

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

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Speaker*

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, March 25, 2009

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYER

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PETITIONS

Increased School Facilities—Garden Valley School Division

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

These are the reasons for this petition.

The student enrolment in Garden Valley School Division has risen steadily for the last 10 years.

Since 2005, the enrolment has risen by more than 700 students, from 3,361 students to 4,079 students, a 21 percent increase.

Since September 2007, the enrolment has increased by 325 students, an 8.7 percent increase.

Currently, 1,050 students, or 26 percent, are in 42 portable classrooms without adequate access to bathrooms.

There are 1,210 students in a high school built for 750 students; 375 students are located in 15 portables without adequate access to bathrooms.

Projected enrolment increases based on immigration through the Provincial Nominee Program reveals the school division enrolment will double in the next 12 years.

Student safety, school security, reasonable access to bathrooms and diminished student learning are concerns that need immediate attention.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth (Mr. Bjornson) to consider providing the necessary school facilities to Garden Valley School Division.

To urge the Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth to consider providing the Garden Valley School Division an immediate date as to when to expect the necessary school facilities.

This is signed by Jo Voth, Judith Voth, Don Friesen, Mike Toews and many, many others.

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

Seven Oaks Hospital—Emergency Services

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

The current Premier (Mr. Doer) and the NDP government are reducing emergency services at the Seven Oaks Hospital.

On October 6, 1995, the NDP introduced a matter of urgent public importance that stated that the "ordinary business of the House to be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely the threat to the health-care system posed by this government's plans to limit emergency services in the city of Winnipeg community hospitals."

On December 6, 1995, when the then-PC government suggested it was going to reduce emergency services at the Seven Oaks Hospital, the NDP leader then asked Premier Gary Filmon to "reverse the horrible decisions of his government and his Minister of Health and reopen our community-based emergency wards."

The NDP gave Manitobans the impression that they supported Seven Oaks Hospital having full emergency services seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Premier of Manitoba consider how important it is to have the Seven Oaks Hospital provide full emergency services seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

This is signed by J. Smith, J. Silva, V. Allan and many, many other fine Manitobans.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Agriculture and Food First Report

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the First Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Food.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Agriculture and Food presents the following—

Mr. Speaker: Dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on AGRICULTURE AND FOOD presents the following as its First Report.

Meeting

Your Committee met on Tuesday, March 17, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matter under Consideration

- *Bill (No. 2) – The Animal Care Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur le soin des animaux*

Committee Membership

- *Mr. ALTEMEYER*
- *Ms. BRICK (Vice-Chair)*
- *Mr. DERKACH*
- *Mr. DYCK*
- *Mr. EICHLER*
- *Ms. KORZENIOWSKI*
- *Hon. Mr. LEMIEUX*
- *Mr. NEVAKSHONOFF (Chair)*
- *Mr. SARAN*
- *Mrs. TAILLIEU*
- *Hon. Ms. WOWCHUK*

Public Presentations

Your Committee heard the following nine presentations on Bill (No. 2) – The Animal Care Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur le soin des animaux:

John Youngman, Canadian Coalition for Farm Animals

Robert McLean, Keystone Agricultural Producers
Miles Beaudin, Private Citizen

Shane Sadorski, Manitoba Cattle Producers Association

Bill McDonald, Winnipeg Humane Society

Colleen Marion, Manitoba Veterinary Medical Association

Twyla Francois, Canadians for the Ethical Treatment of Food Animals

Catherine King, Private Citizen

Georgina Norris, Private Citizen

Written Submissions

Your Committee received the following six written submissions on Bill (No. 2) – The Animal Care Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur le soin des animaux:

Rory McAlpine, Maple Leaf Foods

Dave Shelvey, Dave's Reptiles N'Stuff and the Westman Reptile Gardens

Robert Kell, Private Citizen

Dr. Dana Medoro, Private Citizen

Randy Tonnellier, Private Citizen

Sandra Allen, Private Citizen

Bill Considered and Reported

- *Bill (No. 2) – The Animal Care Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur le soin des animaux*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill, with the following amendment:

THAT the proposed subsection 5.1(2), as set out in Clause 6 of the Bill, be amended by striking out everything after "may transport it" and substituting "to or from a veterinary clinic or the nearest suitable place to obtain medical attention."

Mr. Nevakshonoff: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for St. Norbert (Ms. Brick), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Standing Committee on Public Accounts First Report

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

Madam Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts presents the—

Mr. Speaker: Dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

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

Meetings

Your Committee met on the following occasions:

- May 7, 2008
- May 14, 2008
- October 8, 2008
- March 16, 2009

All meetings were held in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- Auditor General's Report – Audit of the Public Accounts for the year ending March 31, 2007
- Auditor General's Report – Operations of the Office for the year ending March 31, 2006
- Auditor General's Report – Operations of the Office for the year ending March 31, 2007
- Auditor General's Report – Operations of the Office for the year ending March 31, 2008

Committee Membership

Committee Membership for the May 7, 2008 meeting:

- MR. BOROTSIK
- MS. BRAUN
- MR. DERKACH (Chairperson)
- MS. HOWARD
- MR. JHA
- MR. LAMOUREUX
- MR. MAGUIRE
- MR. MALOWAY (Vice-Chairperson)
- MR. MARTINDALE
- HON. MR. SELINGER
- MRS. STEFANSON

Committee Membership for the May 14, 2008 meeting:

- MR. BOROTSIK
- MS. BRAUN

- MR. DERKACH (Chairperson)
- MS. HOWARD
- MR. JHA
- MR. LAMOUREUX
- MR. MAGUIRE
- MR. MALOWAY (Vice-Chairperson)
- MR. MARTINDALE
- MR. PEDERSEN
- HON. MR. SELINGER

Committee Membership for the October 8, 2008 meeting:

- MR. BOROTSIK
- MS. BRAUN
- MR. DERKACH (Chairperson)
- MR. DEWAR
- MS. HOWARD (Vice-Chairperson)
- MR. LAMOUREUX
- MR. MAGUIRE
- MS. MARCELINO
- MR. MARTINDALE
- HON. MR. SELINGER
- MRS. TAILLIEU

Committee Membership for the March 16, 2009 meeting:

- MR. BOROTSIK
- MS. BRAUN
- MR. DERKACH (Chairperson)
- MS. HOWARD (Vice-Chairperson)
- MR. JHA
- MR. LAMOUREUX
- MR. MAGUIRE
- MR. MARTINDALE
- MS. SELBY
- HON. MR. SELINGER
- MRS. STEFANSON

Officials Speaking on Record

Officials speaking on the record at the May 7, 2008 meeting:

- Carol Bellringer, Auditor General
- Diane Gray, Deputy Minister of Finance

Officials speaking on the record at the May 14, 2008 meeting:

- Carol Bellringer, Auditor General

Officials speaking on record at the October 8, 2008 meeting:

- Diane Gray, Deputy Minister of Finance

Officials speaking on record at the March 16, 2009 meeting:

- Carol Bellringer, Auditor General
- Hon. Mr. SELINGER

Reports Considered and Passed

Your Committee considered and passed the following reports as presented:

- Auditor General's Report – Audit of the Public Accounts for the year ending March 31, 2007
- Auditor General's Report – Operations of the Office for the year ending March 31, 2006
- Auditor General's Report – Operations of the Office for the year ending March 31, 2007
- Auditor General's Report – Operations of the Office for the year ending March 31, 2008

