attention of members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have the six individuals who are serving on the Manitoba

Legislative Internship Program for 2010-2011 year are seated.

In accordance with established practices, three interns were assigned to the government caucus and three to the official opposition caucus. Their term of employment is 10 months, and they will be performing a variety of research and other tasks for private members.

These interns commenced their assignments in September and will complete them in June. They are, working with the government caucus: Ms. Sarah Carson of the University of Manitoba, Ms. Kelsey Hutton of the University of Winnipeg, and Ms. Candace Préjet of the University of Winnipeg. And working with the caucus of the official opposition we have: Ms. Coryn Courcelles of York University, Mr. Matthew Fox of the University of Manitoba, and Ms. Laura Marrast of Carleton University.

Professor Jean Friesen looks after the academic portion of their internship and the administration of the program is carried out by our Clerk, Patricia Chaychuk. The caucus representatives on the Internship Administration Committee are the member for Rossmere (Ms. Braun) and the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen).

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of all members, to congratulate the interns on their appointment to the program and hope that they will have a very interesting and successful year with the Assembly.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: And also, in the public gallery, we have the parents of the honourable member for Minnedosa (Mrs. Rowat), Jack and Marion Kostuik, who are the constituents of the honourable MLA for Russell.

And also I'd like to draw attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today George and Geri Jarvis, who are the presidents of the Block Parent Program in Winnipeg, who are the guests of the honourable member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady).

And also with us today from 13 Military Police Platoon we have Captain Bowen, Captain Nash, Corporal Smith, Corporal Huver, Corporal Harris, Private Booth, Private Braun, who are the guests of

the honourable member for St. James (Ms. Korzeniowski).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Vale Inco Mine Plant Closure

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): We are concerned to learn of the announcement this morning made in Thompson about the prospect of over 500 jobs being lost in that community. We're concerned about the impact on those 500 families and the community of Thompson with this announcement today by Vale Inco.

Mr. Speaker, reading the government news release that was desperately rushed out shortly before question period, the member for St. Boniface indicated that he was caught off guard by this announcement today, and I want to ask, in light of the fact that Vale Inco is one of the biggest employers in Manitoba, is the largest employer in Thompson, how he could've so utterly failed to anticipate this very significant announcement today.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, let it be very clear: This announcement by Vale Inco, in our view, is an unacceptable approach to making a decision like this in Manitoba.

And we have made it clear to them that—in the past when issues like this have arisen, that when they work with the government we often can find solutions to these issues, ways to modernize technology and move forward, and our release this morning simply puts it to them to come meet with us and look at solutions. They felt the need to rush out an announcement after a very short period of information made available to the government. We want to engage them in a constructive solution, and we look forward to the opportunity to meet with them to discuss that.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, as the Premier—as the member for St. Boniface desperately scrambles following this announcement that he failed to anticipate and the impact on the 500 jobs, the 500 families in Thompson, and his failure to anticipate and his now desperate scramble to try to look like he's doing something about the problem, what we are concerned about is why it wasn't anticipated, why steps weren't taken sooner to address some of the concerns of families and

workers in Thompson, and how it is that, along with today's announcement of 500 jobs lost in Thompson, that Vale Inco could also be announcing the creation of 1,500 new jobs in Saskatchewan, an investment of \$3.4 billion in Ontario, and a further new investment of \$2.8 billion in Newfoundland.

Mr. Speaker, how is it, as he tries to blame the company that these massive investments are being made in Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Newfoundland as they pull jobs out of the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, that's—the point we are making is that for them to proceed in this fashion without a proper period of consultation and engagement with the people of Thompson through their city council, through their local union, through the provincial government, is exactly the reason we found this decision to be unacceptable. It's exactly the reason why we're asking them to sit down with us and look at alternatives, and we expect them to do that.

The member opposite identifies correctly that they've made commitments in other jurisdictions. We know in Manitoba we have a very high-quality workforce. We have a very strong community in Thompson, with excellent supports for the families that live there, and we have an excellent resource that they've been engaged with for over 50 years, and that is exactly why we want them to sit down with us and take a look at constructive alternatives.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, the announcement today is against the backdrop of an independent report which showed that Manitoba's rank as a place to invest in mining dropped from 11th place to 51st place—this is a report that was available to the government some time ago—a 40-point—40-point drop in terms of Manitoba's ranking.

And I want to ask the Premier, in light of the warnings that he was receiving about Manitoba's investment climate, how it is that he can today claim to be surprised when there's an announcement of 500 job losses in Manitoba, the creation of 1,500 jobs in Saskatchewan, an investment of \$3.4 billion in Ontario, and a further new investment of \$2.8 billion in Newfoundland by the same company. Mr. Speaker, rather than trying to blame others, why not just acknowledge his own failure?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, we actually reformed the mining tax regime in Manitoba; the members opposite voted against it. And an independent report—according to PricewaterhouseCoopers, in

2009 Manitoba was ranked second in Canada for competitiveness in mining taxes.

They're not proposing to stop mining in Manitoba. That is not the issue. The member, of course, is confusing the facts, as he so often does. They're not proposing to stop mining in Manitoba; they're proposing to expand mining in Manitoba.

It's the value-added functions of smelting and refining that they are contemplating moving to other jurisdictions. This is what we want to have a conversation with them about, because we know we have a competitive business environment. We know we have a skilled workforce. We know we have a strong, supportive community, and we know in Manitoba that other mining operations are expanding as we speak. The Lalor mine is one of the largest finds in Manitoba and is proceeding at this very moment.

So it's not a question of mining tax regime; it's a question of them making a decision at a national level without proper consultation and opportunity to work out [*inaudible*]

Football Stadium Premier's Due Diligence

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

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): And on a new question related to failure to do due diligence, Mr. Speaker, the comments coming from the member, who also said Crocus was strong at the same time as he was telling Cabinet that it was headed for insolvency, are not particularly persuasive.

* (14:00)

Mr. Speaker, as we look at the failures and weaknesses associated with the stadium deal that this Premier put together, the failures of due diligence in his decision to play banker with the dollars of taxpayers, I just want to ask the Premier if he can indicate today why it is that he failed so utterly in doing due diligence prior to March's announcement, which has led to the hole now sitting in the ground at the University of Manitoba.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the do-nothing approach of the member opposite is once again showing itself.

The caucus led by the member opposite vigorously opposed the MTS Centre in Winnipeg.

They generated as much controversy as they could about that and then, once it was built and up and running, they tried to claim credit for it. We know how they operate in this House.

We also know that they had no alternative plan to address the fact that the existing stadium required tens of millions of dollars of upgrades.

All the partners are working diligently to move the stadium project forward. Only the member opposite and his caucus is opposing it. We are looking forward to a go-forward solution which will avoid the tens of millions of dollars of costs on the existing stadium, build a publicly owned and operated facility—75 per cent used by the community, 25 per cent used by the Bombers—a year-round facility which will be a credit to our community, and they richly deserve to have these kinds of assets to benefit all the people of Manitoba.

Mr. McFadyen: There are five factual errors in that desperate response, and rather, Mr. Speaker, than dealing with the misstatements that he consistently makes, I wonder if he can address himself to the issue here of concern of both the taxpayers here in Manitoba and to the Winnipeg Blue Bomber Football Club, both of whom deserve better than what they've had from this failed leader over the past six months on this deal.

I want to ask the Premier: He said this morning, on radio, that they are in the process of doing due diligence in connection with the coming announcement with respect to a stadium. I just want to ask the Premier whether the stadium he was referring to on the radio this morning is the same stadium that he announced back in March, and why is it that they're only now doing due diligence on an announcement that was made some six months ago.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the member from Fort Whyte once again is being very reckless in his approach. He said he supported the original deal which was stillborn—went absolutely nowhere.

The proposal that's moving forward now is based on tendered information which has come forward. The only way to get tendered information is to put out the tenders, receive the information, do the appropriate evaluation of them and then figure out the go-forward strategy, which is being done by the Bombers, by the City of Winnipeg, by the University of Manitoba and by the Province, including the private sector. They're all taking a look at the best way to go forward and they know that this new

stadium will be a prime asset for the city and for the province.

It'll provide an opportunity for people going to the university from all over Manitoba to have the ability to use this facility all year round, in the winter, spring, summer and fall. With the soft dome it will provide a home to the Bisons, it will provide opportunities for community use.

The members opposite don't really want to build anything in Manitoba. They always find an excuse to do nothing and then they make reckless accusations about the efforts of others to move this community forward. The biggest barrier of progress—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. McFadyen: And to be fair to the member for St. Boniface, there was one accurate statement just made, Mr. Speaker, and that is that I did support the original deal outlined by the elected Premier of Manitoba, Mr. Gary Doer. I did support that deal and that deal that the member for St. Boniface now refers to was referred to in 2008, two years ago. And Mr. Doer said at the time that he likes the newest proposal because it's more driven by private sector money. I'm on the same page as the former elected Premier of Manitoba, Mr. Doer, on this deal—maybe not some other things, but on this deal, he was right.

