

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Ninth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
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.
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GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	P.C.
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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.
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JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
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NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
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<i>Vacant</i>	Inkster	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, November 26, 2010

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 5—The City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment Act (Historic Property Designations)

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Local Government): I move, seconded by the Minister responsible for Trade, that Bill 5, The City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment Act (Historic Property Designations); Loi modifiant la Charte de la ville de Winnipeg (désignations de biens historiques), be now read for a first time.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable Minister for Local Government, seconded by the honourable Minister for Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade (Mr. Bjornson), that Bill 5, The City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment Act (Historic Property Designations), be now read a first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

PETITIONS

Mount Agassiz Ski Area

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

For several decades, the Mount Agassiz ski area, home to the highest vertical between Thunder Bay and the Rocky Mountains, was a popular skiing and snowboarding destination for Manitobans and visitors alike.

The operations of the Mount Agassiz ski area were very important to the local economy, not only creating jobs, but also generating sales of goods and services at area businesses.

In addition, a thriving rural economy generates tax revenue that helps pay for core provincial government services and infrastructure which benefits all Manitobans.

Although the ski facility closed in 2000, there remains strong interest in seeing it reopened and Parks Canada has committed to conducting a feasibility study with respect to the Agassiz site and future opportunities in the area.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the appropriate ministers of the provincial government to consider outlining to Parks Canada the importance that a viable recreation facility in the Mount Agassiz area would play in the local and provincial economies.

To request that the appropriate ministers of the provincial government consider working with all stakeholders, including Parks Canada, to help develop a plan for a viable, multiseason recreation facility in the Mount Agassiz area.

This petition is signed by N. Windle, A. Edwards, L. Kirby and many, many other fine Manitobans.

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

Bipole III Project

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

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.

Manitoba Hydro staff, technical experts and regular Manitobans have communicated to the

provincial government that they would prefer an east-side route.

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this petition is signed by F. Poulsen, D. Poulsen, F. Dunn and many, many more fine Manitobans.

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

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by almost 20 per cent. If this decision is not reversed, it will result in further rate increases for Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this is signed by A. Tegtmeyer, B. Tegtmeyer, S. Zimmer and many others, Mr. Speaker.

*(10:10)

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

H5N2 Avian Influenza

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): I do have a statement for the House.

I rise to provide a brief update to the House about the confirmed case of H5N2 avian influenza at a turkey breeding farm in Manitoba.

Members of the multiagency, federal-provincial avian influenza response team continue to work together in responding to this situation.

The farm remains under quarantine. As a precautionary measure, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency has quarantined three additional operations that had significant contact with the infected farm.

Individuals exposed to the birds have not reported illness, and health support is being provided to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency workers on site.

Again, I want to reassure members of the Legislative Assembly and the public that avian influenza viruses do not pose risks to food safety when poultry products are properly handled and cooked. Thank you.

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): I thank the minister for the update for the House and the members of the Assembly.

On the day after American Thanksgiving, I know that a number of Americans did eat an awful lot of turkey yesterday, and we know that if it's prepared properly there's nothing to worry about.

And I did talk to some of the producers last night and I know they're very concerned, but they're also very pleased that we're handling the situation in a way that we see fit and actually moving forward in a timely manner.

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

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been granted.

Mr. Gerrard: I want to thank the Minister of Agriculture for his timely daily updates on this matter, which is very important, we hope, as it works through, not as serious as it could have been. But certainly, so far it seems to be handled pretty well, and we just hope that there is no spread from where it is now. Thank you.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Phoenix Sinclair Death Public Inquiry

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): It's been now over five years since the tragic death of Phoenix Sinclair under this government's child welfare system. It's also been more than four years since our elected premier, Gary Doer, promised a public inquiry into this tragedy to ensure that it couldn't happen again.

Mr. Speaker, more than 170 days have now passed since the deadline for the convicted killer, Mr. McKay, to appeal to the Supreme Court and, yet, no appeal has been filed.

I want to ask the Premier why he continues to delay this public inquiry. Why is it that he has so little regard and so little interest for improving the child welfare system that he's prepared to play politics with this inquiry by clinging to the faint hope that the convicted killer will file an appeal more than 180 days after the deadline passed?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Just before I answer the member opposite's question, I want to congratulate the member from Concordia on his first child, Elizabeth—Anna Elizabeth, and we should all congratulate him for being a new father.

Mr. Speaker, this question's been asked several times already in the Legislature, and our answer has been quite clear. We do not want to do anything that

will compromise the ability of the justice system to ensure that this heinous crime is properly prosecuted and justice is rendered for the people that have been so directly affected by it. And we do not want to do anything that would compromise that conviction to be upheld at this stage of the game.

Mr. McFadyen: And the fact is that the two killers were convicted at trial beyond a reasonable doubt. The two killers appealed to the Manitoba Court of Appeal. The Manitoba Court of Appeal unanimously rejected their appeal. They had 60 days to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada; they haven't appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada. More than 170 days have gone by since the deadline to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada. One of the two convicted killers has said she's not appealing; the other one, Mr. Speaker, hasn't taken a final position, but the deadline passed 170 days ago.

Why are they allowing the convicted killer of Phoenix Sinclair dictate the timing of the inquiry that—into her death? Why are they playing such shameful, despicable, reprehensible politics with Phoenix Sinclair, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, again—again—we do not want to do anything that would hurt—that would put the perpetrators of this heinous crime back on the street. The member opposite may want to roll the dice and do something reckless in order to pursue his political agenda. We have always taken the view, and we have consistently said we will do a full public inquiry with broad terms of reference that will look into all dimensions of this tragic case: the family, the community and the child welfare system. That inquiry will proceed at the appropriate time.

But right now, Mr. Speaker, if there's any risk that the perpetrators of this crime would be released and put back on the street, we do not want to take that risk at this time.

Mr. McFadyen: The Premier needs to get briefed on the facts. The facts are that two convicted killers were convicted. They were—they appealed to the Manitoba Court of Appeal; the appeal was unanimously rejected by the three judges on the Manitoba Court of Appeal.

They had 60 days to appeal to the Supreme Court. One of the convicted killers didn't appeal; the other convicted killer is musing that possibly he will now more than 170 days after the deadline for filing that appeal.

What they're saying is that as long as this convicted killer continues to muse unreasonably about the possibility of an appeal, they will never call an inquiry into the death of Phoenix Sinclair. They're allowing her killer to dictate the timing of the inquiry.

Will he admit today that they're playing shameful politics with Phoenix Sinclair and this inquiry? Will he be a leader or will he tie his fate to that of his Minister of Family Services (Mr. Mackintosh)?

Mr. Selinger: The principle—it's very clear, Mr. Speaker, we have committed to this for over five years, that there will be a full, comprehensive and thorough public inquiry that will be called, but not at a time that would risk the conviction which has been rendered by the courts. When there is satisfaction that the system will not [*interjection*] Mr. Speaker, we've been very clear on this. We will take an approach that ensures the heinous perpetrators of this crime are not put back on the street because of the reckless demands of the member opposite.

They did the same thing in the Taman case. They did the same thing in the Sophinow case. They always try to overlap these procedures to show that they are pressuring the government. The reality is we will let the court—the justice system do its job properly and then we will call a full public inquiry.

We do not want the perpetrators of this crime, for any technical reason, to be back on the street, and we do want a full public inquiry to get a full and thorough examination—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

* (10:20)

Child Fatalities Section 4 Reviews

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): The only ones that aren't doing their job are this weak government, Mr. Speaker, that can't get its act together and ensure that the death of Phoenix Sinclair is examined appropriately.

It's been more than five years since the tragic death of Phoenix Sinclair, yet details are still shrouded in secrecy with no indication of when we'll get to the bottom of what went wrong.

Can the minister explain to Manitobans why his department keeps secret large portions of

section 4 reviews that are conducted following the death of a child in care?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs): First of all, we have to remind ourselves in this House that this government is not waiting for a public inquiry to make an overhaul of child welfare. Action is under way and, indeed, as we speak, we have added 230 workers and we've increased foster rates 21 per cent. Members opposite decreased them 20 per cent at a time of inflation going up 17. We've been adding more beds; in fact, over 3,200 more foster and emergency beds. That's why we've added 60 per cent more to the budget, over \$100 million, to invest in child welfare, not destroy it like members opposite did. We're fixing the child welfare system. The action is happening now.

Mrs. Mitchelson: If that's what this minister calls action, why are we continuing to see the tragic deaths in his Child and Family Services system?

Mr. Speaker, there have been more deaths since Phoenix Sinclair's death, including Roanna Meagan Fontaine. The details of her death are still shrouded in secrecy. He has no excuses to continue the cover-up.

Mr. Speaker, why won't the minister reveal all the facts of what went so terribly wrong in Fontaine's situation? Why won't he share the complete section 4 review with Manitobans instead of releasing only a portion of it? What's he hiding?

Mr. Mackintosh: My recollection is that the section 4 in the act is the same section 4 that was in place when the member, the very member who just asked the question, was in office for how many years?

And, in fact, I've been advised that the member did look at the confidentiality provisions and made a determination that they should remain exactly the same.

The opposition also had another opportunity to express concern about confidentiality when the Children's Advocate legislation came in to enhance the powers for independent oversight of child deaths. And in that act, something extraordinary on the [*inaudible*] it was included, that allows a Children's Advocate to actually release information about child deaths in the public interest. But the members opposite didn't take any position otherwise than what the government promoted, which is more openness. And that is why, as well, we've been moving

towards recommendations being released from section 4 reports. Members opposite kept that quiet.

Mrs. Mitchelson: That kind of answer doesn't serve justice for the children that have died under this minister's watch, in his system that he says he's fixed.

Mr. Speaker, the minister can't hide behind confidentiality. Another child is dead. Who is he protecting? Is he covering up the failure of his government to protect children who couldn't protect themselves or is he covering up the failure of his government to act, when several concerns were raised about Fontaine that were ignored before she died?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, I know members opposite tried to cover up what they were doing to child welfare when they were in office, when they had an opportunity to fix child welfare, and, instead, they helped to destroy it.

We know what they did. Every opportunity they had, and it wasn't just during a recession, they came into this House and they said, geez, we have a really good idea for child welfare. We're going to cut the supports for foster families. We're going to cut the supports for foster children. Of all of the Manitobans, they looked at the most vulnerable and they said, we're going to cut, year after year after year after year, in the face of the Children's Advocate saying to them, what the heck are you doing? You're going to undermine the whole system. That's what they did.