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Minnedosa (Mrs. Rowat), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Standing Committee on Crown Corporations First Report

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

Madam Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Crown Corporations presents the following as its First Report.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

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

Meetings

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

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

Matters under Consideration

- The Annual Report of the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation for the year ended March 31, 2004
- The Annual Report of the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation for the year ended March 31, 2005
- The Annual Report of the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation for the year ended March 31, 2006
- The Annual Report of the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation for the year ended March 31, 2007
- The Annual Report of the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation for the year ended March 31, 2008

Committee Membership

Committee Membership for the October 6, 2005 meeting:

- Ms. Brick (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mr. Dewar
- Mr. Eichler
- Mr. Faurshou
- Mr. Jha
- Mr. Martindale (Chairperson)
- Mr. Reid
- Mr. Rocan
- Mr. Schellenberg
- Mr. Schuler
- Hon. Mr. Smith

Committee Membership for the November 21, 2007 meeting:

- Mr. Dewar
- Mr. Jha (Vice-Chairperson)
- Ms. Korzeniowski
- Ms. Marcelino
- Mr. Reid (Chairperson)
- Ms. Selby
- Hon. Mr. Selinger
- Mr. Borotsik
- Mr. Eichler
- Mr. Faurshou
- Mr. Graydon

Committee Membership for the March 16, 2009 meeting:

- Ms. Blady
- Ms. Brick
- Mr. Cullen
- Mr. Dewar
- Mr. Graydon
- Hon. Ms. Irvin-Ross
- Ms. Marcelino

- *Mr. Reid*
- *Mrs. Rowat*
- *Hon. Mr. Swan*
- *Mrs. Taillieu*

Your Committee elected Mr. REID as the Chairperson.

Your Committee elected Ms. MARCELINO as the Vice-Chairperson.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reports Considered and Passed

Your Committee considered and passed the following report as presented:

- *The Annual Report of the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation for the year ended March 31, 2004*

Reports Considered but not Passed

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

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

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Wellington (Ms. Marcelino), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

**Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development
First Report**

Ms. Jennifer Howard (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the First Report of the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development.

Madam Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development presents the following—

Mr. Speaker: Dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT presents the following as its First Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on Thursday, February 12, 2009 at 4:30 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matter under Consideration

- ***Bill (No. 228) – The Grandparents' Day Act/Loi sur la Fête des grands-parents***

Committee Membership

- *Ms. BRAUN*
- *Mr. CULLEN*
- *Mr. DEWAR*
- *Mr. FAURSCHOU*
- *Ms. HOWARD*
- *Hon. Ms. IRVIN-ROSS*
- *Mr. JHA*
- *Ms. MARCELINO*
- *Mr. MARTINDALE*
- *Mr. PEDERSEN*
- *Mrs. STEFANSON*

Your Committee elected Ms. HOWARD as the Chairperson.

Your Committee elected Ms. MARCELINO as the Vice-Chairperson.

Bill Considered and Reported

- ***Bill (No. 228) – The Grandparents' Day Act/Loi sur la Fête des grands-parents***

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

Ms. Howard: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Wellington (Ms. Marcelino), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

**Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs
First Report**

Ms. Jennifer Howard (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the First Report of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs.

Madam Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs presents the following as its First Report.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

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

Meetings

Your Committee met on Friday, January 23, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- *The reappointment of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner*

Committee Membership

- *Mr. ALTEMEYER*
- *Ms. BLADY*
- *Hon. Mr. CHOMIAK*
- *Mr. DEWAR*
- *Mrs. DRIEDGER*
- *Mr. GOERTZEN*
- *Mr. GRAYDON*
- *Mr. HAWRANIK*
- *Ms. HOWARD*
- *Mr. MARTINDALE*
- *Hon. Ms. MCGIFFORD*

Your Committee elected Ms. HOWARD as the Chairperson.

Your Committee elected Mr. MARTINDALE as the Vice-Chairperson.

Motions

Your Committee agreed unanimously to the following motions:

- *THAT the Committee recommends to the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council that Mr. William Norrie be re-appointed as Conflict of Interest Commissioner for an interim period until a new appointment can be made.*
- *THAT the Committee authorize the Chairperson to ask the Speaker to inform all MLAs in writing of this re-appointment, prior to presentation of the committee report in the House.*

Ms. Howard: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), that the report of the committee be received.

* (13:40)

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Tribute to Soldiers Killed in Afghanistan

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): I have a statement for the House, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to recognize the life of Sapper Sean Greenfield, a Canadian soldier who was tragically killed in the line of duty serving in Afghanistan. Sapper Greenfield was a member of the 24th Field Engineer Squadron from 2nd Combat Engineer Regiment and was serving with the 3rd Battalion, the Royal Canadian Regiment Battle Group, based at CFB Petawawa. He was a proud Manitoban, having grown up in the community of Pinawa, where he excelled at hockey, soccer and honing his musical skills. His loss has been felt deeply by his friends and family in Manitoba and in Ontario.

The men and women of our armed forces put their lives on the line every day to ensure that we can all live in a better, more peaceful and secure world. We are constantly reminded of the precious gift of freedom that we possess here in Canada. As a Manitoban, Sapper Greenfield certainly did not take any of this for granted.

On behalf of all members of this House, I extend my deepest condolences to the family and friends of Sapper Greenfield. We also express our condolences to the families of all Canadian soldiers who have been killed and wounded serving our country since the House last met.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that, following the tributes from other members of the House, we stand for a moment to mark the life of Sapper Sean Greenfield.

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Premier for his statement and rise to join with the Premier and other members of this House in mourning the passing of the 19 Canadian soldiers who have died in Afghanistan since the House last sat in December. Those 19 soldiers include Sapper Sean Greenfield from Pinawa, Manitoba, and we extend our condolences to his family and friends.

In addition to Sapper Greenfield, as Canadians we have lost 18 others, including: Corporal Mark Robert McLaren; Private Demetrios Deplaros; Warrant Officer Robert Wilson; Corporal Thomas James Hamilton; Private John Michael Roy Curwin; Private Justin Peter Jones; Private Michael Freeman; Warrant Officer Gaetan Roberge; Sergeant Gregory John Kruse; Trooper Brian Richard Good; Warrant Officer Dennis Raymond Brown; Corporal Dany Fortin; Corporal Kenneth O'Quinn; Trooper Marc Diab; Master Corporal Scott Vernelli; Corporal Tyler Crooks; Trooper Jack Bouthillier and Trooper Corey Joseph Hayes.

Mr. Speaker, as members of the House, we honour the memory of these fallen soldiers, commemorate their dedicated service to and great sacrifices for the citizens of our province and our country. Thank you.

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

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

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I join the other members of this Legislature in extending condolences to all those who have died in Afghanistan. It is now somewhere over a hundred soldiers, including the 19 soldiers since we last met. I think that it is important that we are here today to extend our condolences to the family and the friends, including those of Sapper Sean Greenfield.

It has been a period of our involvement in Afghanistan which has been hard on many Canadian families and certainly it is important for us not only to recognize the families but to recognize the soldiers and their contributions to the efforts that Canada is making to improve the situation in Afghanistan and try to achieve peace there. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is there agreement for a moment of silence? *[Agreed]*

Please rise for a moment of silence.