I want to ask the member for St. Boniface, who is now saying that it was always going to be a 100 per cent taxpayer-funded deal, whether the member for St. Boniface who today claims it was always a 100 per cent taxpayer-funded deal is the same member for St. Boniface who five months ago said that there's a major role for the private sector in this deal.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the member is once again playing fast and loose with the truth. It's a 100 per cent publicly owned facility. The financing of it comes from a variety of sources. That was always the original plan, was to bring everybody together to fund a publicly owned asset for the benefit of the whole community. The member knows that.

The member from Fort Whyte knows that and he wishes to misrepresent the facts. The reality is that we have a strategy to build a new stadium to avoid the tens of millions of dollars of cost of repairing the old one, to open up Polo Park for economic development in Manitoba, to make the pie larger, to have more private sector investment in a class A shopping centre site.

All of these proposals are the ones that will allow this project to go forward as the partners come together and figure out the final nature of their relationship and how they will do this project together.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I'd like to caution the honourable First Minister when using words that could be interpreted in various demeaning ways. For example, the word—using the word "fast and loose with the truth." It could easily be interpreted in a very negative way.

So I caution the honourable member to pick and choose your words very, very—*[interjection]* Order. I caution the honourable member and I would ask you to pick your words very carefully.

Cost and Funding Options

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): The desperate flailing around that we now see—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Let's have some decorum. Order.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor.

Mr. McFadyen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier has just said that he's working with the various partners to try to figure out the nature of their relationship.

Now six months after the original announcement, and months after this hole was dug on the property at the University of Manitoba, I wonder if the Premier can just provide some clarity to Manitoba taxpayers and to Blue Bomber football fans, today, as to how much the new stadium is going to cost, who's paying for it and roughly what that stadium is going to look like. Can he provide any clarity at all on those three, pretty basic questions?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the design has been put out there. People are committed to providing a high-quality stadium in Manitoba which will have uses for amateur sport for the community as well as for the Bombers.

The reality is is that they've compiled the tenders. They're doing their work on that. They're looking at how they want to move forward on the project. There is a high degree of commitment to

provide a good quality facility in Winnipeg with the participation of the Bombers, the university, the City, and the Province, and Creswin realty, of course, has been involved up to now providing leadership on the stadium design and moving the project forward.

The reality is that the members opposite have no plan to replace the existing stadium. The members opposite have no plan for the future of the province, whether it's health care, whether it's education, whether it's economic development. They have no plan to do any of these things. They completely hide in the bushes when it comes to any kind of future vision for the province of Manitoba.

We see nothing constructive coming out of them on any of these views. We have a Throne Speech that moves Manitoba forward. It moves Manitoba on several fronts, including recreation facilities.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on his first supplementary question to his—the new question that he had raised.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, the original question hasn't yet been answered. And the original question was: What are the details of the design? How much is it going to cost and who's paying for it? If he could just provide clarity on those three points, I think everybody would very much appreciate that.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the member raises a question about the future of the stadium. I've made it very clear that there's a commitment to a high-quality facility. There's a commitment to all the partners contributing resources to make that happen.

We've indicated, in the public, that the Bombers wish to play a stronger role in that regard. There always was—in the context of the original arrangement announced last spring, there always was the option of looking at the—private investment in Polo Park generating revenues that would help pay for the stadium, and those options are all being put together in an overall plan that people have a degree of comfort with as they go forward.

* (14:10)

So the reality is, Mr. Speaker, in the absence of any constructive suggestions by the member opposite, while they continue to make reckless and wanton statements about the specifics, the reality is that the partners in Winnipeg are working on a concrete plan to advance the project, and when they have all that worked out they will make an announcement in due course.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, the—back in August when this was—when the Premier was telling everybody in Manitoba that this was a \$115-million project, and before it became a project that's somewhere over \$160 million, but back at the time, just in August, so just a couple of months ago when it was a \$115-million project, he said publicly, and I quote, we do know that the private partner, Creswin realty, has said that they will take responsibility for cost overruns.

He then went on to say on August the 25th, and I quote, we're pleased that Creswin has committed to handle overrun issues.

I just wonder if the Premier can indicate today, two months after those comments were made, whether those comments were accurate.

Mr. Selinger: Again, Mr. Speaker, the original arrangement had the private partner making a large commitment to financing the stadium, contingent upon their ability to own the team.

The reality is is that there are some cost overruns that have to be addressed. All the partners are coming together to address those concerns and to work out a go-forward plan. The go-forward plan sees a larger role for the Bombers. It also acts upon the original provisions in the agreement; the original provisions in the agreement were intended to open up Polo Park for further economic development, for private investment and for the revenues to come off that private investment to be available if necessary to help finance the stadium.

So the original conception was a go-forward strategy that allowed the tenders to be let, allowed the prices to come in and allowed for options to be considered, if necessary. We are now at the stage where those options are being considered and everybody is working together to ensure the project continues to move forward.

Cost Overrun Responsibilities

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

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, and just on the question of what the Premier says versus what actually transpires, the Premier said, and he's dealing with significant sums of taxpayers' money, and he hadn't—hasn't responded to the question that was just asked, and I want to just put it to him again.

He said in August, when this was a \$115-million project, and I quote, we do know that the private partner, Creswin realty, has said that they will take responsibility for cost overruns. He then goes on to say on August the 25th, and I quote, we're pleased that Creswin has committed to handle overrun issues. That's what he said in August.

I wonder if the Premier can indicate today whether those statements were accurate.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I—if the member would have been listening, he would have heard me just answer it in the last question.

The original conception of the arrangement was for the private partner, contingent upon them wanting to own the team, to be a major financial contributor. There was also a plan B option structured into the original agreement. The plan B option allowed the existing site where the stadium exists, which yields no tax revenue—yields no revenue—to be opened up for redevelopment. And private investment will go into that site which will generate revenues to help pay for the stadium. That was always an option under the original arrangements. That option is being considered, along with a larger role for the Bombers, and people are working together to find a go-forward strategy on the stadium.

But there is a high degree of commitment to building the new stadium because of the amenities it will offer the community, the amateur community, the community more largely, because of the ability to have year-round use and because of the fact it will avoid some very serious costs that are required to keep the existing stadium up and running and safe.

And so people knew that they had to move forward. I commend them on doing that. Members opposite want to block that. They have no alternative plan. They have no specific approach on how they wish to deal with it.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Selinger: People on this side of the—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, it sounded an awful like—a lot like back in March, that this was a deal that had been struck that was actually going to be followed through on. There was a plan A and a plan B as the Premier has said. The indications that he—that are now coming out are that plan A is gone;

plan B is maybe there, maybe not; that they're currently working on a plan C.

And I just want to ask the Premier if he can indicate to the House today, when he does eventually announce plan C, what assurance can he give Manitobans that there won't be a plan D, E and F following that?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the fact the member knows the letters of the alphabet, but the reality is I think it's helpful that he's acknowledged that the original arrangement always had a plan B as part of it, and members are looking at what the original arrangements provide in terms of opportunities to move the stadium forward.

We have more information now. We have information on the design of the stadium. Everybody's committed to keeping a high-quality design on the stadium. We know that the tender information is suggesting that there are higher prices than originally anticipated back off the '08 estimates that were provided at the time. We know that everybody's working to bring forward this project and move it forward, and Manitoba, on this side of the House, along with the City of Winnipeg, along with the Bombers, along with the university, are committed to moving forward on this project because of the amenities that it will bring to our community for Manitobans all over the province who go to the university: amateur athletes, soccer players, people that want to use it as a recreational opportunity. We know that that is a good option for the future, and we know that pouring millions of dollars into the existing facility would not be a good use of public resources.

Mr. McFadyen: The Premier has acknowledged that because of his failure to anticipate rising costs that plan A is now off the table. He suggested today that plan B may still be on the table, and plan B involved Creswin developing the—tearing down the existing stadium, developing the existing Polo Park site and the use of TIF property tax revenue to repay the original provincial financing.

Can the Premier then confirm today that that plan B, the Creswin development at Polo Park and the TIF financing, is part of the coming announcement?

Mr. Selinger: The member's statements should not be taken as factual when he has no idea what he's talking about when it comes to plan B. The reality is, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Selinger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The original proposal had the option of redeveloping Polo Park and the revenues generated off that being available to pay for a new stadium. That is a factual statement. All the rest are simply conjecture on the part of the member opposite. The reality is that we have the Bombers, we have the City, we have the Province, we have the university, we have a private partner that have done a lot of work to move this concept forward. They've gone out and put a good design in place. They've gone forward and received the tendering information. They are now working on a business plan that will support that. Everybody understands that we need a high-quality facility. Everybody understands from the get-go, except perhaps for the members opposite, it was always intended to be publicly owned and available for public use.