Personal Care Homes Patient Admittance Moratorium

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, in October we learned of a critical shortage of acute care beds caused by a shortage of PCH beds in Winnipeg. To deal with this the government put a moratorium in place forbidding PCHs from admitting patients from the community. they could only admit patients from overcrowded hospitals.

Can the Minister of Health tell us today: Is that moratorium still in place?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): I can inform the House that, indeed, the—our regional health authorities across Manitoba have plans in place should they experience pressures in acute care settings.

The WRHA was experiencing a pressure in acute care concerning the release of patients into

personal care homes. They did activate a policy that they have in place. That was some six weeks ago.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, in the last six weeks, 254 patients have been admitted to personal care homes and 150 of those patients, indeed, came from the community.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, as of yesterday, we did understand that the moratorium was still in place.

Knowing that our population is aging, Mr. Speaker, knowing that we would eventually need more personal care home beds, this Minister of Health still implemented an Aging in Place strategy that called for closing 680 PCH beds by 2009.

Can the Minister of Health tell us: In Winnipeg, how many of those 680 PCH beds has she closed under her strategy?

Ms. Oswald: In actual fact, Mr. Speaker, there have been reports done that have suggested that we need to increase the continuum of care. We need to do more, in particular on the supportive housing side, which we have committed to do.

We also believe, Mr. Speaker, we have to do more to enhance home care, which in our Throne Speech we committed to do. We also know we have to increase the number of personal care home beds. Indeed, we made an announcement last week in Morden-Winkler. We've signalled in this Throne Speech we're going to do more than that.

And in point of fact, Mr. Speaker, the only time that I have heard somebody in this Legislature speak about the debedding of our health-care system being a good thing is the member for Charleswood during Committee of Supply.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, this Minister of Health likes to take a lot of things out of context.

Mr. Speaker, we have a leaked document that indicates that the WRHA was planning, according to this strategy by this government, to close 680 beds in Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, last week there were 450 patients in Winnipeg waiting for a personal care home bed. Over a hundred of them were being warehoused in acute care beds in our hospitals.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health how she could do such poor planning around this issue that we've got a hundred PCH patients stuck in hospital beds because we don't have enough personal care home beds in Winnipeg.

Ms. Oswald: Well, let me be very clear, Mr. Speaker, and I'll say this loud and clear to the doctors and the nurses and the health-care aides in our health-care system, that I believe no hospital in Manitoba to be a warehouse. Shame on the member opposite.

Second of all, Mr. Speaker, very clearly, we have worked with our partners. We have asked, again, for a review from the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy, an institute, I would declare, that was started by the members opposite. I commend them for that, because it is the jewel of the nation in terms of developing data for health policy. We've asked them to review projections. That report's going to come out in December.

In anticipation of that, Mr. Speaker, we have signalled in the Throne Speech our commitment to enhance long-term care, to do more personal care home bed construction, better home care, more supportive housing, not debedding being a good idea from the member opposite.

Manitoba Hydro Bipole III Location Consultations

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): At the gathering of municipal officials from across Manitoba, we had a resolution passed by more than 90 per cent of elected councillors, reeves and mayors, elected—elected people, elected councillors, elected reeves, even elected mayors, Mr. Speaker, 90 per cent saying the west-side directive from this Premier was the wrong way to go.

I want to ask the Premier: Why does he think he's smarter than all of these elected officials from across Manitoba?

* (10:30)

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we had a very good discussion about bipole at the AMM. It's unfortunate the member opposite didn't have a chance to participate in that. We made it very clear that the reckless approach that the members opposite would take would put the economy of Manitoba at risk. Only the Leader of the Official Opposition wants to cancel the converter stations. He wants to cancel the possibility of increasing reliability for hydroelectricity in this province. That would be folly. Manitoba Hydro has made it crystal clear they need additional protection with additional converter stations in this province, and the member opposite wants to cancel that. We also need to keep

the reputation of Manitoba Hydro clean and green in our export markets, and they want to put that at risk.

And we also want to have the opportunity—the opportunity—to grow our economy through ecotourism. The member opposite's approach would put all of those things at risk in a reckless way. Manitobans won't stand for it.

Mr. McFadyen: Well, Mr. Speaker, on matters of building major hydro lines, I know the Premier thinks he's the province's leading expert on building major power line projects. He thinks he's smarter than elected councillors. He thinks he's smarter than elected reeves. In fact, he even thinks he's smarter than elected mayors. I'll bet he thinks he's even smarter than Susan Thompson, but I want to just say to this Premier—and I want to just say to this Premier on the matter of the power line, there's one person in this province who knows more about bipole lines than just about anybody else: that's the former CEO of Hydro, Len Bateman, who was around when the original two bipoles were being built. Let's take this outside of the political realm. Let's let Len Bateman speak.

Will he agree to a public committee meeting with his members present, as was suggested by his House leader, and allow Len Bateman to speak so Manitobans can hear what this great expert has to say?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the people of Manitoba voted on this in the 2007 election. It's only the members opposite—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. It's time for questions and answers, and I have to hear the questions and the answers. It's getting very, very difficult to hear, and I'm sure that most members in this House would like to hear the questions and hear the answers; so I'd ask the ones that are being a little too vocal to co-operate and have the respect of other members, to be able to hear the questions and the answers.

Mr. Selinger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said earlier, the people of Manitoba voted on this in the '07 election and ever since the members opposite have lost that election, they've been trying to reverse that decision. If that's not the height of reckless arrogance, nothing else is in this Legislature.

The reality is that the current president and CEO of Manitoba Hydro has said the converters are essential to the security of hydroelectricity for

Manitobans. The member opposite wants to put the economy at risk; he wants to put Manitoba's multi-billion dollar economy at risk. He wants to put our export customers at risk. He wants to, therefore, put the ability for Manitobans to have the lowest hydroelectricity rates in North America at risk. The member opposite is a high-risk, reckless approach to public policy when it comes to Manitoba Hydro and the more we discuss this, the more Manitobans know that.

Mr. McFadyen: Well, Mr. Speaker, he wants to start with the 2007 election. Gary Doer, who was running for office, said on the CBC debate, and I quote: We're not going to run it down the west side. End of quote. That was the line Gary Doer used in the CBC debate. It's on video. He's got to go back and review it.

What was the promise in 2007? Gary Doer on CBC: We're not going to run it down the west side.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I just want to get back. We're having a good political debate on this issue, but let's take it outside of politics. Let's go to real experts like Len Bateman. Let's go back to the engineers and experts who have experience building these lines. AECL was involved in the first two—on the first two lines.

Will the Premier agree with the suggestion, made by his Government House Leader, that we convene another Hydro committee meeting and we bring Mr. Bateman and the engineers and other experts forward to testify? Then we don't have to have a debate in this House; we can hear from experts who actually know what they're talking about. Will he agree to that, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, one of the outstanding features of this country is people have the right to speak out on an issue any time they wish to do that, and that's certainly something that we value inside of Manitoba.

The member opposite is really trying to avoid the issue. He's trying to avoid the reality that he's the only person in Manitoba that says, cancel those converter stations, put the Manitoba economy at risk, put our export markets at risk, put our ability to have a UNESCO World Heritage Site at risk. It's that kind of risky, reckless behaviour that we need to stop. We need to move forward with new generation, new transmission capacity inside of this province, service our customers to the south and to the west of us and

do that in a way that grows the Manitoba economy and keeps the rates lowest in North America.

The member opposite is the only one that wants to go against every one of those policy objectives and we know Manitobans won't support that.

Football Stadium Costs and Funding Options

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

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): On a new question. Speaking of fiascos, can you give us an update on the stadium deal?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I thank the member opposite again for this opportunity to acknowledge that it was only the opposition that opposed the MTS Centre, and it got built. They did everything they could to obstruct that.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I can't hear a thing. Order. I'm—once again I'm going to ask the co-operation of members. We—lookit, we have a lot of guests in here, and, also, I need to be able to hear the questions and the answers. I know some members are not interested in them, but there's a lot of members that are interested in hearing the questions and the answers, and I think each member should respect other members. And I'm asking the co-operation of honourable members. We need to hear the questions and the answers.

The honourable First Minister has the floor.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, we are proceeding on a project which we think will make a big difference in Manitoba. It'll provide for use by amateur athletes, by the University of Manitoba, by the public. It'll be open and available 24-7, a year-round facility. Obviously, it'll be used by the Winnipeg Blue Bombers as well. It replaces a stadium that has nearly time expired at Polo Park. It replaces a stadium at the University of Manitoba which is also very old and in need of a serious upgrade—actually, replacement, which is why we're bringing this project together on that site.

The members opposite didn't want to do the MTS Centre. They don't want to do the stadium. They don't want to protect the boreal forest. They don't want to protect workers with health and workplace safety laws. We know their approach—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

**Old Stadium Site Redevelopment
Guaranteed Maximum Price Contract**

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): I opened my *Free Press* this morning and I saw a headline, "New plan for old stadium site?" with a question mark behind it. Mr. Speaker, it could've been a headline written four years ago, but here it is this morning, "New plan for old stadium site?"—question mark. In that article there's a reference to the possibility of putting in place a guaranteed maximum price on the contract.

Does the Premier support the idea of a guaranteed maximum price with the contractor as they move forward?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): It bears underlining that the member's approach would never have even the possibility of redevelopment at Polo Park occur because they had no plan to clear the site. They would've just stuck with the existing facility that was time expired and poured tens of million dollars into replacing it when it wouldn't have lasted very long after they do that.

The whole point here is to open up the opportunity for economic development in Winnipeg. The Polo Park site offers a very attractive way to do that, and yes, people want to do this project with a price that's fixed and clear, no question about that. But the members opposite don't want to do the project at all. That's why they're dragging us backward, just like they did on the MTS Centre.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, I mean, his communications are all over the map on every front, on every issue. The—he hasn't provided an answer on the issue of a guaranteed maximum price, which was raised. He can't provide clarity on that. I see they've even withdrawn their ads because of the factual errors that were in them.

But, Mr. Speaker, can he also just indicate whether he's supportive of a guaranteed maximum price for the project as proposed, or is this just more meaningful rhetoric that he's later going to have to withdraw, just like he's done with his ads?