A moment of silence was observed.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Brian Sinclair Death Apology Request

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Today is the first time the House has sat since the disclosures around the final tragic hours in the life of Brian Sinclair who was left to wait 34 hours in the emergency room before tragically passing away at Health Sciences Centre.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier, his Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) and some of their officials repeated over and over again statements that later turned out to be false with respect to the circumstances leading up to Mr. Sinclair's death.

I want to ask the Premier if he wants to take the opportunity today to apologize for those statements and to set the record straight out of respect for Mr. Sinclair and his family.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, out of respect for Mr. Sinclair, I would repeat what I said last September, that this was a tragic incident that took place in our health-care system.

It was a preventable death. We accept responsibility, and for that, Mr. Speaker, we certainly are responsible to Mr. Sinclair and his family.

The facts are very straightforward in terms of what we said in the House, and, Mr. Speaker, our concerns, as they were in September, remain today, that this is a death that should not have taken place in the health-care system. That's what I'd like to reiterate to the people of Manitoba again today.

Mr. McFadyen: Well, Mr. Speaker, if he had left the comments at that in the immediate aftermath of the death, then it would be a very different story. We might be able to accept today's comment without further question.

But the reality, Mr. Speaker, is that he and his minister went out on a campaign to create the impression that Mr. Sinclair didn't ask for help when he went to the emergency room. They said he didn't approach the triage desk. They said that the emergency room wasn't visible from the triage desk.

They said that Mr. Sinclair wasn't somebody known to be in need of help.

We know it was all untrue now, Mr. Speaker. Why not just apologize for those falsehoods, set the record straight, in order to properly pay tribute to Mr. Sinclair and the tragic circumstances surrounding his preventable death.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, we took responsibility in September, 13 times in *Hansard*—at least I did—and the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) did it beyond that.

Mr. Speaker, on 10 occasions I said that this was a preventable death.

The member opposite is trying to frame different statements in such a way to mislead what happened in *Hansard*. He'll take a word here and a word there, Mr. Speaker.

As I said, 13 times I stated it was a preventable death. The Minister of Health did the same thing.

We also stated—and I also stated—that the death was preventable. I said it was a tragedy 30 times in the House in September, and it was. I repeat it today, and, Mr. Speaker, we have said, even within days of this incident taking place, it was a preventable death.

I recall raising questions about baby death operations that took place in the Children's Hospital, and six years later we still haven't had a member responsible for that issue take responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, obviously we feel that it was a tragedy, that it was preventable, and we've said so over and over and over again, and I'm perfectly prepared to say it again in the House.

I'm prepared to say it on the next question in the House. I'm prepared to say it in the further questions in the House and will continue to do so, Mr. Speaker.

*(13:50)

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, we all agree that it was a tragedy. There's no dispute over that point—but these hollow words coming from the Premier with no action to actually address what happened and no apparent concern for the fact that he and his minister deliberately went on a campaign to create the impression in the media, in this House, and through the public of Manitoba that Mr. Sinclair didn't do enough to let the people at the Health Sciences Centre know he needed help.

We know he was crying for help. He went to the triage desk. Security guards went on his behalf. They didn't disclose those facts until it came out through Dr. Balachandra.

Will he apologize for creating the impression that Mr. Sinclair didn't do enough when, in fact, Mr. Speaker, he was asking for help?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite wants to apply for the counsel for the judicial inquest, he's quite entitled to do so, but the member opposite raises a question about what action took place following the tragedy and the death and the preventable situation at the Health Sciences Centre.

Mr. Speaker, we didn't wait four, five years. We took action right away. The Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) took action through the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority.

I would point out that the first point of entry for Mr. Sinclair was at the Health Action Centre. Mr. Sinclair saw a doctor and a nurse. That referral did not go in a formal way to the Health Sciences Centre emergency room staff. We changed that protocol.

The member says no changes were made. He's wrong. Changes were made. In fact, Dr. Balachandra said that these are good steps forward when he was commenting to the media on September 24, 2008.

So to say that no action was taken is wrong, Mr. Speaker. Dr. Balachandra confirms action was taken, and it took place at the first point of entry of Mr. Sinclair where things went tragically wrong.

Brian Sinclair Death Minister's Response

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, this Minister of Health has ducked her responsibility and her accountability every step of the way as it relates to Brian Sinclair. First, she misled the public about what happened to Brian Sinclair, saying that he never presented to triage. Then, a month after his death, when she received the administrative report, the report said that he did present to triage, but the minister never corrected her record.

Can I ask the Minister of Health: Why, at that time, did she not correct the record?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): I can say to the member opposite and to all members of this House that we know that when the tragedy involving Mr. Brian Sinclair occurred, the facts are

as follows: a critical incident review was started immediately, started immediately upon the discovery of the tragedy of Mr. Sinclair, before the media reported the story, before members opposite endeavoured to politicize it.

We know that immediately after, within three days, an independent, judicial inquest was called, and we welcome that judicial inquest for all of the facts of the case to come out. We know within four days, the RHAs were directed to change protocols. That's happened, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health doesn't seem to understand that under ministerial responsibility she should have corrected the record. Instead, she sat on the truth for five months and continued to make and allow misleading statements to be made about Brian Sinclair's death. It became an ER cover-up.

So I'd like to ask the Minister of Health: Can she tell us why she sat on the truth for five months?

Ms. Oswald: Mr. Speaker, I'll say again clearly for the House, when the tragedy occurred, a critical incident review was taking place immediately—incidentally, a review that took place as a result of legislation that we put in place that members opposite supported—that within four days, we directed the regional health authorities to change their system to identify any patients that might be waiting in an emergency room waiting area. Within five days, we established a new protocol to ensure that phone calls went from community clinics to emergency rooms. Within eight days, additional staff was added to HSC.

We've said from the beginning that we want all the facts in this case to come out. That's why we support the independent judicial inquest that's going to go forward. We want all the facts to come out and we've said so from the beginning, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, the Chief Medical Examiner got so fed up and frustrated with the government's spin and misleading statements that he did something unprecedented: He put out a news release so that the truth would be put out there.

The Minister of Health was then caught. Did she demonstrate ministerial accountability? No, she did not. She went into hiding instead and refused to speak to the media. So can this minister tell us: Why did she go into hiding and refuse to speak with the media about this very important issue?

Ms. Oswald: Mr. Speaker, as the Premier (Mr. Doer) noted earlier today, immediately on this side of the House we took responsibility for the tragedy that happened to Mr. Sinclair. I think a decade has passed since the tragedies of the pediatric cardiac deaths. We've never heard one member opposite take responsibility for that.

Further, Mr. Speaker, we took action to ensure that this tragedy would not happen again. Do you know what a responsible Minister of Health would not do? He wouldn't blame the front-line workers. He wouldn't say in *The Globe and Mail* that the front-line workers could have had flashing lights on their head and they wouldn't have done anything.

I'm sure a responsible Minister of Health would never say that about nurses, about doctors, about health-care aides, certainly not this one.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Charleswood, on a new question?

Mrs. Driedger: On a new question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Charleswood, with a new question.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, this Minister of Health has ducked her responsibility and ministerial accountability every step of the way; instead now we have an ER cover-up.

She misled the public at the beginning. When she found out the truth months later, she failed to correct the record and continued to blame the patient for his own death. She sat on the truth for five months. She went AWOL instead of facing the media with some very, very significant questions that needed to be answered.

So we would like to ask this Minister of Health: Can she please explain her irresponsible behaviour as a Minister of Health?