Polo Park Redevelopment Plan

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

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): On a new question. The Premier correctly stated that plan B was that Creswin would get an untendered deal to tear down the existing stadium and develop Polo Park, that the property tax revenue generated by that development would be used to repay the provincial financing.

The Premier is saying today in the House that that plan B is still on the table. Will he confirm that that plan is still on the table, and will that development by Creswin at Polo Park using TIF financing be part of the coming announcement? Yes or no, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, once again, the member is providing information that doesn't come from this side of the House. The original conception of the arrangements was for a plan A led by the private sector in the hands of Creswin realty. The option B was available for private reinvestment at Polo Park. It didn't specify who had to do the private reinvestment at Polo Park. It really—it simply indicated that redevelopment of Polo Park could generate revenues. It indicated that redevelopment at Polo Park could provide revenues that would help finance the stadium, and the reality is, as I've indicated earlier, the partners are working on a go-forward strategy.

The member opposite should be very careful on the allegations that he makes.

* (14:20)

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, the Premier just stated in his response that it was never stated prior to today that Creswin would have the right to develop Polo Park as part of the development.

Can the Premier just indicate again today that he believes today that it was never, ever stated previously that the original deal involved Creswin developing Polo Park because there are literally thousands of Manitobans who have a different understanding of what that deal was. Is he now saying that that original deal of Creswin developing Polo Park was never part of the deal and, if that's the case, then why has he been telling everybody that that was the deal for the past six months?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is operating under quite a bit of confusion. The original proposal, what could be called plan A, saw Creswin redeveloping Polo Park in exchange for providing financing to pay for the stadium. That was part of the original redevelopment of Polo Park proposal.

If they decide not to proceed with that, and plan B is exercised, Polo Park redevelopment will generate additional revenues to help pay for the stadium. The original conception, once again, was for Creswin to provide the financing under their proposal for redeveloping Polo Park.

So there are two options available under the original conception of the arrangements. The first one saw Creswin redevelop Polo Park and provide financing to pay down a good portion of the stadium. The plan B saw the option of redeveloping Polo Park with other possible investors that will allow revenues to be generated that would pay for part of the stadium.

Plan A and plan B are two different plans. The member opposite should know that.

Mr. McFadyen: And so the Premier is now saying that plan A involved both the Polo Park redevelopment and the original fronting of money by the Province, and he's saying that there's now a plan B which has never been announced prior to today. And so I wonder if the Premier wants to take the announcement—to announce today that plan B involves other partners other than Creswin

developing Polo Park and using that money to fund the new stadium.

If he wants to make the announcement of plan B today, why not just be transparent with Manitobans, since he's already alluded to it in his answers, and outline in detail today what is plan B so that taxpayers and Bomber fans know what the heck is going on in the mind of this desperate Premier.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, I invite the member to look at the original conception for moving forward on the stadium. It had a private sector partner that was taking leadership on moving forward on a stadium design in exchange for the option to develop Polo Park. If that arrangement changes, the ability to redevelop Polo Park is still available to the community because the new stadium will free up Polo Park, which yields zero tax revenues right now for redevelopment, and the revenues to come off of the redevelopment of Polo Park will be available to develop—will be available to pay for the stadium.

That was a part of the original conception. It's unfortunate the member didn't understand that.

Manitoba Hydro Bipole III Costs

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

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I did, at the time, take the Premier at his word, and shame on me for having done that. You know, it's fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me; fool me 11 times, I must be NDP.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

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

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor.

Mr. McFadyen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and following that series of confusing and misleading statements from the member for St. Boniface, I want to just ask with respect to other examples of massive failure and mismanagement and failure to do due diligence: We were told by this Premier in 2007 and for the three years following that the bipole line would cost \$2.2 billion.

We learned just a couple of weeks ago from media comments made by the CEO of Hydro, Mr. Brennan, that that number was now going to almost

double to \$4 billion, which is roughly \$15,000 per Manitoba family.

I want to just ask the Premier in light of the fact—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I actually appreciate this question from the member opposite from Fort Whyte because it allows me to put on the record the enormous amount of confusion he has deliberately put in front of us out here. And the reality is the following, Mr. Speaker. There are converter stations that are required no matter which direction the hydro line goes. The converter stations are intended to increase the safety and reliability of the hydro systems because right now there is only a converter station at Dorsey for the entire hydroelectric system. And as early as the late '90s there was—there were advice and suggestions given that that should be addressed with further security for the hydro system.

So the converter stations are something Hydro strongly believes are needed to provide additional reliability to the system regardless of where that bipole goes, whether it goes down the east side or the west side. The member knows that. It's about time he came clean with the public and admitted that he's been wrong by confusing these two issues and starts being honest with the public about the truth about bipole.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, the phony attack dog opposite has got it wrong again. The fact is that—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I'd just like to caution the honourable member. All members in this House are honourable members and—[*interjection*] Order. And they shall be treated as such.

Members on either side of the House will be addressed by their constituencies and ministers by their portfolios, please. So I'd ask the co-operation of all honourable members. The honourable—[*interjection*] Order.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor.

Mr. McFadyen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And the First Minister, the honourable member, has just said that he believes converters are essential.

The trouble, Mr. Speaker, is that a week ago on CBC Radio the CEO of Manitoba Hydro, Bob Brennan, said, and I quote: One option might be to accept the fact that AC might be the best way to send the power down south, even though losses could be

higher, and then you wouldn't need the conversion equipment if you came down with AC.

I just want to ask the Premier: In light of the fact that Mr. Brennan, the CEO of Manitoba Hydro, is referring to the fact that perhaps they don't need conversion equipment, can he just try to get on the same page as his advisers at Hydro and indicate whether we should be listening to Mr. Brennan when it comes to matters of hydroelectricity transmission, or whether we should be listening to the member opposite, who places more value on getting awards from out-of-province lobby groups than he does on protecting Manitoba ratepayers?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the president and CEO of Hydro has made it very clear the converter stations for direct transmission, HVDC, high voltage direct current, are required regardless of which side of the province the hydro line is put down.

If the—if Hydro decides that they do not think that converter equipment is required because they can use an AC transmission technology as opposed to a direct current transmission technology, that has nothing to do with which side the hydro pole goes down, that's a decision to use a different technology to transport electricity to customers, east or west of Lake Winnipeg.

So once again the member should be clear to the public. The bipole is different from the converter stations. The converter stations are a reliability requirement if you continue with the long-standing practice of using high voltage direct current transmission technology when you move power from the north to our customers in the south, east and west of us. That is the preferred technology of Hydro.

If they decide that a different technology can be used, that's something they'll bring forward as a recommendation. Their preferred approach is to—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, and because of his failure to do his homework he's more than a week behind the CEO of Hydro who says the converters may not be necessary.

And so, Mr. Speaker, in view of the—I want to just ask: In view of the failure to do due diligence on Crocus, the failure to do due diligence on Hydro, the failure to do due diligence with respect to the stadium deal, I want to ask this Premier, who seems to have the opposite of a Midas touch, why is it that everything he touches fails?

* (14:30)

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, let's take a look at the facts.

The biggest losses incurred under Crocus were when the member opposite was working in the government and that was \$35 million.

A couple of months ago the member from Fort Whyte went into the public and tried to make a big deal out of the fact that on the first quarter report for Hydro, that there were going to be losses. I noted that he has said nothing about the second quarter report of Hydro, where they are now predicting that the profits at Hydro this year will exceed the forecast by several tens of millions of dollars. The member has not corrected himself on that. The member has never corrected himself on that. He tried to make a big deal out of that.

He tried to make the linkage between first quarter losses—which are at the time of the year when the revenues are the least—were linked to the bipole, which he falsely linked to the converter stations. Now that profits are exceeding forecasts—if he's blaming Manitoba, the government of Manitoba, when there's losses, will he now give credit to the government of Manitoba when the profits exceed forecasts? I think not, Mr. Speaker.

Lake Winnipeg Phosphorus Reduction

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable member for River Heights has the floor.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, yesterday's Throne Speech must rank as one of the worst on record. The government is pretending that the stadium is under construction even though there's only a hole in the ground and the plan's in disarray.

The government is pretending that the \$500-million deficit from last year was a balanced budget. With deficits growing, the Premier's credibility quotient is dropping like a rock.

The Throne Speech should be about setting goals, and even here, the Premier can't do this properly. The Premier acknowledges, in his Throne Speech, that the current goal for phosphorus reduction in Lake Winnipeg is hopelessly inadequate, but he failed to set a specific goal in the Throne Speech.

I ask the Premier: What is his new goal going to be?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question.

I'm glad he's accepted the fact that we need to move to a more thorough and complete standard for reducing phosphorus into Lake Winnipeg. This is progress. This is progress, Mr. Speaker, when the opposition—the official opposition opposed The Water Protection Act and have said, actually, that they're going to gut The Water Protection Act and get rid of it. Now we have a member—we now have the member from River Heights saying that he supports a higher standard for phosphorus reduction.