* (10:40)

Mr. Selinger: I gave a very clear answer to that. Yes, of course we support a guaranteed maximum price. The members opposite don't support the project at all. They have no plan to deal with the need for facilities at the University of Manitoba.

They have no plan to deal with the need for facilities for the Blue Bombers. They have no plan for the economy in Winnipeg other than offering a tax cut to Vale Inco. They have no plan at all other than to drag us backwards into no minimum wage, no boreal forest protection, no health and workplace safety laws, no expansion of the health-care system, no support for the education system.

We know what their plan is: Take us back to the '90s. We're going forward. They're going backwards.

**Overland Flooding
Producer Financial Assistance Eligibility**

Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I raised a question about disaster financial assistance for ranchers in the Eddystone area of my constituency. The ranchers were hit by 11 inches of rain over two days in September 2009. Baled hay was destroyed by overland flooding. The Minister of Agriculture gave a flippant answer yesterday responding as if he had never heard of the issue even though I've raised it with him on at least three different occasions.

Mr. Speaker, why is this government still failing to meet their commitment to producers under the Disaster Financial Assistance program?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Well, Mr. Speaker, I do recognize the work of the MLA for Ste. Rose in bringing forward issues. This isn't the only issue he's brought forward to me and we work together to solve them. And that's always the case. That's—I think it's important to his constituents and it's important to this government too.

We do need to, I think, provide support for farmers at a time—this year and last year—when they've been hit upside of the head with a whole pile of rain that they had nothing to do with, Mr. Speaker. It does have an impact on the farms. It does have an impact on our little communities, and we want to work towards bringing that support forward.

We do need to do that with our partnership with the federal government, with our partnership with the municipalities. Everybody works together on this. We don't worry about pointing fingers like members opposite seem to be doing, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Briese: Mr. Speaker, those ranchers were forced to liquidate all or part of their herds due to the hay losses they suffered in '09. The ranchers were told by department officials to file the FA claims. The claims

were adjusted. They were found to be authentic. Almost one year later the claims were turned down. The reason given was other programs covered the losses.

Mr. Speaker, would the minister please explain what other programs the ranchers are supposed to be covered under? They deserve an answer.

Mr. Struthers: The important thing is that ranchers, whether they're in his constituency or anybody else's constituency, are treated fairly under the rules by which us and the federal government and the municipalities are governed.

I want, as Agriculture Minister, to make sure that the ranchers are treated fairly in this. We do have a range of programs that do help the constituents that this—the member talks about. We are working with the federal government right now in bringing forward an AgriRecovery program that will indeed help cattle ranchers, and that's what happens when the federal and provincial governments co-operate and work together. Good things happen then for ranchers.

Mr. Briese: Mr. Speaker, this is the Disaster Financial Assistance program. It's not the AgriRecovery program.

Mr. Speaker, we have a Disaster Financial Assistance program to cover losses from events such as the heavy rains in September 2009. There is a precedent of DFA coverage on at least two different occasions. Eddystone ranchers trusted the provincial government. They believed that when a disaster struck, the Province would step up to the plate. Fourteen months have slipped by; no compensation has been paid for the damaged bales.

Mr. Speaker, why has this government failed to pay the DFA claims of the Westlake ranchers. Why was the promised aid taken off the table?

Mr. Struthers: I think, Mr. Speaker, the experience will show that in case after case right across this province, wherever farmers, whether they be ranchers or grain and oilseeds, hog producers, poultry, across the board, I think what—what I think anybody can see is that the case of ranchers are brought forward, it's heard, the rules by which they're governed—that are governed by us and the federal departments—we need to bring forward as much support as we can under those rules that do benefit the ranchers that the member talks about.

That work will continue, Mr. Speaker, and we'll continue to try to meet the needs of the ranching community along with other producers in the province of Manitoba.

Elder Abuse Prevention Complaint Investigations

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Health, in her typical pattern of spin, tried to confuse Manitobans with her explanation or her claims of complex numbers. The fact of the matter is that the statistics obtained from her office, which we tabled Wednesday in the House, said plain as day that this government could only find time to investigate 39 of over 1,200 complaints lodged in personal care homes abuse in 2009. And yet in her government's typical pattern of unaccountability, she blamed everyday Manitobans for not understanding the complex numbers of her own design.

Mr. Speaker, Phyllis Froese's complaints about the poor care and neglect for her father were thoroughly documented.

Will the minister make a commitment to prevent abuse from occurring rather than just trying to explain it away as complex numbers?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, every issue that is brought to the Protection for Persons in Care office is reviewed carefully.

The member opposite is endeavouring to say otherwise. That is not so. This would be in addition to a number of other things that the member opposite said directly to the faces of the media yesterday during a press conference that were patently untrue.

I want to be very clear with Manitobans that if they have a concern about the care of their loved one that they should come forward, that the Protection for Persons in Care office is there for that reason. They can also go to the facility or the regional health authority, and I want to ensure them that that situation will be reviewed and remedies will be made as necessary, Mr. Speaker.

Personal Care Homes Action to Prevent Falls

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): The minister may try to explain it away, but there were only 39 investigations in the document in more than 1,200 complaints. They tell the story.

Let us take this one step further. Falls were a problem for Mr. Henry Froese. Falls have been recognized as a major problem among the elderly for at least two decades. And since 2001, with the report—a major report to the Manitoba's Minister responsible for Seniors, action to prevent falls have been known to be needed and, where well done, have been shown to be effective. And yet in spite of many studies showing good care can reduce falls by as much as 20 to 50 per cent, there's been little progress made in reducing falls overall in Manitoba.

Can the minister tell us why so little progress has been made in reducing falls among the elderly in personal care homes in Manitoba since the NDP came to power?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): And I will concur with the member that one of the most complex issues that patients and staff deal with in personal care homes and care homes for the elderly is the issue of falls, and there has been, indeed, lots of work done on education, on communication with the family. There are very complex decisions sometimes, Mr. Speaker, that need to be made concerning issues of restraint, which no family wants for their loved one. Plenty of work has been done to assist with equipment and, again, with staff training.

I want to say to the member that lots of work has been done on prevention, the creation of the PPCO office, the implementation of standards in Manitoba put forward by this government.

The rigorous insistence that these standards be in place is another issue, and I believe the member opposite has voted against that.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the real problem is that this government has delivered such poor management that there has been no effective decrease in the number of falls in Manitoba.

In fact, I table the evidence. Falls in five regional health authorities for which we were able to obtain data since 2004 show that the number of falls in personal care homes has gone up by 5,000 since 2004 compared to the most recent year, 2009-10. Is the minister going to say that this, too, is too complex?

Why has the minister not been able to reduce the number of falls by 20 to 50 per cent over this time period instead of seeing them skyrocket just like the number of complaints has skyrocketed?

Ms. Oswald: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows full well that one of the most important things that you can do under the issue of patient safety is to address errors and report them when they occur. This is a very basic principle on reporting of critical incidents as well, and when you see the number of critical incidents going up—the reported incidents going up in a region—it can suggest that the reporting is becoming better. And when you have better reporting, you have better opportunity to remedy that, to prevent that from happening.

*(10:50)

It is to suggest, Mr. Speaker, that in jurisdictions where falls are not reported or critical incidents are not reported that they don't happen at all. This is an entirely false premise. Of all people—[interjection] While I do feel a bit cross with the member, I can see that he cares very deeply about patient safety. He knows that you have to increase reporting.

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: I'm sorry. I'm on question No. 8. I misread it. Question No. 8—the agreement is that it goes to a government backbencher. So after I—under our rules, I have to recognize the honourable member for Radisson.

Economy Statistics Canada Report

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): Now, I'm going to be talking about the economy which is very, very important for Manitobans.

So let's see if the information which I heard about Statistics Canada showing continued consumer confidence in our economy—could the minister of enterprise, trade and training give the information to the House how this particular confidence of consumers are being released by the information that is available to all of us. Please share the information with the House. Thank you.

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade): Last month Stats Canada reported that wholesalers in Manitoba were doing exceptionally well, and this month Stats Canada has reported that Manitoba retail sales growth has led the country at 6.3 per cent over the first nine months of 2010, Mr. Speaker.

Also, Mr. Speaker, Stats Canada, of course, talked about our labour force. We have the lowest

unemployment rate in Canada at 5.2 per cent. We have the youth unemployment rate that is lowest in the country at 9.2 per cent, and in 12 months, 19,200 jobs have been created, including 15,100 full-time jobs and 14,500 private jobs. We're going to continue to move forward.

Members opposite are proposing to cut half a billion dollars from the budget, and we know what impact that would have when you multiply the impact of that investment, Mr. Speaker.

Women's Correctional Facility Project Status

Mr. David Faurschou (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, Portage la Prairie is home for the Manitoba women correctional facility. Currently, not only the guards, but the inmates themselves are fearing for their safety because the capacity of that facility is being exceeded by more than twice its original design.

This government is currently under way with construction of a new women's correctional facility. Yet, that facility is behind time, over budget and is now forecast to be to exceed its design capacity on its opening day.

Is this what this government is all about with their planning for the future?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Well, it is fascinating, we have the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), who gets up day after day after day saying this government's not being tough enough on crime.

Yet, strangely enough, he and all of his colleagues vote against more resources for policing in the province of Manitoba every opportunity they get. Every opportunity they get, they vote against more support for Crown attorneys in this province—every opportunity they get. And the member for Portage is absolutely correct. The number of people in our correctional facilities continues to grow because of our tough approach on crime, innovative laws we're passing in this province, more support for police, more support for Crowns and, also, hiring more correctional guards which they vote against, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Manitoba Council on Aging Awards

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): Manitoba Council on Aging held its annual recognition gala awards this past October. These awards are given to seniors who donate their time and efforts to improve the lives of seniors throughout the province. This is a great program initiated by MCA to thank and pay tribute to our golden citizens.

I'd like to point out that three out of nine of this year's recipients were from the constituency of Radisson.

Colleen Tackaberry received an award for her many initiatives aimed at improving the physical, emotional and social well-being of seniors throughout Winnipeg. She started many exercise groups in Transcona, formed a grief support group and a recovery group to deal with addictions and ran an elder-abuse prevention workshop. She's also credited with the expansion of a seniors health fair from a church basement to 30 booths in one of Winnipeg's busiest shopping centres.