Ms. Oswald: I'll tell the member opposite again what a responsible Minister of Health does. A responsible Minister of Health ensures that there are critical incident review systems in place, check. A responsible Minister of Health ensures that immediately an investigation goes into place to find out what can be changed, like, for example, changing the process in the ER waiting room to identify all

people, like to change the protocol to ensure that phone calls are made from community clinics.

A responsible Minister of Health does not blame front-line workers like all the members opposite.

Mrs. Driedger: Instead, Mr. Speaker, she blamed the patient.

Mr. Speaker, this Minister of Health, when she stood up and made comments about her health-care system being stellar, it was only hours after she had heard that Brian Sinclair died in an ER waiting room, and that's the minister that stood up and said she had a stellar health-care system.

Art Schafer, an ethics professor at the University of Manitoba, said and I quote: The failure of the victim to approach the triage desk was the centrepiece of the story they fed to the public. If they knew it was false at the time they perpetrated it or if they discovered the truth and subsequently didn't correct the record, they are guilty of failure of openness, failure of honesty.

This minister is guilty of those accusations and we would like to ask her to explain: Why has spin become more important to her than patients?

Ms. Oswald: Mr. Speaker, the most important thing to me, and I believe for every member in this House, is to find out what went so tragically wrong on the day that Mr. Sinclair died. That is the most important thing.

It was a tragedy. It was preventable. We are going to welcome Chief Judge Wyant's inquest so that all of the information can come out, every bit of information which we have said we wanted from the beginning.

You know, the member opposite talks about quotes from the paper. A doctor from the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority recently referred to the Tory Health critic as either having a profound ignorance of health care delivery or a disturbing proclivity for fearmongering. Their quotes alarm, Mr. Speaker.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Let's have some order. The honourable Member for Charleswood has the floor.

* (14:00)

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, we're speaking about a situation where a patient died under this government's watch after waiting 34 hours in an ER

without care. So what the minister stands up here and says are absolutely hollow words. Her actions throughout this whole process have spoken louder than anything she has said, and we've got an ER cover-up.

What did we get from this minister? We've got a lot of spin, but we've got zero leadership, zero accountability and zero responsibility. So can she tell us why she deserves to be in this high position? Does she feel she's entitled to be in this position of trust by the public when she is failing the public every step of the way as it relates to the death of this man?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I would contrast the accountability and responsibility that took place with this minister with this tragedy over the tragedy that took place in the 1990s where nobody accepted responsibility; nobody said it was a preventable death; nobody would answer a question. In fact, it took five years later for the 12 families to get an apology from the member from Seven Oaks.

Now, yes, a tragedy took place. Did the minister say no tragedy took place? No, she said a tragedy took place. Did the minister deny that it was a preventable death right away with preliminary information? No, she said it was a preventable death. Was action taken to make sure that this did not happen again? Yes. Did the Chief Medical Examiner say that the action taken were the right steps forward? Yes. I am proud of the Minister of Health.

Brian Sinclair Death Minister's Response

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, four months after the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) and the Premier received the facts from their officials about what happened with Mr. Sinclair, and they learned that he had been vomiting in the emergency room, that security guards had been looking for help, that he approached triage, four months later, the Minister of Health told *The Globe and Mail* that, in her view, the outcome of the inquest was going to be that they were going to conclude that Mr. Sinclair died as a result of kindness. This is what the Minister of Health told *The Globe and Mail*.

Does the Premier share his minister's view that Mr. Sinclair died as a result of kindness or does he live here on planet Earth with the rest of us?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): The advantage of *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker, is that there is a record of what we said with preliminary information a couple

of days after the tragedy became public. We made a number of statements. There is a choice at that point to just say, we'll wait for the judicial inquest until we comment, as was the case in the 1990s, or there is a fundamental choice to accept responsibility in terms of the general situation and accept responsibility for a preventable death. We choose to accept responsibility. The minister chooses to accept responsibility.

Within three days of the tragedy, we've all said that this was a preventable death at the Health Sciences Centre. We didn't say you had to wait for an inquest, Mr. Speaker. Now we are more than willing and accountable to take the comments we said within a day of the tragedy taking place, within two days of the tragedy taking place, and compare the results and findings for the judicial inquest. We want to take all the facts. There will be cross-examination. There'll be evidence presented, and the judge will make a decision and a determination. At that point, we are more than willing to take what we said and take what members opposite said and look at what we said in a preliminary way.

If the members opposite want to join up with a judicial inquest, if they want to apply for jobs, if he wants to apply for a job to be the general counsel of the judicial inquest, he's quite welcome to do it. Go ahead, apply for the job. The judge may or may not hire you, I don't know. But, Mr. Speaker, I do know that a judge will make the decision and we will be judged by a judge, not by members opposite.

Health-Care Services Accountability

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): The problem with that rant, Mr. Speaker, is that his minister has already concluded that Mr. Sinclair died from kindness. She's already prejudged the outcome of the inquest. I don't know how anybody in their right mind could reach that conclusion based on what we know about the tragic final hours of Mr. Sinclair's life.

In addition to that tragedy, Mr. Speaker, we have heard from literally hundreds of Manitobans who have had terrible experiences in emergency rooms across the province, those that remain open. We've heard tales of highway medicine, and we found out, around the same time that the facts came out about Brian Sinclair, that the Department of Health has a policy of allowing brown envelopes in the context of its tendering. The Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald)

endorsed that policy. She said Mr. Sinclair died from kindness, brown envelopes are allowed in the tendering process, and that she's doing a stellar job days after learning about Mr. Sinclair's death.

How are they going to clean up the rot at the top of the health-care system when they don't even appear to be in touch with the reality of what's going on on the ground?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Well, Mr. Speaker, we heard over and over again, in the last few weeks, about our record on health and the members opposite's record on health, and that's why it's always good to have this accountability.

Mr. Speaker, I would also point out that the article gives the impression that there's cash in envelopes. I know members opposite are sensitive to that, given the allegations against—well, not allegations—with the confirmations of the former Conservative Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney.

I understand, Mr. Speaker—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

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

Mr. Doer: I have been advised—and the facts may come out differently with the Auditor General—but I have been advised that there was no, quote, cash in envelopes. I am aware in other tender processes, we always hear that the bids in tender processes are sealed and opened at the same time to ensure, whether it's in the Department of Highways or whether it's bridge construction or whether it's applying for capital works in health care, you know, a number of times I've been involved where envelopes are sealed and opened at the same time so there can't be any allegation that bids are submitted and then a lower bid is submitted and then there's a question of whether somebody had inside information.

So a sealed-bid proposal is something that I know is often used by many public entities to ensure the integrity of the tendering process. We'll wait for the Auditor General again. The member opposite, I don't know whether he's condemned the Auditor General. I know most other officers of the Legislature he's condemned, but, oh, yes, I guess he has done that, too.

But we'll wait for the Auditor General to report, Mr. Speaker.

Health Department

Call for Replacement of Minister of Health

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that it was the CFO of the health authority who said that we get cash in brown envelopes; we open the brown envelopes after the bids. Sometimes there's cash; sometimes there's nothing at all. Oh, we get together and find out what the prize in the brown envelope is after the bid. That was the CFO of the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority that said that on the record and it's endorsed by his Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald).

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we have highway medicine around the province. We have a Minister of Health who misleads the public about the worst ER tragedy in our history, and we have a Minister of Health who has prejudged the Brian Sinclair inquest by already concluding that he died as a result of kindness.