The higher standard will be set after due consideration by our technical officials and the review of the data they get, and advice they get from the Clean Environment Commission.

The reality is is that we want to protect Lake Winnipeg, whereas the official opposition wants to just let it continue to nutrify. We will work with the people that have the scientific knowledge to set an appropriate standard to protect Lake Winnipeg.

That's why we laid it out in the Throne Speech along with improvements to health care, improvements to education, improvements to community safety, improvements to infrastructure. We laid out a plan for the future of the province. I hope the member opposite will support it now.

Food Bank Use Reduction Plan

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I've been calling on this government to give us a better target for a long time for phosphorus reduction.

Mr. Speaker, my supplementary—continuing on the poor quality and lack of targets in the Throne Speech.

One of the aspects that stands out is that the government has lost interest in helping the poor. Food bank use in Manitoba has skyrocketed in the last year, and yet the government has not set a goal to improve conditions and reduce the need for people to use food banks. The Premier is relying on increasing food bank use by Manitobans to fill the gaping holes in his own policies.

I ask the Premier: Will he be honest with Manitobans? Is his goal to increase food bank use or is he going to address the substantial and major poverty issues in this province, which leave low-

income Manitobans with no choice but to use food banks?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I can appreciate this question from the member opposite.

Manitoba has the lowest unemployment rate in the country and that is in no small measure due to the fact that we put a budget forward that put a priority on job creation in Manitoba.

We also support increases in the minimum wage so that people have greater purchasing power to buy the necessities of life.

I can only point out the following: The member opposite from River Heights has opposed minimum wage increases, and he voted against a budget which brought us the lowest unemployment rate in the country.

If you're serious—if we're serious about addressing poverty, we have to ensure that people have opportunities for employment. We have to ensure that people have opportunities for education and training. We have to ensure that people have opportunities for decent, affordable housing. All of those items are in the budget.

And, of course, with the \$70 million additional that we've put in to supporting people that need some form of assistance, including a shelter benefit, we will continue to find ways to lift people up as we move Manitoba forward.

I only wish the member opposite would actually support a budget that creates jobs, would actually support a budget that has a higher minimum wage and would support a budget that has more housing to shelter Manitobans.

Child Welfare System Children in Care Fatalities

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I'm only pointing out that something isn't working in what the Premier's doing if we've got one of the highest rates of food bank use in all of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, when I went home last night, I was sick about the government's indifference to vulnerable children in our province and in the Throne Speech.

Yesterday, we heard the same old, same old talk; no action on protecting vulnerable children in the care of our province. There are more than 8,000 children under the NDP's care and, on average, some 50 to 60 of these children die each year. The

Throne Speech did not set any goals or targets to reduce the number of children in care who die each year. Why not? Why is the NDP indifferent to children who die under their watch?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, if the member read the Throne Speech, he would see that we made additional commitments to child welfare in terms of prevention, and the resources were going to be available in the budget for that. We're pleased that the federal government has come to the table on that. He will see that there are strengthening of the vulnerable persons legislation in the budget. He will see that there's additional commitment to fetal alcohol spectrum disorder resources, additional commitment to suicide prevention, additional commitment to recreation facilities and, fundamentally, a strong support for an education system that allows more people to continue in school, to attend school and graduate from school. Those are all very significant statements of forward direction in Manitoba that were stated in the Throne Speech.

The member opposite, I ask him: Will he support this future direction for the province or will he go back to the statement that he opened up with today and say that he wants to eliminate the deficit as his top priority?

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Sam Ginter

Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, in the summer of 2008—no, this is wrong—

Mr. Speaker: You've concluded your members' statement?

Mr. Briese: Excuse me, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in the summer of 2008, Sam Ginter received an accidental gunshot wound to the head while he and his brother were target shooting. Sam's grandparents rushed him to Neepawa hospital. When it was discovered that his injury was extremely serious, he was immediately taken to Winnipeg. After four hours in surgery and several days in recovery, Sam was sent home. While he still looks like an ordinary teenage boy, he lives with a traumatic brain injury that creates a unique set of challenges for Sam.

Throughout his recovery period, Sam has been bright and optimistic. Even immediately after his

surgery he enjoyed talking to his family and was in high spirits. After coming home, Sam began to recover—began the recovery process and started setting goals for himself to master. The first was to start going to school by himself in November. After several months of attending school part-time with the help of a peer tutor, he worked hard and by November he had reached his goal.

Another goal was to go to the Banjo Bowl that his family had tickets for. Sam was determined to walk up the stadium stairs to his seat and with determination, he made it all the way up. Throughout his recovery, Sam has been setting goals and reaching beyond them.

Sam has had tremendous support from his family; they've come up with creative ways to help him through the recovery period. Using tools like the Nintendo DS and other games, he works on fine motor skills. He does word searches and uses the iPod touch to work on organizational skills. Because the connections in his brain need to be remade, he has to re-understand things that he may have already known. Some of the challenges he faces may appear to be common traits by his family, but his family understands it is heightened because of the injury and they are very supportive of Sam in his continued recovery.

I want to congratulate this courageous young man and his family for working through the difficult times that brain injuries present. In May I attended the Air Cadet awards evening, and I was thrilled to see Sam receive one of the awards. Because of his bright spirit and determination and with the help of his family Sam is enjoying life and is an inspiration for many others who are struggling with brain injuries. Thank you.

*(14:40)

Canadian Flag Legislature Display

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski (St. James): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw attention to a very special flag which was displayed in the lobby of the Legislature during the week of Remembrance Day. It is a flag that flew over Kandahar Air Force Base where Canadian troops are stationed in Afghanistan. The flag was brought back by Winnipeg's 13 Police Platoon on their return to Canada and presented to the Province of Manitoba this June by Captain Stephen Bowen at the Welcome Home Soldiers event organized by family and friends for the troops.

The 12 reservists, men and women, many of who took time away from full-time careers and their education, completed eight months of pre-deployment training in Edmonton, Alberta, followed by an eight-month tour of duty in Kandahar. The certificate accompanying the flag reads: Let it be known that this Canadian flag was flown in the face of friends and enemies of Afghanistan at the Kandahar Air Field in April 2012 and bears witness to the securing and rebuilding of free Afghanistan.

I was incredibly and deeply touched to be presented with this flag and pleased that its presence here in the Legislature recognized the work our soldiers are doing in Afghanistan. It was also present during the lake-naming ceremony honouring our fallen Manitobans.

Thank you to Winnipeg's 13 Military Police Platoon, a subunit 15 Military Police Company, 1 Military Police Unit. I wish them and their families all the best and invite all members of this House to support our troops and the great work they are doing both abroad and in their communities.

I would like to read the names of the members of the joint task force: Captain Stephen Bowen; Corporal Michael Trach; Corporal Janice Holt; Corporal Daniel Black; Corporal Andre Desjarlais; Corporal Kayla Harris; Corporal Peggy Harris; Corporal Adam Orvis; Corporal Cameron Smith; Corporal Jessica Porter; Corporal Wilhem Huver; and Corporal William Sawchuk. A special thank you to you all.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

National Addictions Awareness Week

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in honour of National Addictions Awareness Week, which is being observed across Canada from November 14th to 20th. National Addictions Awareness Week comes at a critical time this year, as with the latest Throne Speech there was absolutely nothing to even acknowledge the dismal wait for addiction treatment, much less a plan to improve it.

One only needs to look at the newspaper to see that addictions are a growing problem in our province, and this NDP government can't keep up. There are only 12 residential treatment beds for women in all of Winnipeg. This means wait times are often three to four months. Some community-based programs, such as Addictions Foundation of Manitoba's methadone intervention program, are full

to capacity and also have a wait list that is several months long. These are people, often young, who are addicted to opiate painkillers such as OxyContin.

A co-ordinated vision for addictions treatment is needed. There has to be a continuum of care, from detox to treatment to transition back into the community, otherwise people will continue to go through the revolving door of addictions and treatment.

We need to invest in front-line addictions treatment providers who are already on the ground getting the job done rather than pumping money into additional bureaucracy. We need to co-ordinate service so that addicts from all areas of the province and from a variety of backgrounds can access the care that is appropriate for them. Finally, we also need to invest in prevention.

This year the theme for National Addictions Awareness Week is Celebrating Healthy Choices as it promotes addiction-free lifestyles for families, individuals and communities. Each education is vital for our province and for our young people. According to a report recently issued by the Addictions Foundation, approximately 27 per cent of high school students meet the criteria for addiction or alcohol dependency. The long-term effects of illegal drug use and alcohol abuse include unemployment, poverty, homelessness and involvement with the criminal justice system, along with increased costs in our health care, social services and criminal justice systems.