Ray Henson was recognized for his years of service with the Prendergast Centre Association. The centre, which houses three daycares, a gymnasium, a child and family resource centre and the Prendergast Seniors Club, was in need of a new roof. Thanks to Mr. Henson's fundraising efforts and dedicated leadership, the centre managed to get its roof. And I thank both the past Premier Gary Doer and our present Premier (Mr. Selinger), who was the Minister of Finance at that time, who put the financing together for this particular centre.

The third Radisson recipient also received an honourable mention: Pat Krueger was recognized for her work in the community, which includes over 25 years of experience at Winakwa Community Centre club. One of her greatest accomplishments was successfully campaigning to have a playground and a new wading pool installed at the Winakwa for the neighbourhood children to enjoy. She continues to volunteer at the Taché nursery centre every week.

Mr. Speaker, I have very high regard for these seniors and many, many more who grace the constituency of Radisson with their presence and their contribution. It makes me very proud. Seniors recognized by the MCA—they deserve a great honour by all of us because they do contribute in building our communities better.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Canadian Mixed Curling Championships

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Mr. Speaker, the 2011 Canadian Mixed Curling Championships were held in Morris November 13th to 20th with 12 teams representing all of the provinces, Northwest Territories and Yukon.

Morris was this—has the distinction of being the smallest community ever to host a Canadian Curling Association championship, but this small town is big on curling, having produced such greats as: Harvey Mazinke, a Manitoba champion, a Canadian champion and world silver medallist; the Hamblin brothers, David, Kevin and Doug, who won the 2002 World Junior Championships; their parents Lorne and Chris, who coached the Swiss Olympic curling teams; and long-time dedicated Morris curler and volunteer Lorna Lewis.

Morris may be the—small, but the community spirit is huge. The town of about 1,600 people produced 160 volunteers to run this major curling event, 10 per cent—that's a big percentage of dedicated, community-minded people.

After the opening ceremonies on Friday the 12th, the round robin began Saturday evening and progressed through the week. On Wednesday, Manitoba was on top but fell to a three-way tie for third following a loss to Nova Scotia. At week's end, the top-ranked team in the round robin with a 10-1 mark, Prince Edward Island, earned a bye to the final game. Its only loss was to Manitoba, an 8-5 decision in draw 5. Manitoba clawed itself out of a three-way tie for third to reach the final, first beating Ontario and then dusting Nova Scotia 8-3 in the semifinal. The final game was a showdown between Robert Campbell's PEI team and Manitoba's team consisting of skip Terry McNamee, Lana Hunter, Allan Lawn and Lisa Blixhavn, who replaced Tanya Enns who is expecting twins in late December.

The Southern Manitoba Convention Centre was packed with spectators Saturday afternoon as PEI and Manitoba began the final battle. It was a nail-biter all the way, tied 3-all at the end of the ninth end, with PEI having the hammer coming home. It was PEI that captured the championship 4-3, with Manitoba placing second. Campbell's PEI team also captured the mixed title in 1989 in Brandon,

coincidentally the last time Manitoba has hosted the championship.

It was a great week in Morris, and the volunteers and sponsors are to be commended for their hospitality and support. Congratulations to all the teams, Robert Campbell's PEI team on their win, but a special salute to Team Manitoba, led by Terry McNamee, for making it such an exciting finish. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (11:00)

Duff Roblin Provincial Park

Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Group'Action St. Norbert for their hard work and advocacy in ensuring that the wishes of St. Norbert residents were considered in the development of the plans to relocate Duff Roblin Provincial Park.

In 2004, Group'Action St. Norbert successfully undertook a survey of St. Norbert residents to determine their desires for the recreational component of the redeveloped floodway. I was very pleased to join members of GAS this fall as the St. Norbert Farmers' Market played host to a community open house that displayed plans for the relocated Duff Roblin Provincial Park.

The first phase of the park will be overlooking the inlet control structure on the Red River Floodway. It will include a park centre building and an observation tower which is scheduled to begin construction next summer.

The main attraction for the park will be a 15-metre high tower with an observation deck. This will provide visitors with an amazing view of the floodway. The tower will also feature a selection of displays that will highlight the floodway and the contributions the late Honourable Duff Roblin made in expanding Manitoba's provincial park system while serving as premier of Manitoba.

Residents of St. Norbert are very pleased to see that the relocated park will also be available for year-round enjoyment, as the park centre's lobby will remain open for people wishing to warm up after a fun-filled outing tobogganing down the hill adjacent to the floodway gates.

Thanks to the vision and dedication of Group'Action St. Norbert and their partnership with Manitoba Conservation, the relocated Duff Roblin Provincial Park promises to be a worthy reminder of

the late Honourable Duff Roblin and his most recognizable legacy, Duff's Ditch. The constituents of St. Norbert and Winnipeg will be enjoying the amenities of this new park long into the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Students in Free Enterprise

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity today to recognize an exceptional group of students from Brandon University, Students in Free Enterprise, also known as SIFE. SIFE is a non-profit international organization with participating teams in universities around the world. Presently, SIFE Brandon University facilitates 12 sustainable projects with—throughout the Westman region. In the gallery today is the past VP Campus Relations at BU, Katie Lee, who was instrumental in the development and implementation of many of these projects.

Last year the team was a mighty 18. However this year the group has grown to 30 active student members. Together with their faculty advisor, the team develops projects under the seven criteria released by the SIFE organization.

The criteria include business ethics, financial literacy, entrepreneurship, environmental awareness, sustainability, personal success skills and market economics. After completing various projects, each SIFE team visits a regional and national competition against fellow Canadian SIFE teams. This year, the Brandon University team placed third in the country at the national competition. Their projects include money matters; the agribusiness competition, a post-secondary scholarship program for high school students to develop an agribusiness business plan; and Green Futures, which consists of 44 raised garden plots as a garden—community garden on the east side of Brandon. Ten of the plots were earmarked for grades 5-6 students, who worked with SIFE members farming their own plots and reaping the benefits of growing their own vegetables. This project received generous funding support from local businesses.

SIFE BU is now competing against other SIFE organizations in the Pepsi Refresh Everything Scholarship competition. The successful SIFE team will receive a \$25,000 grant. If successful, SIFE BU will expand the Green Futures project and build 44 more raised garden beds this spring. In order to win the competition, you must vote at www.refresheverything.ca for the SIFE Brandon University economic and healthy eating project.

Congratulations SIFE Brandon University, and I wish you continued success as you complete—compete this year in both regional and national competitions and, remember, vote www.refresheverything.ca for SIFE Brandon University. Thank you.

Guru Nanak

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Mr. Speaker, one of Manitoba's greatest strengths is its diversity. This week, on November 24th, the Sikh community across the world celebrated the birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the founder of Sikhism. As an advocate of social equality, he's a beloved religious leader and teacher. He's particularly important to Winnipeg's Sikh community, who celebrated his life with many different events over this past week.

Guru Nanak, born in the 15th century in India, spent his life travelling thousands of kilometres on foot to meet with people from all walks of life. He taught values that, I believe, are important to people from all faiths and cultural backgrounds: the importance of truthfulness, earning an honest living and generosity to those less fortunate. He also challenged the dominant subjugation of women and the caste system in India, telling people to judge a person by their deeds, not the circumstances of their birth.

Both Sikhs and non-Sikhs still commemorate his progressive vision and in my constituency throughout this week people of all different backgrounds came together to pay homage to the Sikh guru. It is a dramatic example of how his message of tolerance and understanding lives on.

In a century marred with religious violence, it does us all good to remember how deeply Guru Nanak valued the dignity of human life. That is the strength of the Manitoba mosaic, that we can teach each other tolerance and respect out of our different experiences. The story of Guru Nanak's life gives us all a great chance to reflect on the courage of others. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

THRONE SPEECH

(Seventh Day of Debate)

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

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

We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, thank Your Honour for the gracious speech addressed to us at this Fifth Session of the Thirty-Ninth Legislature of Manitoba, and the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) in amendment thereto, and standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Healthy Living, who has 30 minutes remaining.

Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors): Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to put a few words on the record for—in favour of the Speech from the Throne and to discuss the Leader of the Opposition's motion.

Before I start, though, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome you back to the—our wonderful Chamber. I'd also say thank you for being here because we really respect your wisdom, your patience, your judgment and it's really nice to see you healthy once again.

I'd also like to welcome the pages and the people who support us everyday, whether it's in the constituency, throughout the ministries, throughout government or just people in the community. These are people who are supportive to us. They allow us to do our jobs, and whether you're opposition or government, I think that we have a very good support system and it is truly appreciated.

And I really do appreciate being a member of the government that cares about the people, that cares about all in society, that really builds and plans for the future. I think it's wonderful to be part of a government where I've had the opportunity to serve in a number of portfolios, some of the economic portfolios. We're talking about the building of the province, and whether it's Hydro and building the province, building transmission, building dams to obtain \$20 billion of resource revenue over a 10-year period on some investments, whether we're building Wuskwatim and Keeyask dams and other dams, I think it's really important to see a vision of what we can do.

And, you know, it scares me because a lot of what the members opposite are saying is don't do things. Don't build the dams. Don't build the transmission. Don't build the investment in the future.

And so it's scary because there is a huge contrast between the members of the Conservative Party and the members of the NDP party. And I think it shows in some of our debates. They're saying don't build transmission. They didn't build transmission for 10 years; they don't want to do transmission in the future. They don't want to build dams. It's obvious; they wiped out Conawapa. They stopped the whole idea of moving forward on Conawapa when the Conservatives were in power.

I'm pleased to see that we're building dams, and I think that Hydro is truly a jewel. And on this side of the House we believe that when we have Crown jewels, we have thing—Crowns that do a good job as far as the economics, employ people and actually have good value-added. I think that's positive.

I think there's a huge contrast between us and the Tories on the fact that the Leader of the Opposition has said that he believes in moving to market-rate electricity prices, which is a tripling of electricity prices in Manitoba, versus us, who believe that we will export product, electricity to markets west of us, Saskatchewan and Alberta, south of us, and make money, and have the lowest possible electricity prices. But, on that, we will continue to make money on export sales, and the export sales will allow us to invest. We have \$2.2 billion of export of—sorry, of retained earnings. I'm pleased that we continue to have export sales, and I'm pleased that we have the lowest published rates in North America.

*(11:10)

Now, I know the members opposite are chirping and the member is—from Brandon West is chirping, but when his leader and his party tripled—tripled—the rates for the average Manitoban, I think that people will understand the difference between an NDP government and a Conservative government.