Mr. Speaker, before any other Manitobans are killed by the kindness of the NDP, will he replace his Minister of Health with somebody who Manitobans can have faith in?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the answer to the question is no. Furthermore, he's wrong on all the facts in all his allegations. He's always wrong. He frames one word here and one word there and one word over there.

Mr. Speaker, let's deal with the facts. The member opposite said in this House, in 2006, that the rainy day fund in Manitoba would be fully drained in three years. Well, tonight, if the rainy day fund isn't drained, will he resign?

*(14:10)

Flooding Disaster Assistance

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): The people of the Red River Valley are preparing for the worst but yet hoping for the best as this year's high water event threatens to wash over the land.

Can the Minister responsible for emergency services, or Emergency Measures, tell us what assistance will be given to Riverside, in my constituency, who may need to evacuate and what services are on standby in case of local fire or medical emergencies in valley communities who may be isolated due to road closures?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): I, first of all, want to indicate that we have been briefing the public. I want to offer to all members of the House the same briefing that we had as part of the security subcommittee with both the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) and the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

I can indicate that there are two communities that under current projections could be dealing with a complete closure of the ring dikes. One is the community that the member mentioned. The second is Roseau River. There are, of course, 16 other communities currently with the current projections, and, of course, that's all subject to the weather. We watch anxiously with the developments that we've seen both in terms of the weather the last 24 hours and further south to us.

But the main reason for the warning, that there could be a potential closure in the two communities, is, indeed, because of the emergency services issues. Even without houses being impacted, we want to make sure that fire service and ambulance service can be provided—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Taillieu: Since the '97 high water event the valley communities have mitigated water damages considerably. I would like to commend the mayors and reeves, the local officials and individual property owners who have worked very hard to protect against this event and against future events.

However, when roads and ring dikes are closed, there is a significant economic hardship for some of the local communities. I'd like to ask the minister: What plans are in place to help local businesses recover from economic hardships as a result of this year's event and future events, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Ashton: I hope the member would also acknowledge that the \$130-million investment in the Red River Valley included the federal government and a very significant investment by the provincial government. That, combined with the investment in the expanded floodway, Mr. Speaker, the two alone are \$790 million I think of the best invested money ever in Manitoba history, a wise move by all involved.

I want to indicate that we are projecting levels this year on the Red River that at a minimum will be at 2006 levels. Under most scenarios, we're looking at least at 1979 and there's a one-in-10 chance of

1997. Disaster Financial Assistance will be triggered—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Taillieu: You know, every year there is a spring event; it just varies in magnitude. It's not only important to prepare before the event but also to plan for the aftermath, that being reopening the roads as quickly as possible and providing for assistance with the clean-up, Mr. Speaker.

Can the minister say what plans are in place to help farmers and landowners recover once the water recedes?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, we have been planning for this for quite some time. I would stress, by the way, that while, indeed, we do face flooding every spring, one of the key differences because of that preparation is in 2006, for example, the fifth worst flood of the century, there was only one home evacuated and that was a voluntary evacuation.

Now, not to say that there wasn't damage. There was \$12-million worth of damage, Mr. Speaker, which was covered through Disaster Financial Assistance, but we have been planning under any and all circumstances, No. 1, to enhance in whatever way we can in terms of flood protection. That's why I mentioned the floodway which, in fact, will not really kick in until you have much higher water levels than we're anticipating this spring.

But I can say, Mr. Speaker, that we also are anticipating on the recovery side, we had a forum in Morris just recently, in Boissevain as well. We're working with Manitobans. We're trying our darndest to be—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Flooding Emergency Vehicles

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, the residents of the Emerson constituency have been very busy with flood preparations. Their efforts are to be commended.

The Rural Municipality of Franklin has already been declared a state of emergency due to the washout of roads, property flooding and blocked culverts. Access to fire and ambulance services during the flood is to be a major concern, an area of concern for my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, could the minister responsible please advise what steps the provincial government

will be taking to ensure that emergency vehicles like ambulance and fire trucks can be maintained during the flooding?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): I want to stress again, in fact, one of the reasons that both Water Stewardship and EMO earlier this week gave advance notice of the potential for two of the ring dikes to be closed, both in terms of Riverview and Roseau River, was, indeed, that that would trigger a situation in which it would not necessarily be possible to provide the degree of certainty of emergency services that is required.

We have been working with the municipalities, with the RHAs, with all of the stakeholders, Mr. Speaker. This will be a very significant event, and I can tell you that each and every municipality in this province has an emergency plan, something that, again, is part of legislation brought in, actually, by this government a few years ago.

We're working very closely with all of the stakeholders to minimize the disruption and deal with the impacts of a very significant flood.

Overland Flooding Reduction Strategy

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, the overland flooding can lead to road closures and it can also pose a threat to the private property. Manitobans want assurances that the provincial government is taking all steps possible to reduce the risk of flooding on provincially maintained roads and highways.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation provide assurances that the government has enough equipment around the province to ensure that municipal drains are being cleared in a timely fashion to reduce the risk of this overland flooding?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): I thank the member for the question. Our government is very, very concerned about overland flooding currently occurring in southern Manitoba, and our crews are working beyond the call of duty, if I could put it that way, because they're working many, many hours doing what they can to steam out frozen culverts.

As we know, we received a lot of precipitation in the fall, and the culverts are blocked solidly through many of the culverts. It's taking a great deal of effort to unthaw those culverts. Also, the

freeze-thaw that we've been going on through this particular winter has been extremely difficult on culverts and dealing with overland flooding.

But, Mr. Speaker, the department is working overtime and doing the best they can in co-ordination with many, many municipalities to ensure that overland flooding and the cause of overland flooding is going to be taken care of as best as possible.

Flooding Evacuation Process

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): It appears that the communities like the Roseau River First Nation in my constituency will be evacuated during this flood. Depending on the severity of the flood, other residents along the Red River may well need to be evacuated. Evacuations are a stressful time for individuals and communities.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister responsible outline the steps that will be taken when it becomes necessary to evacuate these communities and the individual residences?

Mr. Ashton: Well, Mr. Speaker, I, first of all, want to remind the member that the current projections—and, again, this is all subject to the weather and a number of other factors, that we're all aware of what's happening south of the border, particularly in North Dakota, and certainly our thoughts are particularly with the city of Fargo-Moorhead, because they're dealing with a very difficult situation.

I want to indicate that we have projected that there is the likelihood that that will happen, so that is why, well in advance of the crest, we have provided that as public information. We're certainly also providing that directly, both to Riverview and to Roseau River, and we will take every step to minimize the disruption.

I also will indicate we fully anticipate being there for Disaster Financial Assistance, as we have been with each and every major flood situation in Manitoba over the last decade.

* (14:20)

Brian Sinclair Death Minister's Response

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, the Premier has indicated that he has accepted responsibility for the death of Mr. Sinclair, and we in this House actually all know that the Premier,

because he's done such a very poor job of running health care in this province, is the one responsible.

But, Mr. Speaker, the fact is that it was critical to understand quickly what went wrong and to correct it, and, yet, we waited many months for Dr. Balachandra to carefully review the tapes from the Health Sciences Centre emergency room before the basic details of what happened were known.