So this National Addictions Awareness Week, I hope the NDP will not continue to be addicted to a bigger bureaucracy and administration, but instead make the critical investment to provide adequate resources for addiction treatment in Manitoba and to promote making healthy lifestyle choices. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Winnipeg Block Parents

Ms. Sharon Blady (Kirkfield Park): Mr. Speaker, 35 years ago, caregivers in Manitoba decided to get more involved in keeping their kids safe. They organized the Winnipeg Block Parents in 1975, which has since become the largest volunteer-run child safety organization in Canada. Block Parents now works with 173 elementary schools across the city, including École Bannatyne, which last week hosted a Block Parents information night for all of the elementary schools in the St. James school division.

The Block Parents program provides a network of police-screened, easily recognizable safe places in case of need. While it started with school groups, the program now works closely with the Winnipeg Police, and it's a creative, community-based response to potential crime. Although it was originally created with kids in mind, seniors and others, young and old, can also go to a Block Parent if they feel they have nowhere to turn.

Geri and George Jarvis, presidents of Winnipeg Block Parents, visit 15 to 20 parent council meetings a year to tell kids and adults about what it means to be a Block Parent. Winnipeg has the largest membership in the country with over 2,300 volunteers. Anyone 18 or older can join. Members may be single or a couple, may have kids or not, may be stay-at-home parents or simply people in the community who can be available for a few hours a week.

A big thank you to École Bannatyne for hosting the Block Parents information night and to volunteers like George and Geri Jarvis, who've worked with the community and with the program for over 32 years.

Mr. Speaker, the word "community," despite getting tossed around a lot, is hard to define and, in reality, even harder to foster. While programs like Block Parents continue to work with schools like École Bannatyne to protect our most vulnerable people, something shifts, and houses grouped together transform into communities of people looking out for each other.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be a block parent and I look forward to working with other École Bannatyne parents and the Jarvisses to help the program grow in our neighbourhood.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Throne Speech Goals and Targets

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak briefly on the lack of adequate goals and targets in the recent Throne Speech.

We have 50 to 60 children in the care of government who die each year, and yet the government didn't set a goal or a target to reduce such deaths or to put in place a plan to reduce such deaths.

Though the government in the Throne Speech admitted that the target for phosphorus reduction in

Lake Winnipeg is hopelessly inadequate, it failed to actually set a new target.

The Throne Speech should be about setting the direction, the goals and the targets for our province. It is disappointing when the best the government can do is to say it is thinking about setting targets. In many other areas the government failed to set goals and targets. The government didn't provide any target for a reduction in the incidence of FASD in Manitoba. It didn't provide any target to reduce the incidence of diabetes in Manitoba. It didn't provide any target for introducing liberation therapy for people with multiple sclerosis, and there were no specific targets for reducing high school dropouts when we are one of the highest in Canada in terms of high school dropouts, and I could go on and on.

The Throne Speech, sadly, was short on action but long on pretense. It pretended, for example, that the 2009 budget with a \$500-million deficit was balanced. The Throne Speech was not only lacking in goals and targets, it was also lacking in credibility. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

THRONE SPEECH (First Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: Consideration of the Speech of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe), 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.

Motion presented.

Mr. Jennissen: It's a pleasure to be back again, and I'm particularly pleased to see you back healthy and hearty, Mr. Speaker, because I think I speak for all members on all sides of this House that you're held in great esteem and affection by all of us, and it's just wonderful to see that you're back again healthy.

I also would like to welcome the new pages. May this brief experience they have in these hallowed halls not sour them forever on politics. I don't know if there's ever a page that actually became

a politician. I've never heard of one, but I hope so. But sometimes, I guess, when they see us in action, perhaps they feel that other careers may be more rewarding.

* (14:50)

It is a privilege to move acceptance of yesterday's Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank, in advance, my seconder, my young and dynamic colleague from Concordia as well.

We live in turbulent and challenging economic times. I think we all are aware of that. We have come through a large portion of the rapids in this global economic recession. I think we could see some smoother water ahead. We certainly know this is not the time to turn the canoe around and go upstream again because it's going to swamp, so we don't want to do that. And also it's not hard to govern in affluent times, when things are well. I've always argued, you know, it's easy to govern in Alberta because when you get that \$7 billion or \$10 billion or \$12 billion in oil revenues, it's not that tough to govern—

An Honourable Member: Even Conservatives can do that.

Mr. Jennissen: Even Conservatives can do that, my honourable colleague says. I didn't say that, but I'll put him on record.

But these are tough economic times, and I think you judge a government in tough economic times. I think that's when you weigh them, you measure them, you get a depths of them, they get the true worth of them, not when times are easy but when times are tough.

Now I could tell the tale of two government—governments. There was a former government when it, that former government, went through difficult economic times in the early and mid-'90s, and what was the reaction, or should I say the overreaction? Oh, well, health-care cuts like social service cuts, education cuts, infrastructure cuts, savage cuts, deep cuts. I don't need to list all of them. I'm sure that other members will talk about that later on but, you know, nurses were fired, many of them. Spaces for doctor training were reduced, those spaces were reduced. The educational system was starved. We sold off a major Crown corporation. Those are acts of desperation, I would think, and we are still trying to repair the damages of those days. We're still trying to repair those damages. No need to gloss over the fact that they occurred. We wish to put this in

historical context because if you don't learn from history, you're bound to repeat it.

So it is a tale of two governments. This particular government and the direction that we embarked upon in 1999—and I admit there have been flexibilities and changes as times have changed and economic situations have changed, but I think despite the belt-tightening, we have been even-handed, we've been honest, fair, transparent. We've been progressive. We have grown. We have not sold Crown corporations. We have not made massive slashes to our services. We've protected those front-line services and we're still maintaining modest growth.

So I think this Throne Speech is a continuation of that trend, and I applaud this particular Throne Speech and I hope you support it. We're not going to act rashly like that other government did. We have a proven track record; it's worked for us and it will continue to work for us, although, of course, we have to be on our toes and we have to modify and we have to be nimble and flexible.

And there are indicators. Let's look at some of the indicators, and the indicators are that over the last five years, we have the best average growth rate in all of Canada. You take a look at high school graduation. That's an important indicator of how well we're doing. Education is very significant. The connection to that and economic development and getting jobs is extremely tight. Well, high school graduation is up. Colleges and university grad—colleges and university enrolments up by approximately a third. Number of active apprentices in this province has doubled.

And let's take a look at the Provincial Nominee Program which is an unparalleled success—an unparalleled success. We have increased the number of new Canadians coming in every year. Mr. Speaker, last year there was 18,500 new Canadians to this province; in the last 10 years, 85,000 of them.

Mr. Speaker, we are aiming at targets of 20,000 targets, annual targets—20,000 targets that the members opposite never even dreamed of. Those are huge targets, and I think we can achieve them.

And remember, Mr. Speaker, that the history of Canada is—the history of modern Canada is largely a history of an immigrant people coming to this country. I'm an immigrant myself, and I'm proud to say that in this Legislature the immigrant experience and immigrants themselves are reflected right here.

We don't talk about it, as the opposition does; we elect them. We have two members on this side of the House that were born in the Ukraine—pardon me, the Ukraine—the United Kingdom. I'm sure there's some members connected with Ukraine, as well. But two of them were born in the United Kingdom. Two were born in India; one in the Philippines; I was born in the Netherlands. I represent all those people wearing wooden shoes and looking at tulip bulbs. It is not a huge group, but it's a great group. So we do know about immigrants because we have the spokespeople, real immigrants, sitting right in this Chamber, and I think that's important.

Mr. Speaker, the Lieutenant-Governor yesterday talked about Manitoba families planning for the future, talked about optimism and he talked about common sense. And regardless whether he wrote it or not, those are the two facts we really want to look at—that people planning for the future want to be optimistic and they want to use common sense.

Now, I can talk about former governments, which were governments that did panic, and I believe that when they were in a panic mode they didn't use common sense. This Throne Speech does reflect optimism as well and common sense. Why should it not? Because the people in this Chamber on this side certainly reflect the diversity that is Manitoba. *[interjection]* By this side, I mean this side.

Mr. Speaker, I know that my colleagues will talk about many detailed aspects of the Throne Speech, but I would like to focus it more on what's in it for the north and how it relates to northern Manitoba because I am a northern MLA. I'm a northern MLA. And let's take a look at the north that was once basically a forgotten area of this province. That's no longer a forgotten area of this province.

Let's take a look at the Aboriginal people that were once treated as a forgotten people, but they're no longer forgotten—not under the direction of this government and the direction we are going, Mr. Speaker.

Two days ago, I think it was in room 200, we were honouring the legacy of Louis Riel, the founding father of Manitoba, and we honoured the first Legislative Assembly of Manitoba. And we also talked or embarked upon a new Métis policy because we want to work together with our Métis people and our Aboriginal people. They're our partners. We are not going to ignore northern Manitoba, northerners, Aboriginal people, Métis people. We will not do that.