And the member opposite, I know that he was in favour of selling MTS, and, at that time, there was 5,800 people. It was a legitimate thing. And I just look at it now with 2,600 employees and, although they're a good company and they're a good corporate citizen, I do think that there's a big difference between the Conservative Party and the NDP party as far as treatment of Crowns and looking at the larger benefit.

Mr. Speaker, I'll start the next part of my speech with a quote from Hillary Rodham Clinton, who said no government can love a child; no policy can substitute for a family's care, but at the same time,

government can either support or undermine families as they cope with moral, social and economic stresses of caring for their children.

I believe that it's important to care about families and support them. I'm proud to be the Minister of Healthy Living, and I'm proud to be a person who personally cares about human investments and long-term prevention strategy. I think it's very wise to have and invest in prevention.

The members opposite have been on records that they wish to eliminate the Ministry of Healthy Living and they have said that they will eliminate the Ministry of Healthy Living, which I think is penny-wise and pound-foolish. I think it's reckless. I think it's short-term gain for long-term pain. I think prevention makes sense, and I think that the average Manitoban believes that.

I look at some of our programs, and I'll just go for some of the simple ones: in motion—in motion is a program that works with multiple stakeholders to get people physically active. Right now there's 550 schools, 142 work—sorry, communities and 410 workplaces. Over five years it actually has increased physical activity by 10 per cent, which leads the country.

So we were the lead in the country. We've had, for an investment of \$1.2 million, we have had 10 per cent additional people who are physically active. And I think that's a wonderful partnership with the people of Manitoba, whether it's seniors, young moms, families, children. It's a wonderful program, and I'm pleased that there's been \$1.2 million over the past five years.

Now, the members opposite, the Conservative Party of Manitoba has said that they will cut \$500 million from the budget, which means they're going to cut 416 projects just like in motion out of the budget this year alone.

I look at addictions. I'm pleased that we're investing \$25 million, which has doubled—almost doubled the funding of addictions in a 10-year period. We had an announcement yesterday that expanded women's treatment and transition beds. We have now, working with the federal government, to do a centralized intake. We're working with \$1.6 million to get addictions prevention and treatment out in the schools. I'm pleased that we've expanded prevention initiative.

I think creation of addiction services and the basic doubling of the funding to addictions, and the

movement forward on River Point Centre and all these initiatives is an investment in health. It's an investment in people, and I look at that and realize that the cutting of \$500 million means they would wipe out the entire addiction networks, all the funding to the agencies, all the funding to AFM and they would still have to wipe out 20 times that.

I think that's risky. I think it's not investing in humans. It's not supporting families. It's not supporting individuals, and I'm pleased to be part of a government that has voted, time after time, to expand addiction services. I'm proud to be the minister responsible for expanding the prevention initiatives in the school.

I'm pleased to see that we've got more transition beds, more women's services. I'm pleased that we've moved forward on the InSight program, which is getting FASD prevention out there. It was an investment of \$278,000 to expand services to vulnerable women who had the potential of being pregnant. The \$278,000 has had in excess of 76 per cent effectiveness right today, and that money—if we can prevent a child from getting FASD, and now we—that saves millions of dollars. But more importantly than just the money, it saves the difference on a human being and a life in the future.

And I'm proud to be a government that has voted consistently for expanding programs for FASD prevention and intervention and support, and I'm proud that we've expanded those to about \$10 billion a year—\$10 million a year, sorry, and I'm proud to be a person who believes that's necessary.

I am saddened by the fact that the Conservative Party has, every single year, voted against that money. And the \$278,000 is an investment in people and prevention. And I look at cutting \$500 million from the budget; I think that's reckless, I think it's short-sighted and I think it's sad.

Next, I look at the Healthy Baby program, and I'm proud to be the minister responsible—or the chair of the Healthy Child program. Some of the programs: Families First program. It's a universal [*inaudible*] regular home visits, supports positive parenting, build parenting skills, builds families, connections to communities, 1,445 families served, \$10.6 million. The parent-child coalitions: 26 parent-child coalitions working with multiple families, helping people, \$3.3-million investment in young families and in parents. I look at the Healthy Baby Prenatal support, supporting 4,500 young moms, getting good nutrition to young moms, getting

education and information and nutritious food to young moms, providing support to 42,500 people since it's launched. It's got great science. It's got good support, and you know what, Mr. Speaker, we vote for it; the members opposite voted against.

So, looking at the Healthy Child program and the wonderful work it does and the wonderful dedicated staff in the communities, it costs about \$28 million. Thus, the members opposite would cut it and 20 programs that size in order to get their \$500-million reckless spending commitment, and that's this year alone. That would harm people. That's penny-wise and very pound-foolish. And I know the member from Brandon West believes in those sorts of things; I don't. I believe in supporting young families and children.

I look at the Roots of Empathy program, \$290,000 investment. This deals with antibullying, gangs. It deals with aggression. It costs 270—sorry, \$290,000. I like the program. I had the opportunity to meet Mary Gordon. I see Seeds of Empathy, Roots of Empathy that's delivered in schools and daycares across this province. I'm proud of that program. Other provinces have cut it; we continue to expand it. And in order to make the \$500-million reckless cut, that's 1,724 projects like Roots of Empathy and Seeds of Empathy. That would be reckless and that would be sad.

Mr. Speaker, I look at all what we're doing on youth programs and I look at some of the investments. I have a philosophy: Busy kids are good kids. You have a choice between hiring kids or having kids have too much time. You have a choice between facilitating teams or having kids who have too much time. You have a choice between having kids join positive groups versus gangs.

And I am pleased that through MB4Youth we have continued to expand opportunities, and I'll go through some of the options. You have the Winnipeg Aboriginal Sport Achievement Centre, which keeps lots of people busy, and I'm pleased that they have engaged lots of youth in sports and activity. Big Brothers and Big Sisters, and I know the member from Brandon West is chirping against the Big Brothers and Big Sisters. I'm pleased to support Big Brothers and Big Sisters for providing mentoring and support for families, people without a parent. I have been witness to what that Big Brothers and Big Sisters organization does, and I think it's a good investment in young people.

* (11:20)

I look at the CSI, the summer learning institutes, the Stop Learning Loss and the programs that are offered by the Rotary Club of Winnipeg here in this city. And I'm proud to be helping with them. Why? Because they get kids a place to go. They get that energy focused and channelled on positive community improvement and on individual improvement. They provide the mentoring and the guidance, and I think that's wonderful. And I'd like to thank Strini Reddy and others who are working with the Boys and Girls Club, who are working with these kids to make a difference because they care and they do make a difference.

There's the Thompson Boys and Girls Club; there's the Healthy Schools initiative; there's the Teen Talk workshops and peer support; there's the healthy—the children Healthy Baby programs; there's the summer employment programs, the Green Team and Urban Green Team and Rural Green Team, which employs hundreds of kids around the province doing good work—doing good work for non-profits and community clubs and community organizations around this province. I'm pleased to continue to put money and support those, expand those programs and enhance those programs on a regular basis versus the members opposite, which would cut programs.

And I look at the new mentoring program that we just announced at Tec Voc the other day, and what it's doing is taking the business community to work with kids at risk, to work at kids—with kids to provide a focus in the future. Those will get the kids motivated. That'll get the kids to stay in school. That will get people enthusiastic about their future, and I think that I look at these programs and these programs cost the Healthy Living budget \$1 million a year. It's \$1 million to be smart with children, to provide a focus, to provide guidance. And I look at these programs that cost \$1 million, and the members opposite would have to cut 500 times the entire investment in these groups in order to make their budget commitment for this year only. I think that's reckless. I think it's terrible for the long-term future.

And I think it's important to say, yes, we do have to get tough on crime, and I think we do have to get tough on crime. But I also think that you offer opportunities for kids. You create jobs. You create focus. You create support. You keep kids busy. You open up gymnasiums and rec halls. You have programs that invest in recreational complexes. And you know, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite are

chirping against recreation for kids and keeping kids busy. I think it's a positive thing to do.

And I think that we have a quote from Barack Obama: People don't expect governments to solve all their problems. But they sense deep in their bones just that slight change in priorities. We can make sure that every child in America has a decent shot at life and that doors of opportunity remain open to all. They know we can do better.

We know that we will continue to do better as a government. We know we will open up the opportunities and open up doors for young people. We know that we need to create a ray of hope, and I'm pleased to be a government that continues to invest in it. And I know the members opposite don't believe in that strategy. They want to close the doors to all the youth.

I think we have to be smart on crime as well as tough on crime. I think we have to open up the gyms and rec centres. I think we have to fund these groups that are working and doing good work with kids, especially kids at risk, and I am proud to be the Minister of Healthy Living, the minister that's focusing on prevention. Prevention in health care, prevention in—as far as gangs, and prevention as far as the family services—working with family and children, and I think it's passing strange that the members opposite and the Leader of the Opposition, in one of his first budget speech, has said that they would eliminate the Ministry of Healthy Living. They do not believe in prevention, and I think it's funny because—I think that it's interesting because they do not believe in prevention. They do not believe in making wise decisions for the future. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be part of a government that does. And whether you're looking at that and you're saying, where do you want to go, I know in the city of Brandon, I know that we've had positive input from the public, talking about the expansion of the Y, talking about expansions to the recreation facilities. And I know the members opposite will vote against those investments, and I think that it's very positive that we've expanded it.

So, whether it's the YMCA in my area, the Centennial Pool, the recreational trails, whether it's the Healthy Baby program, the community support programs, the Boys and Girls Clubs, all these other things, I think it has to do with what we believe. And I believe—I hate to tell the members opposite—I do fall in the case that I do care about investments in humans. I do not believe that you dispose of people

because they're not your priority. I believe in governing for all; that means the most vulnerable, as well as the most affluent. I find it sad that the members opposite will choose to govern for just the few, rather than all.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, and I'm pleased to have the opportunity to stand today in the House and to speak to and to support our motion that indicates we have no confidence in the Throne Speech that this government has brought in.

Mr. Speaker, before I get into my comments on the Throne Speech and the lack of vision in that Throne Speech, I would like to just, first of all, say to you welcome back. We're really pleased to see that things went as successful as they did with your surgery and extremely pleased to see you doing so well after the fact. I know it's a long, slow recovery and each day, I hope, is a better day for you, and we look forward to seeing you back to full health in the not-too-distant future.