I ask: Why did the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) so badly fail Manitobans in not acknowledging the basic facts of what happened until Dr. Balachandra uncovered the truth?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Well, Mr. Speaker, the basic facts, on a preliminary basis, were stated in this House, that it was a preventable death. We took responsibility. I would point out that the first point of entry of Mr. Sinclair to the health-care system was not at the Health Sciences Centre; it was at the Health Action Centre where Mr. Sinclair was seen by a doctor and a nurse and the information was not formally transferred by protocol to the Health Sciences Centre.

We took and changed that protocol and Dr. Balachandra has commented that it was a positive step forward.

Mr. Gerrard: Yet, when we look back at the painful last 34 hours of Mr. Brian Sinclair, desperately sick and vomiting in the Health Sciences Centre emergency room as recorded on that video, we see that the Premier and the Minister of Health are continuing to say, well, at some point in the future we're going to find out what happened because the inquest is coming. Well, you know, that's months and months away yet, and while we wait months and months yet for some of these answers, the Premier and the Minister of Health continue to stonewall and to block the road to a better understanding and to improve functioning of the emergency room.

I ask: Why do the Premier and the Minister of Health continue to play cover-up and hide?

Mr. Doer: The member opposite uses the word "cover-up." I don't think anybody else has had their convention throw all the media out. He has no business lecturing this House, Mr. Speaker.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would like to remind members that when the Speaker is standing that all members should be seated and that the Speaker should be heard in silence. I've been standing and

I've been saying order and the members are ignoring the instructions of the Chair. There is a penalty for that. So I'd be very, very careful in the future.

Mr. Gerrard: We are all too aware of those painful last 34 hours of Mr. Brian Sinclair, desperately sick and vomiting, recorded on video. As we all know, he came to the emergency room; he waited those 34 painful and desperate hours for the help which never came, and we are still waiting for answers.

I ask the Premier: Is he going to keep his Minister of Health in her present position until we get some of these answers or is he going to shuffle the Minister of Health in order to further cover up the situation and keep her from answering questions?

Mr. Doer: The information has been fully available to the public through our answers in a preliminary way in September. Mr. Speaker, the members opposite forget to mention or ignore or omit to mention that the first point of entry was at the Health Action Centre. We've admitted that. We've admitted it broke down at the Health Sciences Centre. We said it was a preventable death. We said it was a tragedy. We took responsibility. All of the material was sent to the Chief Medical Examiner. It wasn't covered up. The inquest was requested and it will take place with a judge, and we'll be accountable for the judge's findings.

We hope that the action that the minister took last fall initially is deemed by the judge to be the proper steps. I'm sure there'll be other action that will be taken after cross-examination takes place. But what happened was a tragedy, and we've said that.

What happened at the Health Sciences Centre should not have happened. We've apologized for that. Why it happened and whether the procedures we've put in place could prevent that in the future, we'll await the judicial inquiry. We have taken preliminary steps. The Chief Medical Examiner said those are positive steps forward.

Rural Personal Care Homes Lack of Spaces

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, why is the Minister of Health tearing families apart by forcing them to move away from their loved ones in their communities where they have lived all their lives? I want to table a letter that has been signed by the mayor of Winkler, Mayor Harder; mayor of Morden, Mayor Wilson; and the reeve, Mr. Petkau.

Does the NDP have a new slogan now? It's called musical beds for personal care homes.

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): I thank the member for the question. Certainly, when it comes to caring for our loved ones and for our elders, it's not something that we on this side of the House would joke about, Mr. Speaker. It's a very serious issue.

We know that the Boundary Trails hospital is experiencing pressures with people residing in beds at this time, and they are working on some contingency planning. They're working by meeting with municipalities, meeting with mayors, meeting, most importantly, with families, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that the best possible plan for families can happen as we go forward.

There is a situation with crowding, Mr. Speaker, and we're working with the regional health authority through that situation.

Mr. Dyck: The elderly have worked their entire lives to build our province. Now the NDP are telling them their services are no longer required and they're shipping them far away from home, family and friends. Why? The minister has known for years that Tabor needs a new personal care home. This is not a new revelation.

Ms. Oswald: The member opposite is, of course, aware that I've met with members of the community specifically concerning the Tabor personal care home.

We concur that we want to move forward and provide as many opportunities as we can for seniors to be residing in the appropriate place at the appropriate time. We know in some situations this means an increase of personal care home beds, and we know in other situations Mr. Speaker, this means supports for seniors in group living or the addition of supportive housing, and we've been working towards that.

We know that in the member opposite's community, we are experiencing a pressure at this time, and the regional health authority is working with families and community leaders to address that.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Order. Before moving on, I'd just like to draw the attention of all honourable members to

the loge to my right where we have with us Myrna Phillips, who was the former Member for Wolseley.

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

House Business

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on House business or a point of order?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): No, House business.

Mr. Speaker: House business.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could ask leave of the House to have today's allotment for members' statements to be applied to tomorrow's members' statements and then have the schedule resume as normal on Friday.

Mr. Speaker: Is there agreement of the House for today's allotment of members' statements to be done tomorrow instead of today? So you're looking at waiving members' statements today? Is that the gist of it?

Mr. Chomiak: Correct.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. So, today, it's been agreed that there will be no members' statements. Today's rotation will be implemented tomorrow. Is there agreement? *[Agreed]*

So we would normally be in members' statements, but we've agreed not to, so now we'll move to grievances. Are there any grievances? No grievances. Okay, we will now move to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): I wonder if we might take a short perhaps five-minute recess to allow preparations to be made for the reading and introduction of the budget.

Mr. Speaker: Do we have leave to take a five-minute recess? *[Agreed]*

And, also, I would like to remind our guests in the gallery that the ones that only had a pass for question period, question period is now over. The ones that are in the gallery should have budget passes, not the regular question period passes. Just a reminder.

The House recessed at 2:30 p.m.

The House resumed at 2:38 p.m.

BUDGET ADDRESS

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chomiak), that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Motion presented.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present the 2009 Manitoba budget, a balanced budget, and our tenth consecutive balanced budget. Our government is the first in 50 years to bring in a full decade of balanced budgets.

Le Manitoba a eu l'économie provinciale la plus stable au cours de la dernière décennie.

Translation

Manitoba has had the most stable provincial economy over the last decade.

English

Investment has increased in Manitoba companies and our labour force has expanded, with more than 10,000 jobs added to Manitoba's economy in 2008.

* (14:40)

Mr. Speaker, we continue to monitor precipitation levels and flood forecasts closely, and we are already working with municipalities to prepare for spring flooding.

Record investments have been made in floodproofing efforts around the province, with more than \$850 million spent since 1999.

Because of these investments, we are confident we will be able to cope with the forecasted flood levels, reducing the effects and minimizing damage to communities, property and infrastructure.

We are living through a time of extraordinary change on a global scale. Since last fall, the world's financial circumstances have changed dramatically. The sound financial management practised by Manitobans and Manitoba businesses puts our province in a better position than many to face the current economic upheaval.

Last year, Manitoba's economy continued to grow steadily, outperforming the country as a whole for the third consecutive year.

The dividend of this steady financial management is the ability to stimulate our economy today and build for the future. Manitoba will not be immune to a global recession, but we are determined to take advantage of our economic strengths to sustain our quality of life.

Mr. Speaker, we have moved quickly to implement an economic stimulus plan by accelerating infrastructure projects and investing in education, training and innovation. Going forward, we will continue to implement this plan by pursuing opportunities for economic growth, while maintaining affordability for Manitobans.

We must be realistic about the challenges that lie ahead. Experts predict the economy will continue to be volatile over the next 12 to 24 months. To deal with this, we have developed a plan to create and maintain jobs and critical services. We have made some difficult choices but have been balanced in those decisions.