And, again, even in this very Legislature, we have—not talking about it, not theoretically, not symbolically, but actual representatives of the people we're talking about. The member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) is a well-known symbol of Aboriginal people and achievement of Aboriginal people. The member from The Pas who works very hard to represent his people and all constituents in his constituency and has to fill some very large shoes of the late Oscar Lathlin, who worked very hard to improve the lot of Aboriginal people in this nation. And even, Mr. Speaker, yourself who represents all of us in this Chamber so eloquently are also a symbol of the tradition of the Inuit people and the power and the strength they bring to the fabric that is Canada.

That's important, Mr. Speaker, that we have the people right here to represent what was once a forgotten people so that they can speak on behalf of their own people. Last spring—and I was very proud that last spring we unanimously—not just one-sidedly, but unanimously—supported the Aboriginal languages act where we really highlighted the importance of seven Aboriginal languages in this province to acknowledge how important they are to the history of this province, to the texture of what is Manitoba. I'm proud of the fact that we're working together and Hydro is working together with the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation of Nelson House in the hydro development, the construction of Wuskwatim dam.

* (15:00)

Aboriginal people are now our partners. We work with them as partners. They are our partners. They're the original people of this country. They deserve to be our partners. They deserve to have a serious stake in our economic development and we are doing that. We're making that happen. And of course we know the spinoffs, the education, the development, the jobs, the pride, the respect that follows from having a serious stake in economic development—not to be forgotten, not to be left at the edges of society but to be firm partners of this economic journey on which we are all embarking as Manitobans.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have to go back to something that's very important to Manitobans and to—particularly to northerners, and that is Manitoba Hydro. In the early '90s and mid-'90s, we had decisions to make. We just didn't make them. We knew that we had to increase our generating capacity

but we sat on it. Nothing happened with the former government. We knew that we needed a new bipole. We knew we needed another line for several reasons. One of them is for security and reliability. But the other reason, we needed to be able in the future to bring electricity power south.

We needed to do that then but the former government sat on it. They did not act. They could have acted but they didn't act. It's easier to criticize, much easier to criticize, than to make tough decisions. These were the same people that criticized Limestone—Limestone that has been a fantastic success. They were not so enthusiastic about that years ago, but then they're not known for building hydro dams or power lines or roads for that matter in northern Manitoba. Remember that for Manitoba, hydro is, I suppose, a more modest equivalent of oil for Alberta. We have a little oil. Saskatchewan has a lot more. Alberta has a lot, and so we have a renewable resource. Oil is not renewable.

We also, of course, have water and wind, and I'm happy to say that we have wind farms in St. Leon and St. Joseph and other energy initiatives, biofuels and ethanol and so on, but hydro is critical and central to the development and growth of our economy in this province. And yet Hydro appears to be surrounded by controversy, particularly from the people who, when they should have acted, didn't act; who could have made decision, didn't make decision. They won't make a decision but when we make one, they don't like it.

Well, Mr. Speaker, Hydro is going to build a power line on the west side of this province and there are reasons for that. I know the controversy and I know the simple arguments. I hear it all the time. You know that the straightest distance between—or the quickest distance between point A and point B is a straight line. You'll go from the power source in the north straight to the United States. That's short. That's quick, minimal line loss. Yes, everybody knows that but let me tell you something. You don't run a line if there's a mountain in between, if there are mountains of challenges in between. If you jeopardize a bunch of things, and there were huge reasons, huge reasons why we had to go on the west line—the west side rather than the east side.

You know, it reminds me, Mr. Speaker, when those people over there talk about the quickest route, in my younger years, when I used to travel in the United States with my wife, I looked at the map and I was kind of silly and I said, I want to go from

point A to point B and I always took the quickest route. It was always the longest route. You know why? Because you're on back roads or behind farm equipment. You're going to lose a tire or whatever. So the quickest route on the map is not always the best route.

So we had to make a tough decision and we made that decision. We knew that there was huge opposition to Bipole III on the east side. We knew that Aboriginal people, many of them, didn't like it. We knew that environmentalists didn't like it. We didn't want to jeopardize the UNESCO World Heritage Site. We didn't want to savage a pristine wilderness. We needed reliability. We needed to get the power south and a decision had to be made. And furthermore, Mr. Speaker, although people over there don't want to realize that a line on the west side—remember that some day we'll have increased capacity running east-west and the economies of Saskatchewan and Alberta and further west and south can also use our power and then the line will be in the place that now suits them—it doesn't suit them right now.

So we can't overlook all those factors that weigh into making the decision. It isn't simply a decision you make on from point A to point B. If that was the case, it would be extremely simple. We have to take other factors into account and make tough decisions. Remember we made that tough decision that you avoided in the early '90s.

Mr. Speaker, hydro is important in the north. So is mining, and it's appropriate to talk about mining a little bit, about this huge sector which—billion-dollar sector in this province, because we're on the eve of a mining convention. In fact, in the next several days, I hope to meet a lot my friends, a lot of the prospectors and the miners from northern Manitoba.

And I'm proud to know that we're very active in many parts of this province with regard to the mining sector, particularly in Bissett and Wabowden, and also near Snow Lake, the Lalor deposit, a huge deposit that's going to be massive—that's going to be a massive deposit of gold and zinc and perhaps other minerals. And that will create jobs for northern Manitoba, for the region around Snow Lake, the whole greenstone belt including Flin Flon, Cranberry Portage, and so on. So that's extremely important.

Also, education is important, Mr. Speaker. Education is important. And I can remember when we talked about University College of the North that

former leaders of the Tory Party were not so keen on it. In fact, they were more than lukewarm against our own University of the North because, again, they wanted to keep us, I guess, into a sort of a colonial status. We deserve our own University of the North and we have it and it's grown by leaps and bounds. Doesn't mean that there aren't some problems. There are always growing problems but at least there's growth. The Tory attitude was, don't have it at all.

I'm very proud that we have a mining academy associated with the University College of the North in Flin Flon, a \$3.5-million institution with state-of-the-art simulators. Very important for training our younger people and even our older miners because mining is important to this province.

Health care is always a challenge, certainly is in northern Manitoba. And I'm very happy with a fairly non-expensive suggestion—innovation. That was the primary health-care bus—I think that's a great idea—that roll into isolated areas or rural areas where they can do checkups, blood pressure checks, blood sugar checks, health education and so on.

It doesn't have to be high tech. It can be low level and still meet the needs of people. But it's going to the people, bringing the health care to the people where it's needed, as we're trying to bring education to the people where it's needed, because UCN has satellite campuses, or satellite centres, all over the north.

Our government has helped to track more doctors and nurses to the north by expanding training and recruiting initiatives. Our new northern and remote family medicine residency program is fully subscribed now with 25 medical residents who have committed to return at least two years of service in northern and remote locations. We need more doctors. We need more family doctors and I think by 2015, that's our goal, to have a family doctor for every Manitoban that needs one. I applaud this initiative.

In the north, nothing is more important, I guess, than infrastructure but roads, airports, transportation. And that's why I'm so happy to see that there's significant development on CentrePort and we have initiatives and discussions like Arctic gateway. And there was just an Arctic Summit a few days ago.

We are redeveloping our own port, our inland port, Churchill—a very important port. If global warming is going to be even a greater reality than it now is, and Lord knows we're already losing huge

chunks of Arctic ice every year, more than we ever have before, and there is a possibility that the Northwest Passage will be a useable passage very soon, well, that's going to put Churchill in the limelight. We then can carry on the trade that we now carry on in a limited capacity from Churchill. And that is actually the one little golden lining in the dark cloud of global warming, that it actually, you know, does give us a little bit of a positive in that sense.

An Honourable Member: The positive of global warming.

Mr. Jennissen: Well, there is a positive, for Churchill, at any rate.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Jennissen: Well, I met—the member opposite obviously don't—are not supporters of the Port of Churchill, Mr. Speaker.

Global warming, of course, has horrible consequences for our winter roads and that's a big problem for us, Mr. Speaker, because flying in supplies to remote communities is extremely costly. I was in Tadoule Lake the other day and I looked at a quart of milk—I guess it's a litre now, and I believe it was \$14. You know, people cannot afford those kind of prices.

Now, years ago—not that many years ago; it was our government—we tried to realign the winter roads and we spent three times as much on winter roads, annually, than the former government did. We tried to realign some of those roads, get rid of the toll roads in northern Manitoba in order to be able to provide food at a more reasonable cost to the people of northern Manitoba.

* (15:10)

But global warming is a reality. Those roads may not always be open. We may have to fly in food, and it's an extremely expensive proposition. That's why roads, airports are so tremendously significant for northern Manitoba.