Mr. Speaker, I do also want to commend the member for St. Norbert (Ms. Brick) for the job that she did while you were not available to us. And I know it's not easy to keep decorum in this House from time to time, and she did a very good job, so she must have had a good teacher. And so we look forward to having you here for a long time to come.

Mr. Speaker, I also would like to congratulate the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) on the birth of his first child. That was news that we received today, and I do know that the member for Concordia is beaming from ear to ear today and I would expect nothing less. It's really a miracle to have a new life brought into the world and I can't speak from first-hand experience in the recent past about myself, but I can indicate that I've had the opportunity to watch two beautiful, new granddaughters be born two years ago and four years ago. And no one in this House can really understand what it feels like to be a grandparent that sees that new life and the next generation of family coming into the world, and it's so much—well, I can't say it's more exciting, but it's extremely exciting to know that your children have been able to reproduce healthy grandchildren for us.

And we, as grandparents, have the ability to spend a lot of time with grandchildren, to spoil them, to do all of the things that grandparents like to do and also to send them home at the end of the day, in most

cases, and know that we can re-energize ourselves and have them back. And so I just want to say to the member for Concordia, congratulations, and I hope that he experiences all of the joy of parenthood and experiences the joy, but also understands, I know, the responsibility that comes along with being a parent for the first time. And there will be challenges. There will be sleepless nights, but I know that it's worth it all in the end, and I speak from experience on that.

* (11:30)

I would like to just also welcome back all of the table officers and all of those within the Chamber that provide a service for us on an ongoing basis, and just say to all of you, thank you again for your commitment and for the work that you do to keep this place focused and running well.

To the pages, I want to say welcome, and there are some parts of the job that you will enjoy more than others but there's never—I always say, never a dull moment. You may disagree with that at the end of your tenure here, but that we—first of all, I want you to know that we are all human beings here in this Legislature, and although you will see many times that we have disagreements, and we can get very animated when we speak and when we debate issues, but also do want you to know that when there is something that is affecting, in a negative way, any member of this Legislature, that we all care very much about individuals, about their families, about their health and all of the things that go on in life outside of this Legislature. And so I hope you understand that as you listen to the debate that takes place in this Chamber.

And also to the new interns that are supporting our respective caucuses, hope that they enjoy and learn much about some of the things that go on behind the scenes that don't just happen in here, but the work that needs to get done in order to prepare all of us, both opposition and government, for the jobs that we do in this Legislature.

And, Mr. Speaker, I do want to talk a bit about the constituency of River East, too, and indicate what a pleasure it's been to serve for almost a quarter of a century—almost 25 years—and thank the constituents of River East for their support and for their confidence in me as we've been through some ups and downs and some very difficult challenges.

I was pleased to note that the demographics of the constituency didn't change in any major significant way as a result of boundaries and

redistribution, and I just want to thank those that made presentation to the commission—the Boundaries Commission—that talked about River East when it was going to be significantly changed. And there were many, many that came out and made representation to the Boundaries Commission. And, as a result of that, the commission did look at it and, I guess, agreed with the common-sense approach that was taken by many members of the community that wanted to keep River East intact. And, as a result, we've seen, you know, just very small changes in the boundaries. So I'm pleased to know that many of the constituents that I've had the opportunity to represent over the last 25 years—or almost 25 years—I will continue, hopefully, to be able to represent after the next election.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity during the fall to spend a significant amount of time knocking on doors and talking to residents in the northeast quadrant of the city of Winnipeg. And, first and foremost, the one issue that they did raise on a continuing basis was the safety issue, the issue of crime and the issue of what—and gave some pretty constructive and common sense solutions and suggestions and ideas on what needed to be done to try to ensure that our community was safer. And we are not immune, in the suburbs of the city of Winnipeg, from violent crime, break-ins, auto theft and vandalism that does occur.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's a paramount issue to the residents in River East, and they do, on the majority—in the majority of instances, want to see responsibility taken for criminal activity, and they want to see consequences for that kind of activity and behaviour. And we will, and I know Manitobans will see as we move over the next year, the next several months, they will see concrete suggestions and ideas and policies put forward from our party to try to deal with the issues that constituents raised.

One of the other things, of course, in most communities, I think, right throughout the province are the issues of infrastructure. People are very concerned about being able to get from point A to point B on safe roads, on roads that need to be improved. And I know we hear a lot of that from communities outside of the city of Winnipeg, but right in the city of Winnipeg, in the northeast quadrant of the city of Winnipeg, issues of infrastructure have been issues for a long time.

I was pleased to see that the next extension of the Chief Peguis Trail is going to move forward. As

a matter of fact, there is some dirt being moved as we speak. I know that over the winter it's going to be more difficult, but the Chief Peguis Trail and that extension has been over 20 years in the plans and in the works for the city of Winnipeg. All three levels of government had to come together to make the project a reality. When the initial proposal came out and was approved, it caused some major concern in River East constituency, in northeast Winnipeg, that the intersection at Rothesay and the Chief Peguis Trail was going to have a level crossing, which would've meant that Rothesay would have had to be expanded, a residential street to four lanes, that there were going to be stoplights, that there were going to be safety issues for children that would have to cross over the new Chief Peguis Trail to get to schools that didn't have a school on the one side and would have to cross over.

Those issues were significant. I immediately, when speaking to my constituents, heard that, you know, yes, we want to see the Chief Peguis Trail go forward, but if it means having to do it in a substandard way, we don't want to see it happen; do it right or don't do it at all. And went back and worked with city councillor, certainly spoke to the Premier of the Province of Manitoba and to officials at the federal level. And, as a result, they were able to go back to the drawing board; they were able to reconfigure the Chief Peguis Trail and now we're going to see a below-grade intersection at Rothesay, Mr. Speaker, which has really made a significant improvement to the project.

Mr. Doug Martindale, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

Also, the Pioneers Greenway, which has been developed along the old railway tracks right through my constituency, has been a real welcome addition to our community. But there was some concern also, when the Chief Peguis Trail was being approved, that it would cut the walkway and the pathway which is used by many, many constituents, right from Elmwood through to the Perimeter Highway. Mr. Acting Speaker, there was some concern for the safety of those that wanted to bike or walk along that trail.

And it was the hard work of our city councillor, Jeff Browaty, that went back to the City of Winnipeg and, as a result of that, we were able to get an overpass for pedestrians and cyclists at the location of the Pioneers Greenway. So some positive things have happened in northeast Winnipeg over the last number of years, and I'm pleased to have been able

to work with not only our representative at City Hall, but also with the Premier, the former Premier Gary Doer, and members of his government and the federal level to try to get things done right. And it looks like some things are being done right and they will leave a positive long-term legacy for northeast Winnipeg.

* (11:40)

Mr. Acting Speaker, I want to congratulate all of those who put their name on the ballot to run at the municipal and school board level in all of our communities right throughout Manitoba. We all know what it takes to run for political office. There has to be a major commitment, and so I want to thank all of those. I especially want to thank those who won their seats and will represent, hopefully well, the views of those that elected them.

I especially want to give my congratulations to the mayor, Sam Katz, who won re-election in the City of Winnipeg. As our mayor, I believe that he will continue to try to represent the best interests of the city of Winnipeg as a whole as he moves forward in his next mandate.

And I also want to congratulate my city councillor, Jeff Browaty, for the good job that he did in running a top-notch campaign, getting to as many doors as he possibly could and for having such a resounding success on election night. And I want to congratulate him also for being—becoming a member of the Executive Policy Committee for the first time. It's his second term, and I know that he has grown in the job of city councillor and he has represented those in northeast Winnipeg extremely well. So I want to congratulate him on a job well done.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Mr. Speaker, I now move to some of the issues that have been presented by this government who has been in power for 11 years now, and some of the, I would call it, rhetoric that we saw in the Throne Speech. It kind of smacked of a desperate, tired government who's run out of steam, a government that has failed in many, many areas to deliver upon the promises that—some that they promised 11 years ago that they haven't followed through on.

And the one that's most evident and most clear, of course, is the promise 11 years ago to end hallway medicine in six months with \$15 million. And I remember that promise very clearly, Mr. Speaker, and Manitobans bought into that. It was a simple, slick promise that certainly had an impact on them

winning the election. But what do we see 11 years later? We see people lining the hallways in our emergency rooms on a regular basis. And it was a very simplistic promise but not easily implementable.

And we see time and time again, those kinds of promises and commitments, Mr. Speaker, but you'd think they would have learned from that and they would have been a little more careful this year going into an election year, when they promised that every Manitoban would have a family doctor by the year 2015. Well, how can a government again promise something that they are not going to be able to deliver on? You think they would have learned their lesson 11 years ago. But, no, again they come out with promises that, when you look at the detail, aren't promising a family doctor for everyone; they're promising nurse practitioners will have a greater role.

And I think that's something that all of us in the Legislature agree with, that nurse practitioners do have the ability to see patients and to perform roles that they haven't traditionally performed and take some of the pressure off some of the others in our health-care system and free up some time for doctors.

But to promise a doctor for every Manitoban is a promise, Mr. Speaker, that they're not going to be able to fulfill. And so I think it's irresponsible for a government—and it's a government that's tired and has run out of practical solutions for our health-care system and is just out there willy-nilly promising things that they're not going to be able to deliver on.

I also heard a promise for—and it sounds like government is going to be bringing in legislation to mandate that students stay in school until the age of 18. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think this government has its priorities all mixed up. They haven't been able to deliver on keeping students in school until the age of 16 and they're moving the goalpost from 16 to 18 years. Why aren't they looking at the practical solutions to try to deal with the kids that fall under the legislation today, rather than expanding that mandate? They haven't fixed the problem. Children aren't staying in school until they're 16, never mind 18. Fix the problem that exists today before looking at expanding.

Mr. Speaker, we know that there are children out there today at the age of 12 and 13 and 14 that aren't in school, that are stealing cars when they should be in school. What's the government doing to address

that issue? Fix that problem first before you look at doing more within the system.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the focus of this government, and I have to give them credit, some of it has been on—some of the programs have been on early intervention and trying to ensure that children get off to a good start to life, but we still have many, many children within the system that are falling through the cracks. We have children that are in our Child and Family Services system that are being moved from place to place to place at a very early age, and they're not in school in the early years. What's the government doing to try to fix that problem? Why aren't they dealing with the issues that presently exist within our system, and ensuring that children get the basics in the early years of schooling? Why aren't they serious about trying to fix those issues before they create another issue with 16- to 18-year-olds? They haven't fixed the situation for 16-year-olds, for 15-year-olds, for 14-year-olds, for 10-year-olds that aren't presently attending school or involved in the school system. Look at the issues that exist today; fix them and then move on to a loftier goal.