We are dedicating investments to create jobs in the near term and building the foundation for prosperity in the future.

This budget offers a balanced plan that:

- stimulates the economy and improves access to credit for businesses;
- makes key investments for Manitobans and their families for the services they need; and
- identifies practical strategies to reduce costs and modernize government.

More than one third of government departments will hold the line or see slight decreases. But we are not standing still. We are continuing to modernize government and build innovative partnerships to improve services for Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba is well positioned to take advantage of our fundamental strengths: our diversity, our agility and our creativity.

Le présent budget aidera le Manitoba à surmonter la crise économique actuelle et nous préparera pour un avenir plus prospère.

Translation

This budget will help our province weather the current economic storm and prepare us for a more prosperous future.

English

Infrastructure Investments

Manitobans have told us we need to invest in infrastructure projects to create jobs and stimulate our economy. We are acting on this sound advice. We have already made record investments in social housing, schools, highways, roads, health care, water and sewer systems.

Budget '09 builds on this approach with further investments in priority areas. It increases capital investment to \$1.6 billion, a \$625-million increase that will create and maintain about 10,000 person-years of employment.

We support the strategic investments recently announced by the federal government, providing significant funding for infrastructure projects, with a particular focus on much-needed investments in social housing. We are matching the federal social and affordable housing funding to further our work in this area.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce the Province's largest-ever investment in social housing. We will spend \$387 million on social and affordable housing, more than double the amount in budget '99-2000.

We know that low-income Manitobans, especially women, struggle to find affordable housing. Our investments include more than \$160 million in capital funding for the rejuvenation of existing facilities, including Lord Selkirk Park and Gilbert Park in Winnipeg and the Brandon Tenant Park. Budget '09 also provides funding for a range of housing options for individuals with mental health issues at risk of homelessness. We also continue to work with the Manitoba Métis Federation on housing options and opportunities.

Our schools must grow to meet the needs of our expanding communities. Since '99, the provincial government has provided more than \$483 million in capital funding for public schools. Budget '09 includes funding for a significant new multimillion, four-year school capital program which will include the construction of new schools as well as renovation to existing facilities.

At post-secondary institutions, we have provided more than \$565 million in new capital and maintenance projects in the last decade. This work will continue with additional investments for:

- projects at the University College of the North at The Pas, Thompson and other regional centres;
- projects at Brandon University and the Len Evans Centre for Trades and Technology at Assiniboine Community College in Brandon;
- trades facilities at Red River College;
- the University of Winnipeg's science complex and the Richardson College for the Environment; and
- Project Domino and maintenance projects at the University of Manitoba.

Our roads and highways link our families and communities, supporting business and connecting us to the continent. We have introduced major investments into our highway program, creating a five-year renewal plan to modernize aging infrastructure. We will also use stimulus funding provided through the '09 federal budget to add to this work. During the '09-10 construction season, investment in road-related projects is increasing by approximately 30 percent, to \$535 million. This additional funding will create new jobs while building better roads and supporting our economy.

CentrePort Canada, a private-sector led corporation created to develop and promote Manitoba's inland port, takes advantage of our location in the heart of the continent and relies on the skills and expertise of Manitoba business and labour.

We continue to support CentrePort Canada by building on our modern transportation connections to provide reliable access to markets across the continent. We are also expanding the fuel tax exemption for international cargo flights to include direct and indirect flights to the United States.

This project will provide a competitive advantage and help make Manitoba the location of choice for industries and manufacturers looking for new and innovative ways to get their goods to market.

Nos investissements en installations et en équipement ont contribué à moderniser le système de soins de santé, ce qui nous permet d'offrir des services ultramodernes à la population manitobaine.

Translation

Our investments in facilities and equipment have modernized the health care system, bringing state-of-the-art services to Manitobans.

English

Later this year, the Artiste, a linear accelerator, combined with imaging technology, will begin providing high-precision non-invasive surgery to Manitoba patients, a first in Canada.

In 2004, the Emergency Care Task Force undertook a review of emergency health care in Winnipeg, and recommended plans for service improvements. This included a number of capital investments in emergency care, including expanding and upgrading emergency departments at Seven Oaks General Hospital and Concordia Hospital in Winnipeg.

We are continuing that work. Work has been done to improve emergency care at the Health Sciences Centre, and construction will soon begin on the redevelopment of the emergency department at Victoria General Hospital. We continue to develop the first-in-Canada mental health crisis centre, and a site is expected to be announced shortly.

Our government has invested in building modern health-care facilities throughout the province. We continue to invest in health capital initiatives. Work will soon begin on several projects, including:

- renovations and upgrades to the Westman Regional Laboratory in Brandon;
- construction of a state-of-the-art cardiac sciences facility at St. Boniface General Hospital;
- additional hemodialysis investments in Russell, Gimli and Winnipeg; and
- a new, 80-bed Aboriginal personal care home in Winnipeg.

An important part of healthy communities is ensuring that drinking water and waste-water systems are properly managed to protect water supplies for the future and encourage community development. With federal and municipal government support, investments in Manitoba water protection will total over \$1 billion in the coming years. In budget '09, our provincial contribution of \$46 million will be augmented with additional funding from other governments to support work in

urban, rural and Aboriginal and Northern Affairs communities.

We are also supporting the development of a water and waste-water technician training program to ensure the long-term availability of qualified operators in Manitoba communities.

Flood damage poses significant risks not only to Manitobans, but also to our provincial economy. The Red River Floodway Expansion Project has substantially increased flood protection for the residents of Winnipeg, East St. Paul and West St. Paul, and the project is on schedule to deliver one-in-700-year flood protection in 2009.

As the floodway project reaches completion, the Manitoba Floodway Authority will partner with east-side communities to build an all-purpose road. Building on the floodway's successful Aboriginal Set-Aside Initiative, the program will ensure local residents have the opportunity to share in the project's economic benefits.

Manitoba's Education Opportunities

When other governments faced economic uncertainty in the past, cuts were made to much-needed services. Admissions to physician and nursing schools were reduced, college and university enrolments fell, funding for innovation and training slowed and tuition costs rose dramatically.

Our government's plan is to emerge stronger than ever before. We know we must keep investing to strengthen our province and grow our economy in new and knowledgeable ways.

L'éducation et la formation professionnelle sont la pierre angulaire de notre économie.

Translation

Education and training are the cornerstone of our economy.

English

To keep moving forward and building our province's future, we will continue to invest in our greatest resource: the people of Manitoba. This year, we have made significant investments in our public schools, raising operating investments by \$53 million, or 5.25 percent. We have also continued the Tax Incentive Grant to encourage divisions to hold the line on property taxes while focussing on the needs of students and parents.

Our post-secondary institutions provide exciting and vibrant settings for learning. Mr. Speaker, we are increasing base operating grants and strategic program investments, totalling a 6 percent increase for our colleges and universities.

* (14:50)

Over the last decade, we have introduced new measures to train more health-care providers in Manitoba, ensuring a strong health-care sector. To continue our support of Aboriginal medical students, we are doubling the amount for scholarships to ensure funds for both first- and second-year students.

Mr. Speaker, budget '09 will also create new training opportunities for nurses in Manitoba, increasing opportunities at the University of Manitoba, Brandon University and the University College of the North.

We will increase funding to the Bright Futures Fund to encourage disadvantaged students to stay in school and consider a post-secondary education.