I mean, we have communities of two, three, four, five thousand people and they're not connected to roads. You don't see any of that in southern Manitoba, though sometimes people in the south have some difficulty with really understanding the depth of our concern because, you know, it's difficult to live in northern Manitoba when you have to fly in supplies, when you have to rely on winter roads. It's not an easy—easy way to survive.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of this Throne Speech. I am very proud of this Throne Speech because it's going in a positive direction, and that's the direction we will continue to go. It was a path on which we embarked in 1999. We're not going to embark on cheap, quick and easy fixes. We saw what that leads to. If we don't—if we're not careful, it's easy to get into a series of economic problems. In 2008 the sub-prime debacle south of the border is a typical example—greed and lack of regulation, and this thing mushrooms everywhere so that the people of the entire earth are affected, the economies are affected, and job losses. Right now in the United States two million homes sitting empty because they've been foreclosed. We don't need that kind of an approach. We want to be more sure-footed and we have been more sure-footed.

We do not want to do the kinds of quick fixes that the former government tried—and I have to reference MTS once again, Mr. Speaker. I have to reference MTS once again because that was what I call a quick fix that doesn't work, short-term gain for long-term, infinitely long-term pain. Let me give you an example. We don't own MTS anymore. The headquarters are somewhere else. The shares are owned, probably, most of them in the United States. We've lost control. That locus of power is gone, and some—and you—and members opposite like us to forget that argument.

But what is—but what's been the impact, the real impact on some of our people? They don't want to talk about that. Let me talk about that. If you go to one of my communities, Mr. Speaker, one of my communities, Pukatawagan, Mathias Colomb First Nation. If you go to the telephone book, you will note that there's less than 100 telephones in that community—that is, private subscribers—less than 100. A community of 2,500 people, that's one telephone for 25. What happens when you get sick, when you want to phone the nursing station? You got to go through your neighbour who may have a phone? Why are phones not available? In just a little ways away in Cranberry Portage, Sherridon, 900 homes have 300 phones. So, in other words, every third person has a phone. In Pukatawagan, every 25th person has a phone. That is not healthy. Phones are a necessity.

The members opposite say, what have you done about it? I know what we haven't done about it. I know what—Mr. Speaker, I know what we haven't done about it. We didn't sell MTS and create that situation largely.

If we controlled MTS, Mr. Speaker, if the people still owned that asset and there was cross-subsidization, then it is possible for people to own a telephone. It's possible. Then, when the senior citizen is ill and has to phone the nursing station he has a telephone. When the house is on fire and you want to phone the fire department—if the band has a fire truck that's working—you can do so. Now you can't. *[interjection]*

Who sold MTS, is the question. Who sold MTS and created that kind of a situation? That's what we should be talking about. But, of course, the members opposite don't want to talk about that. They don't want to talk about the Slick Willy tactics. But I was in this House when many members there were not, and I asked the question: Are you in the process of privatizing MTS? Are you selling MTS? You know what the answer was? The answer was: We have no plans to sell MTS. And, within a number of weeks, MTS was sold. There was a huge disconnect between what was spoken and what was done. That was a Slick Willy approach. And that was galling enough that we lost MTS, a public asset belonging to the people. It's like selling your house to pay for your car. That was bad enough. But remember, Mr. Speaker, that the people who should have been safeguarding that particular public asset and were secretly selling it when they were out of politics and are now sitting on the board of MTS, a privatized MTS. There's something absolutely wrong with that. And, if it's not legally wrong, then it's certainly morally wrong, and, if you can't distinguish that, you've got a problem with ethics.

Mr. Speaker, we don't want the Slick Willy approach and we don't use the Slick Willy approach. We will not sell our public assets, our Crown corporation.

Did you know, Mr. Speaker, that in Saskatchewan where SaskTel is still owned by the people of Saskatchewan, they have much better coverage in terms of cellphone and high-speed Internet, but, also, that SaskTel in the last two years has returned \$180 million to the general coffers of the province? We could be doing that, but we can't do that, of course, because our honourable friends over there sold the public assets. They sold the house to pay for the car. Then they wonder why there's rate shock. Then they wonder why people up north can't afford telephones.

I'll tell you, when we were in power and the rates were frozen, you paid—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Jennissen: We didn't have those kind of rates. When they were in power, Mr. Speaker, all of a sudden—privatized—the rates shoot up. The rates were frozen at \$12.80, I believe it was, a month. Now, take a look what your fixed rate is a month for your telephone. Members opposite don't want to acknowledge that, but that's what happened.

And so when they say, well, why don't you do something about it, well, when you sell the system, you can't then expect people to benefit from the system. There is no cross-subsidization anymore. People up north can't afford the telephones anymore.

How do you help them? The poor nowadays need a telephone, Mr. Speaker. We're talking about really impoverished, marginalized people and they need telephones, but it's gone; it's gone. They laugh about it; they don't take it seriously. That's up to them.

Mr. Speaker, there's a great fear I have. There's a great fear I have and the fear is this, and I'll be very upfront. My fear is that in nine years from now or 13 years from now there will be a government, the Tory government, who will think again about flirting with selling our Crown corporations. I believe that they will actually seriously think about selling Hydro. That would be a disaster. It would even be a worse disaster than when they sold MTS.

Now, I know they're in pre-election mode and they'll do all the kind of, you know, rhetoric to make the government look bad, make themselves look good. They'll try and forget that, you know, they did some of those things in the past, in the bad, old days, Mr. Speaker.

But I think they will toy with the idea of selling MTS again, or, pardon me, toying with the idea of selling Hydro against the wishes of the people. But, of course, they will keep on beating the same tired, old horse that others have tried. Thatcher have tried it—Thatcher tried it. The Bushes have tried it. The Reagans have tried it. You know, the trickle-down economic theory that they subscribe to. And they'll accuse us. They'll say, well, you know, you're the old, tired government. That's what they're going to say, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there is something old and tired in this building, apart—I was going to say apart from myself. There's something old and tired in this building. It's the ideology of the members opposite; that's what's old and tired. It's bringing the

19th century and social Darwinism back to life again. The ideas they have, the trickle-down economic theories, you know, the Tea Party, the right-wing populism revisited, less government, get out of my face, taxes down to nothing.

Who's going to pay the bills? Is it working in the United States? No, it didn't work. Not going to work here either. Of course, they still believe in those tired notions from the 19th century. Well, let them believe it, Mr. Speaker.

I've seen it elsewhere. I remember Ireland. You know, this was a Celtic miracle, the Celtic Tiger. The wonderful things they're going to do. Now they have to be bailed out. The European Union has to bail them out.

There are no quick fixes. Steady approaches, sensible approaches, the approaches that this government is using, that's what we need. That's what we need to support, Mr. Speaker. That's what I support, and I strongly recommend that the members opposite support it because we want good government that includes all people, all people. We don't want, you know, government by the elite, for the elite, of the elite. That's what we had in the past. We don't need that. We want true government for the people of Manitoba.

And we reflect that ethnic and economic—we reflect that economic and ethnic diversity in Manitoba. This government reflects it and it comes through in the Throne Speech. It's a road that we embarked on in 1999 and no amount of levity is going to change that direction that we're taking because that's what the majority of Manitoban people believe. I believe it strongly as well, Mr. Speaker, and, despite the naysayers, we're on the right path.

We are growing modestly, but we are growing, and we're not going to take advice from people that screwed it up in the past. We're going to stay with our plan and it will work. And, yes, there—you know, we will have to recalibrate over the next five years, we know that. We know that we will reach a balanced position again in five years and that will be the wishes of the people of Manitoba because they're a sensible people, and as the, you know, as the Lieutenant-Governor said, they work with optimism; they work with hope; they work with common sense; and so do we, and that was reflected in the Throne Speech.

Mr. Speaker, I heartily recommend that our critics over there accept this Throne Speech and see the value in it that really is there. Thank you.

* (15:20)

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): It's my pleasure and honour to stand to second this motion and follow my honourable colleague from Flin Flon. I appreciate his words. And it's certainly a pleasure to be back in this House, and I think all of us would agree that it's nice spending some time in the constituency and reconnecting with constituents and spending more time there. But, of course, there's certainly much work to be done, and so we want to be back here and back in this Chamber to get to it.

I also want to acknowledge that this is, in fact, my first Speech from the Throne as the MLA for Concordia, and so this is an honour and privilege for me to rise to speak this important outline for the province. And I also wanted to quickly acknowledge that, you know, I think all of us in this Chamber know that it's not just us as individuals here, but, of course, we all have teams of people behind us and support back in the constituency, and I just wanted to quickly acknowledge my support that I have—my constituency assistant Jim Still, and Mr. Still's been absolutely vital in providing that link between myself and the constituency. I just wanted to acknowledge that.

And I also wanted to acknowledge my colleagues here in this House. You know, my colleague here Mr.—the member from Flin Flon, of course, mentioned that, you know, I'm following in his footsteps, both literally here and figuratively. I certainly appreciate his words and warming up the crowd, so to speak, for me to say my few words here. But, of course, it's members from both sides and all across this House that have been very kind to me and have shown me the ropes, and I certainly appreciate that.