This is going to do absolutely nothing, Mr. Speaker, and they talk about penalizing parents whose kids aren't in school from age 16 to 18. Well, what are they doing today to penalize parents whose kids aren't in school when they're 10 years old? When they're 12 years old? Do we have the numbers that talk about truancy in the province? Do we really know what the true picture is?

They don't have statistics. They don't have data. They don't know what's going on under the legislation today that presently exists, so why would they move forward, Mr. Speaker, on trying to expand the legislation to include 16- and 18-year-olds? Fix what needs to be fixed in the system today.

And, when we talk about fixing the system, we need to talk about the Child and Family Services system and the chaos that it's in today. Mr. Speaker, and when I hear the rhetoric from the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Mackintosh), who stands in his place and says they fixed the system; look how well it's working. We're protecting children.

* (11:50)

Well, Mr. Speaker, his speak doesn't match the reality of what we're seeing when children are dying today on a regular basis as a result of failed policies that this government has put in place. And we've

talked many times about how this government rushed through the devolution process without ensuring that the new agencies that were created or those agencies that got expanded mandates—without ensuring that those agencies were prepared to deal with the additional workloads. It takes training; it takes experience; it takes knowing what needs to happen to protect children to ensure that our system is working properly, but, no, they didn't worry about whether there were trained staff. They didn't worry about whether there were boards overseeing those agencies that understood what it meant to run a Child and Family Services agency. They set the agencies up to fail, and they set the agencies up to fail children, children who deserve better from a government and from a minister that has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that children are protected and are safe.

These are children, Mr. Speaker, that are living in homes where they're being abused, where they're being neglected. You can't take children from those homes and put them into safe alternatives only to move them back into unsafe circumstances again, and that's what we're seeing time and time again. Children have been apprehended; children have been placed back in unsafe, abusive situations where they never should be put.

And, Mr. Speaker, we're seeing the results of that failed policy today, and we're seeing it on a regular basis, a very disturbing basis, and Manitobans are seeing through it. Manitobans are sickened by the kinds of headlines and the kinds of stories they're seeing in the media about how children are being treated and abused, and if that doesn't—and if that isn't a wakeup call to this government to do something, to take action, to admit they have been in power for 11 years and things are getting worse—they're not getting better in the Child and Family Services system.

So I just wish that the minister would take a little time to look at some of the things that we've suggested that might help, Mr. Speaker. There's been review after review and recommendation and recommendation and millions of dollars poured into a system that is failing children. And we have said—you know, one of the recommendations that came from the Gage Guimond report was that there be a written reason when children are taken out of a foster home and placed in a different situation, if they've been in a long-term foster placement where there are no abuse concerns whatever, that there be a written reason why it's in the best interests of that child to be moved. Now, it seems like a pretty simple process to

put in place. We've asked this government time and time again why they won't implement that recommendation, and what do we get from the minister? We get some excuse, some reason why it can't happen, not how he can make it happen—very simple.

Mr. Speaker, we've also said that we should be looking at placing a moratorium on moving children from long-term foster placements, if there are no abuse issues, until we get a handle on what's happening in the system, because we've seen time and time and time again that children are moved from safe placements to abusive, neglectful placements. And that's where we're seeing the deaths occur on a regular basis in our Child and Family Services system.

Mr. Speaker, it is not acceptable. We need a government and a minister and a premier that can show some leadership and take some action to ensure protection of children. It's not happening; it's not good enough to provide excuses or blame someone else. It's time that the minister stood up and showed some leadership, showed some—took—was accountable for what's going on within his Child and Family Services system, which he has ultimate responsibility for. The buck stops in his office, and he needs to take some action today to try to turn things around in the chaotic system that is letting far too many children die and fall through the cracks.

Mr. Speaker, with those comments, I want to say that I will be supporting the amendment. I hope that members on the government side of the House might see the light, might see the kinds of things that are in the amendment that they could support and that we could work together to try to improve not only our Child and Family Services system in the province of Manitoba, but our health-care system that has been mismanaged and there have been promises made that cannot be delivered upon. And also in our education system, where I think the government is misguided—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Mr. Speaker, I'm really pleased to put a few words on the record in terms of this—the amendments and also the Speech from the Throne.

But first, Mr. Speaker, I want, as so many others have in this Legislature, welcome you back to the Chamber. It's really good to have you back.

I also want to point out that last Thursday Mr. Speaker celebrated his 11th anniversary as the first elected Speaker in Manitoba. So I think that's something that you can tell your grandchildren about, and they'll tell their grandchildren about. And I think that's something you and the rest of us can all be very proud of in this House.

I want to welcome back the pages and the Clerk and the staff and the Sergeant-at-Arms and the staff there.

Mr. Speaker, I really do want to disabuse the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) of any hope that we have of supporting the partisan political amendments that they brought forward for us to vote on here today. The amendments that they brought forward could only be brought forward by an opposition, only an opposition that is reckless and irresponsible and desperate. We have an opposition that put forward these amendments that will say anything between now and the next election. They'll say anything to get a vote here and there. They'll say anything to try to get some support.

My advice to them, Mr. Speaker, isn't to approach it this way, isn't to approach it by putting misinformation on the record like they did in terms of the child welfare debate we're having, like they did in terms of the bipole debate we're having, like they've done—you know, the other thing they should do: stop saying no to everything. Stop saying no. What do you support? Do you support the football stadium or not? No. They didn't support the arena when it was built. They don't support the stadium. They're a bunch of stick-in-the-muds that say no to everything.

Ah, but, Mr. Speaker, I know what they will say yes to. They'll say yes to the invitation when they get to come and put their little pinkies in the air and drink some white wine and celebrate the stadium when it's put in place. When this government has worked very hard to get that stadium in place, you will all be there, I'm telling you right now. You'll be there just like you were when we built the arena and you said, no, no, no. What did the former premier call it? Negative nabobs of negativity. That's what you are.

You know, you need to get more positive. You get—you need to not put so much misinformation on the record. You need to have an honest conversation amongst yourselves and with Manitobans before you do that. Put together something—maybe put together something Manitobans can actually support rather

than always being against something. That's what this amendment's all about. It's your negativity—

* (12:00)

Mr. Speaker: Order.

The hour being 12 p.m., pursuant to rule 45(4), I'm interrupting the proceedings in order to put the question on the motion of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, that is the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

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

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Formal Vote

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

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

Order. The question before the House is the motion of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen), that is, the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Division

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

Yeas

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

Nays

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

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 19, Nays 33.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Okay, we will now resume debate on the main motion.

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West): It's, indeed, a pleasure and an honour to be the last speaker on the Throne Speech on a Friday afternoon, in this august Legislature, with all of the members here, I know, sitting on the edge of their seats waiting to try to find out exactly what was good and what was bad in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. But I will be leaving, as most of us will be, at the end of my speech because it will be recessed until Monday of next week. And it's been a wonderful week here in the Legislature.

* (12:10)

I know when I drive down No. 1 Highway and I'm driving into the city of Brandon and going down into the Assiniboine Valley, I get a feeling of awe, actually, and one of humility, one of humility to be able to represent the people of that great community of Brandon here in this Legislature. And, when I see the smokestack of Coke and I see the hydroelectric plant, when I see, Mr. Speaker, that city below me, I thank my constituents so very, very much to be given the honour and the ability to represent them here in this Legislature. I've been given that opportunity on a number of occasions, and it never ceases to amaze me that we here are one of 57 and it's a nice, tight little group of people here in this Legislature.

We're actually 57 of about 1.25 million people, Mr. Speaker, and sometimes we forget the responsibility that we have as members in this Legislature. Sometimes we forget that's it's those constituents that really are the ones that we are here to serve, and I can tell you, each and every one of us, as members of this Legislature, deal with some very, very important issues from our constituents. Now, those issues that they bring forward—maybe not seem

as important to us as the big picture, the big issues that we deal with in this Legislature—but I can assure you those issues that they bring to us every day are the most important things that they deal with in their life, and we should never lose sight of that, whether it be an issue with Workers Compensation Board, and we all deal with them; whether it be an issue with immigration, and we all deal with them; whether it be an issue with health care in the province of Manitoba, and we all deal with those issues that come forward, and they come forward on a fairly regular basis to our offices—to our constituency offices. So, really, it's just a time where we can actually appreciate the fact of the responsibility that we as individual legislatures carry into this building.

I'd also like to at this time, as have others, thank the resource staff that we have here in the Legislature that help us do our jobs so much easier. Mr. Speaker, first of all, as was mentioned many, many times before, welcome back. We do need a referee in this place at some time, and I can assure you, you have the ability to have decorum and control of this House, and you've demonstrated that so ably in the past that we do thank you and we do welcome you back to this Legislature. We also thank the table officers who help us a great deal, whether it be in committee, whether to keep us on track as to whether we are in order or out of order. So we do thank the table officers as well as the Hansard, which—sometimes Hansard believes that I speak just a little bit too quickly, so I will try to slow down on occasion. Oh, we do thank the Hansard for keeping a record of everything that we say in this House, not that we can go back to the record to embarrass people, but that we can keep a record of what it is that's very important to us in this Legislature. Thank the Sergeant-at-Arms; thank the pages. By the way, great job today in announcing the votes. It's not something that we could probably even do if asked to perform that function, so congratulations to our pages and to our interns who assist us in our research, assist us in a lot of things that we do. So there's a lot of people that allow us to do our jobs better in this Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity of listening to a number of Throne Speeches in a number of venues, actually, and I can honestly say the Throne Speeches that I've heard in this Legislature presented by this NDP government have gone from mediocrity—very mediocre in what their vision was put forward for Manitobans, to pathetic,

to this last one that I unfortunately have the—had the opportunity of sitting through for 90 minutes and have read through once or twice, to a Throne Speech that I would indicate as being very desperate; a Throne Speech, that if you go through page by page, line by line, a government who is making promises that have already been broken, promises that were made 11 years ago from a very pathetic, desperate, weak government that are now asking Manitobans to embrace as promises going forward. So I would have to describe this Throne Speech as promises made, promises broken; promises made again, promises broken again.