And, last but certainly not least, I also want to acknowledge my family and, in particular, my wife, who is expecting our first child any day now, Mr. Speaker. And this has been quite the roller coaster in the last nine months for me and getting ready for the next big step in my life.

I've had a great time communicating with the residents in Concordia over the last nine months and listening to what their priorities are and the things that matter to them, and I think that this budget as laid out by this government has prioritized those

issues that matter to Manitobans, and it takes some bold steps in ensuring that this province stays at the forefront in the areas of education, health care, our economic well-being and in our communities.

I wanted to start, Mr. Speaker, by talking a little bit about the economy, and this budget, I think, goes a long way in addressing the economic reality in this province. Over the past nine months, this government's five-year economic plan has already proven itself to be the prudent, well-thought-out course of action that is best for the economy of this province. By setting out a course of action that stimulates growth while controlling expenditures through efficiencies, this government has kept our province and our economy moving forward. In fact, our province continues to have some of the strongest growth of any province in Canada, and has consistently had the lowest unemployment in the country. And these strong economic indicators give Manitobans the confidence to keep our economy moving forward. It's this government's prudent fiscal management that has produced these outcomes. We know this because when we look at governments across the country and across the world that believe huge budget cuts are instead the answer, we see they're not performing as well as Manitoba.

I'm proud of the record of our—you know, our record on the economy, and this Throne Speech clearly lays out an economic plan that combines both common sense and optimism to produce the best economic outcomes for our province. And we're not stopping with the local stimulus and protecting services for Manitobans. As indicated in the Speech from the Throne, we're also looking to the future and to emerging markets of Brazil, Russia, China and India. It is these places where we see great potential for Manitoba products and businesses and we're hoping to facilitate and encourage this trade and economic activity. Manitoba has a lot to offer these markets and increased trade will further help us move forward through the economic slowdown that has occurred worldwide.

We're also focussing on small business in this province. We currently offer a wide array of assistance to Manitobans who want to start small businesses through our Department of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade. But there's still lots of untapped entrepreneurial talent, and I welcome the move alluded to in the Speech from the Throne to encourage more women and young people in particular to act on their dreams and take on the challenges of the business world. Much is rightly

made of the diversity in our economy, but little is made of the fact that small- and medium-size enterprises account for one half of the jobs in our province. Our government, however, is well aware of this dynamism in this sector, as is evidenced by the Manitoba becoming the first province in Canada to eliminate the small business tax.

We also realize that a green economy is a healthy economy. Sustainability is at the heart of what our government believes in and Manitoba Hydro has become a symbol of that commitment. Thanks to the foresight of the NDP governments over the decades, Hydro has become a linchpin in this province's economy and a leader in global efforts to reduce greenhouse gases. Manitoba, in fact, received an award for energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives from Environmental Defence at the Copenhagen climate summit, and Manitoba has been at the forefront in improving public understanding and developing public policy on climate change, as was alluded to by my colleague from Flin Flon.

Nonetheless, as the Throne Speech underscored, there remain huge economic and environmental costs to our dependence on fossil fuels for heating and transportation. That is why our government will be stepping up its work on developing ethanol and biodiesel fuels and expanding the use of plug-in and electric vehicles. Manitoba will also be on the top of the accompanying shifts in technology by training more apprentices in the new green trades.

Education is also a priority of the people of Concordia and is a priority of this government, and we can see this in the Throne Speech. I've had the opportunity to speak with educators and students in my constituency and I recognize many of the challenges they face. I know that creating a safe and engaging environment in which to learn is key, and that's why I'm thrilled that our government continues to make this a priority. We know that schools can't help our kids unless they feel safe and supported and comfortable in their learning environments. Also, know that school attendance is a priority of educators and a priority of this government.

We know that quality of education in Manitoba is continually improving. Our high school graduation rate has gone from 71.1 per cent in 2002 to 79 per cent in 2008, and the last program for international student assessment results show that Manitoba is ranking very well compared to other provinces, while Canada ranked within the top four countries in

all categories. But we know there's room for improvement, and that's why this government is making an education—is making education a priority by working to better help students find the best program to meet their needs and interests.

We want to tailor programs to address individual issues so that students can excel in the programs that they choose, replacing focus on high school diploma to a new focus on K to 12 and beyond, to prepare students, starting at the earliest ages so that they can do better, and a long-term approach. We will continue to work with teachers to ensure that they are able to spend more time teaching and less time on administration. More time in the classroom engaging with students means a healthier student body.

Led by the Premier's (Mr. Selinger) Education, Poverty and Citizenship Advisory Council, initiatives to increase graduation rates in the provincial system will be examined and enhanced. A framework of our community schools will be entrenched in legislation, and education is indeed at a top priority of this government.

We need to ensure that Aboriginal students succeed at the same rate as the rest of the province. We want to work with Manitoba First Nations to develop the same supports for teacher development, curriculum, and programming that are available in provincial school divisions, and we're working with the Manitoba Métis Federation to support summer learning programs and the placement of elders in schools.

I've also met in my constituency with countless early childhood educators, and I know that starting a child's education in the earliest years can lead to more successful children in the future. That's why I think this government's priority in early childhood education is a stellar example of the kind of forward thinking that will make our province stronger in the future. We are, in fact, in the process of expanding of infant care spaces; this is across the province. We're only at the halfway mark. Funding has already been committed for 3,500 more spaces and 29 new centres.

Beginning this year, daycares will be established in all new schools and in schools that have major renovations. Next steps will include more funded infant-care spaces to help new parents coming off maternity leave. To support this expansion, Canada's first child-care safety registry for parents in Canada, introduced in Brandon this year, will go province-wide next year, and Manitoba's Family Choices plan

committed to funding 6,500 more licensed spaces and 35 new child-care sites over the next five years.

*(15:30)

We also want to provide better supports for children—special needs children, especially when first entering the school system. We are promoting an innovative, play-based core curriculum to supplement early learning. This program is called Early Returns and will be phased in at licensed daycares and nursery school. Our government will work with teachers and parents to ensure that education—the education system is more parent friendly.

And we also understand how important the educators are themselves to the overall health of the child-care system, and that's why we're committed to the pension plan for child-care workers, which will be instituted here in Manitoba, the first place outside of Québec, beginning on December 1st, and a public education plan will be launched to encourage pension plan members to take full advantage of these pension options.

In—I also want to talk about health care, Mr. Speaker. In 2009, Manitoba had the second lowest hospital administration expenses in the country, but we know that we can do better in creating efficiencies in this way. The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority has brought its figure down to below 3 per cent. One of our steps to lower administrative costs has been to reduce the number of regional health authorities from 13 to 11. We want to lower this—that by further—by streamlining the system through bulk purchasing. We've had success in this area through HealthPRO. It's a not-for-profit co-op that bulk purchases health-care supplies in order to keep volume discounts low across Canada. We contract with HealthPRO, and WHRA gets a better health-care value for taxpayer dollars.

Of all the health—all the announcements made yesterday, Mr. Speaker, in the Throne Speech, I'm confident that the one that will resonate most with my constituents is the undertaking to make a family physician available to every Manitoban by 2015. There are 405 more doctors practising in Manitoba today than in 1999, and for the third straight year will become the biggest medical school class ever at 110 students. The previous government cut medical school spaces from 85 to 70 in the 1990s, and we reversed this cut, and I'm very proud of that.

We've introduced an expanded grants to medical graduates in return for their service in Manitoba, and we're running a successful program to help foreign-trained doctors get the needed accreditation to practise in Manitoba. But we'll be doing more in the next while to boost the supply of family doctors to meet our pledge. We will be bringing in more professionals with a variety of skill sets to front-line medicine, be they nurse practitioners, dieticians or physiotherapists. In fact, the Access River East centre, which is in my constituents—or serves many of my constituencies—constituents—has been operating in this fashion since it opened in 2004.

And, finally, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to address the Speech from the Throne mentioning much about our communities and the health of our communities. We also recognize that building immigration is an important strategy, not for—only for building our economy, but building vibrant, diverse and healthy communities. This government's Provincial Nominee Program recognizes—one of the most robust and successful programs of its kind—will continue to be a priority. The goal is 20,000 immigrants annually.

Our government will work with families to provide healthy recreational opportunities as well. Manitoba's community clubs are central to promoting healthy living and a sense of community. Activities in community—in a community club can

help divert young people away from other activities that may lead them into trouble with the law. Our government will work with community clubs and municipalities to strengthen the infrastructure and programming of our community centres around the province. A program will also be launched in the coming year to revitalize the recreation infrastructure of rural Manitoba.

So I just wanted to quickly close, Mr. Speaker, by saying I think this is an important outline for our province over the next number of years—or for the upcoming year, and I appreciate the opportunity to second this. Thank you.

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): I move, seconded by the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): I think if you canvass the House you'd find it's the will to call it 5 o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 5 o'clock? [*Agreed*]

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, November 17, 2010

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