Manitobans are too smart, Mr. Speaker, to buy into that particular broken promise in this Throne Speech after 11 years of experience from this government. They can talk about the '90s all they want, but the reality is this government has to live with their record of the past 11 years and they can't do that. They can't do that. As a matter of fact—

An Honourable Member: Anytime, any place, anywhere.

Mr. Borotsik: As a matter of fact, the members opposite are saying anytime, anywhere. So let's look at the promises made and the promises broken.

I have, Mr. Speaker, a campaign pamphlet from 1999 that says, it's time for a government that's in touch with the hopes and the dreams of today's Manitobans—Gary Doer. By the way, it says, keep this card, we'll keep these commitments. Well let's go through this card and these commitments and this Throne Speech. Let's take the report card that we have now, of 11 years of failure, mismanagement and pathetic promises broken by this government. Let's look at them.

The first one—the first one—the first one will end halfway medicine and rescue—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa—and rescue health care, beginning by hiring more nurses, reopening hospital beds and reducing wait times. That's what he said, Mr. Speaker. Well, let's go to our health care of 2010. There is nothing in the Throne Speech to address the wait times and diagnostic tests, appointments with specialists and surgeries.

In 1999, Mr. Doer and the NDP government promised that wait times for MRIs would be eight weeks, ultrasounds would be one to two weeks and that waits for CT scans would be cut one week for

every year that the NDP held office. But, Mr. Speaker, in health care today, MRI wait times are worse than they were in 1999. It's 18 weeks to get an MRI from this government who was going to fix health care. It's 10 weeks for an ultrasound and its five weeks for a CT scan. Remember the promise—the promise broken, that they are going to fix health care.

Oh, by the way, in the Throne Speech, now they've had the epiphany. We have 180,000 Manitobans that don't have a doctor—180,000 Manitobans that don't have a doctor. But this government, over 11 years, was going to fix health care, but now we have an epiphany. We're going to have clinics set up in shopping centres so that people without doctors can now actually go to a shopping centre and maybe get some medical assistance. What a great idea. What a promise made, what a promise broken. Do we believe, Mr. Speaker, that they can do anything with health care?

Mr. Speaker, here's a really good one. Mr. Doer's five commitments to you and your family. No. 2, will renew hope for young people, starting with excellent public schools and by cutting community college and university tuitions by 10 per cent. Education—hang on—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Borotsik: Mr. Speaker, they're going to save education. They're going to renew hope for young people, starting with the excellent public school system.

* (12:20)

We have the highest high school drop-out rate in the country. We have the lowest high school graduation rate in the country. We have the lowest post-secondary graduation rate in the country. We have the lowest post-secondary participation rate in the country. Oh, we've reduced the tuition, but did they read *Maclean's* lately? We have universities that are at the lowest rate in the country. Now, this is a government 11 years ago that made a promise that it was going to renew faith in our education system. We've had Education ministers that have destroyed our education system, and now what are they going to do?

Mr. Speaker, look at the Throne Speech. What are they going to do now? They're going to save education. What have they been doing for the past 11 years? Destroying education. Do they want me to repeat? The highest high school dropout rate in the

country. Oh, but now we're going to change that. We're going to make sure that students stay in high school until the age of 18. A promise made by this government is a promise broken. Don't believe any of the promises that this government makes on behalf of Manitobans because it doesn't work. *[interjection]*

Okay, here we go. Here we go. I can speak—Mr. Speaker, it's obvious that they—it's obvious that the members opposite really do have some difficulties accepting their promises made back in 1999. Here's a wonderful one: We'll keep Manitoba Hydro and build a new partnership with business and labour for new and better jobs. What they didn't say in that promise 11 years ago is they would interfere in the management of Manitoba Hydro to the point that Manitoba Hydro cannot operate financially now in this kind of a interference-of-government climate. They have a minister, a Premier right now that thinks that they know more about how Manitoba Hydro should be operating.

Mr. Speaker, we have a number of examples of political interference that should not happen. Bipole III, west side, east side. Manitoba Hydro, for the past 20 years, has been anticipating the construction of a Bipole III transmission line from the north to the south. For 20 years, Manitoba Hydro was putting that transmission line down the east side of Manitoba. For 20 years, until somebody who thinks, perhaps knows more about hydro than Hydro does, sends a letter to a board-appointed—an ex-NDP minister appointed to the Hydro board, gets a letter from the minister responsible for Hydro at the time, the Premier today, and said, oh, by the way, on a whim, let's forget about the last 20 years' planning and let's now change it from the east side to the west side, on a whim—on a whim.

That decision that was made on behalf of Manitoba Hydro by its board that was appointed by this government is now going to waste—and I think this is important—waste \$1.75 billion of Manitoba Hydro's borrowed money to go down the west side—\$1.75 billion of borrowed money to go down the west side. And now, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, that's the latest number that we have, because Hydro has been told by this government, don't do a new capital cost projection going forward. This is a 2007 capital cost projection. Let's not make the new capital cost projection available until much later, perhaps even after the next election, because we have information that we're led to believe that that

\$2.2-billion capital cost for the original line going down the west side—and don't get too excited about this—is now going to be over \$4 billion.

And I know this doesn't mean a lot to the members opposite because \$4 billion is just \$4 billion of more debt that they can go to the New York banks and they can borrow more—\$4 billion more money and beside—and you know what? It's only money that has to be paid back some other time. They don't have to worry about paying it back, Mr. Speaker, but our children do. And our grandchildren are going to have to pay it back if they ever get the opportunity. So now we have a \$4-billion capital cost of a east-of a west-side transmission line—

An Honourable Member: Four billion, with a "b."

Mr. Borotsik: Billion, borrowed billion. You can use it with two "b's," borrowed billion. So now we've got a government that's going to basically destroy Manitoba Hydro, Mr. Speaker. As a matter of fact, we're putting \$4 billion into a foolish west-side line that could be built on the east side for much, much less money and why are we spending an additional \$4 billion? The Minister of Healthy Living (Mr. Rondeau) just said, because our export markets are going to pay for that \$4 billion, we don't have to worry about it.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I have the financials for Manitoba Hydro and I wish the Minister of Healthy Living would approach me and I can give him the facts if they want to ever have facts when dealing with this particular issue. Last year, export sales were \$623 million extraprovincial, so our American sales were 623 last year. This year, this past fiscal year, those sales dropped by 31 per cent to \$427 million. At the same time, domestic costs to hydroelectric power went up. Manitoba domestic users, you, me and all the rest paid \$1.172 billion to Manitoba Hydro for our power. So, domestically, we paid \$1.1 billion. We got \$400 million from extraprovincial.

By the way, just for your interest, we're building Wuskwatim. Wuskwatim was supposed to be \$800 million in capital cost—\$800 million. By the way, did I tell you, the original capital cost budget for the west side was \$2.2 billion; now it's over \$4 billion? Did I tell you that they originally budgeted Manitoba Hydro building at \$75 million and they spent \$283 million? Did I tell you, Mr. Speaker, that Wuskwatim was originally built and

budgeted for \$800 million and it's now \$1.6 billion—\$1.6 billion for Wuskwatim that's going to generate 200 megawatts of power. It's going to generate 200 megawatts of power for \$1.6 billion.

Now, I have a little experience with business plans. With a business case, there's a thing called cost of production and there's a thing called revenue generated from sales. Cost of production on a generating plant that went from \$800 million to \$1.6 billion probably will double the cost of production. So we know now, Mr. Speaker, that the cost of production of that power probably will be somewhere in the neighbourhood of 8 to 9 cents a kilowatt-hour.

Now, what are we selling that power for to our extraprovincial customers down in the US? The last one we had on the spot market, we're told, was 2.5 cents per kilowatt-hour. So we're now doubled our capital cost for Wuskwatim. We've doubled our cost for transmission lines that we don't have to but we're going to sell our power for 2.5 cents a kilowatt-hour when it's going to cost us, at minimum, 8 to 9 cents a kilowatt-hour. Now, that's not good business, so somebody has to cover off those losses and it's probably going to be you and me because we are now going to have to pay more on our rates for our domestic power.

Manitoba Hydro went to the Public Utilities Board and they were supposed to present their factual information for a rate increase, a general rate increase, but they didn't do that. Manitoba Public Utilities Board, which again has got appointments from this government, said, oh, we'll give you 2.9 per cent. Don't worry about justifying it. And, you know what? When you come back again, we'll probably give you 3.5 per cent, but don't bother justifying it. Just spend your money. Waste your money. Manitoba ratepayers will end up picking up the costs. Don't worry, Mr. Government. Don't worry, the NDP government. Waste our money. We, in fact, will make Manitoba ratepayers pay for it.

So we're now selling power at 2.5—I was told by a gentleman who's very credible that there's some power that we're selling on the spot market—are you listening to this? There is some power that we're selling on the spot market for a penny, 1 cent of Manitoba hydro is going to the export—

Mr. Speaker: Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have nine minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, November 26, 2010

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Introduction of Bills		Overland Flooding Briese; Struthers	262
Bill 5—The City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment Act (Historic Property Designations)		Elder Abuse Prevention Gerrard; Oswald	263
Lemieux	255	Personal Care Homes Gerrard; Oswald	263
Petitions		Economy Jha; Bjornson	264
Mount Agassiz Ski Area Briese	255	Women's Correctional Facility Faurschou; Swan	265
Bipole III Project Pedersen	255	Members' Statements	
Taillieu	256	Manitoba Council on Aging Awards Jha	265
Ministerial Statements		Canadian Mixed Curling Championships Taillieu	266
H5N2 Avian Influenza Struthers	256	Duff Roblin Provincial Park Brick	266
Eichler	256	Students in Free Enterprise Rowat	267
Gerrard	257	Guru Nanak Wiebe	267
Oral Questions			
Phoenix Sinclair Death McFadyen; Selinger	257		
Child Fatalities Mitchelson; Mackintosh	258		
Personal Care Homes Driedger; Oswald	259		
Manitoba Hydro McFadyen; Selinger	260		
Football Stadium McFadyen; Selinger	261		
Old Stadium Site Redevelopment McFadyen; Selinger	262		
		ORDERS OF THE DAY	
		GOVERNMENT BUSINESS	
		Throne Speech (Seventh Day of Debate)	
		Rondeau	268
		Mitchelson	271
		Struthers	275
		Borotsik	277

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