Our Tuition Fee Income Tax Rebate continues to offer an incentive for graduates to start their careers in Manitoba, returning 60 percent of eligible tuition fees up to a maximum of \$25,000.

To help support Manitoba students and ensure continued access to affordable education, we are increasing funding to the Manitoba Bursary Fund.

We expect to receive the Levin report on tuition and accessibility in the next ten days. We will continue to consult and work with the public and other stakeholders to ensure continued access, affordability and excellence in education for Manitoba youth and their families.

With support from the federal government, Manitoba will expand skills-training opportunities for individuals, particularly those affected by labour market changes.

Budget '09 will also provide increased funding to develop and expand programs, including literacy, at adult learning centres across the province.

We are further investing in apprenticeship programs to ensure industry has the skilled labour needed to grow companies and create new opportunities for young Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, budget '09 will:

- fund additional apprenticeship training seats;

- establish a new bursary fund for current and prospective apprentices demonstrating financial need; and
- provide a new financial incentive to encourage youth to pursue careers in the skilled trades after graduation from high school.

Budget '09 continues our support of the Northern Essential Skills Training Initiative, which helps unemployed and under-employed people upgrade the skills they need to enter apprenticeship programs and advance their careers.

We are committed to working with our partners—First Nations and Métis leaders, Aboriginal communities, the private sector and our federal and provincial counterparts—to ensure a bright and secure future for Aboriginal youth, while building our work force and growing our economy.

Business and Innovation

The world is Manitoba's markets, and our province's diverse population connects us to the far reaches of the globe. We have one of the faster-growing bioscience sectors in Canada, a strong research sector and innovative companies that continue to develop and market new products.

Research makes innovation possible. It finds new solutions to old problems and leads to technological discoveries. Mr. Speaker, budget '09 builds on our investments in knowledge and provides additional funding for innovation, to support Manitoba Research and Innovation Fund initiatives and develop opportunities for the future. The Research and Development Tax Credit will be made refundable for corporations that work with research institutes in Manitoba on new technologies. At 20 percent, Manitoba has the highest research and development tax credit in the country. This will support successful projects such as the Advanced Manufacturing Initiative, which encourages industry to reduce waste and implement lean manufacturing principles to increase productivity, and better weather difficult financial times.

The Premier's Economic Advisory Council brings together the business and labour communities, along with Aboriginal, academic and community leaders, to advise us on pressing economic issues. Their much-valued advice and leadership on projects

such as CentrePort Canada helps us make the best possible decisions for Manitoba's economy.

The newly formed Manitoba Innovation Council is beginning their work. The council will work to build closer relationships between the business, research and investment communities, and lead in the development of a stronger culture of innovation in Manitoba.

Les entreprises peuvent réaliser des économies en cherchant à optimiser l'utilisation de leurs ressources.

Translation

Businesses can save by looking at ways to use resources more efficiently.

English

Green Manitoba and Manitoba Hydro will introduce a new Power Smart Shops program to help small businesses save energy and dollars through energy efficiency upgrades.

The Business Start Program offers loan guarantees to help entrepreneurs establish new businesses and create jobs. To create more opportunities, we increased the maximum loan guarantee from \$20,000 to \$30,000.

We are expanding the use of tax increment financing to support revitalization and renewal initiatives focussed on projects that will result in significant economic development and community revitalization.

The Manitoba Industrial Opportunities Program provides loans for businesses wishing to create or maintain jobs by expanding or upgrading their Manitoba operations. New Flyer Industries is just one example of a company that has used this program to build their company and achieve great success. Mr. Speaker, we are tripling the value of loans available through this program to ensure companies have access to the credit they need to support their businesses.

We are also making a tangible investment to protect Manitoba workers. Budget '09 provides funding to implement Manitoba's first-in-the-country legislation, which improves protection for foreign workers wanting to live and work in Manitoba.

We are increasing resources to address workplace safety and health issues, ensuring Manitoba workers remain safe on the job.

Mr. Speaker, we are introducing reduced taxation rates for mining to stimulate investment in this sector. Effective this July 1, rates will fall from 18 percent to 10 percent, 15 percent and 17 percent, depending on taxable income. We are increasing support for additional exploration by doubling the available tax credit from 10 percent to 20 percent, effective April 1, 2009, and then rising to 30 percent, effective April 1, 2010. We are also extending the Manitoba Mineral Exploration Tax Credit for three more years.

Manitoba's Aboriginal Procurement Initiative, the first comprehensive provincial program of its kind in Canada, has resulted in a 28 percent increase in Aboriginal businesses providing goods and services.

None of this work would be possible without strong links to Manitoba's business and labour communities. We will continue to consult with them to ensure Manitoba's economy remains strong and competitive.

Balanced Fiscal Framework

Mr. Speaker, budget '09 is balanced, with a projected net income of \$48 million and includes 1.8 percent growth in summary expenditures. Our summary budget includes core government departments, all Crown corporations, other reporting entities and our pension obligations.

Manitobans' personal disposable income per capita, after accounting for inflation, has increased by 6.7 percent over the last two years. In 2009, Manitoba is expected to outperform Canada in real income growth for the third consecutive year.

The net debt-to-GDP ratio has been reduced by more than 25 percent since '99. This year, given the extent of our economic stimulus investments, we expect it will increase but will still remain more than 25 percent lower than in 1999.

Manitoba's debt-servicing cost has been cut by 55 percent, from 13.2 cents of every dollar of revenue in '99-2000 to 6 cents on the dollar in '09-2010.

We have seen similar improvements in our Crown corporations. For example, Manitoba Hydro's

debt-to-equity ratio is projected to be 75:25 in the coming year, compared to 86:14 in 1997-98.

Depuis notre arrivée au pouvoir, nous avons mis en place des mesures précises afin d'assurer une gestion financière saine.

Translation

Since coming into office, we have implemented specific measures to ensure sound fiscal management.

English

We have continued to pay down debt while ensuring the costs of core government capital investments are amortized and fully reflected in annual budgets.

Starting April 1, 1961, the Province failed to fund the employer's current service contributions for pensions. This led to an accumulated and unfunded liability of almost \$3 billion in '99-2000 and would have reached \$8.5 billion by the year 2035.

In 2002, our government began to pay these costs for new employees. We are proud to confirm that, today, we meet our obligations to sound pension funding. Mr. Speaker, we now pay the employer's current service contributions for all civil servants and teachers across the province.

We will also consult with all members of the Legislative Assembly about directing slated salary increases to their pension liability.

We have a responsibility to make the best possible choices to ensure a sound future for this province. The Fiscal Stabilization account acts as a shock absorber to ensure core government programs are not disrupted when exceptional circumstances arise. And so, we have made the choice to use \$110 million from the Fiscal Stabilization account to ensure we can maintain vital programs and key services. This allows us to continue to support Manitobans, their families and their communities, providing both stability and new opportunities while we face economic challenges.

We remain committed to providing vital services while paying down our debt. However, we must do so in a responsible way by reflecting the current economic environment, slowing down some of our commitments and only implementing initiatives that are sustainable within a balanced budget framework.

* (15:00)

Most jurisdictions in Canada will fund stimulus through deficits this year. In Manitoba, our stimulus will be partially funded through reducing debt repayments within the balanced budget legislation.

To balance these needs, amendments will be introduced to provide the government more flexibility in making the debt payment required by balanced budget legislation.

However, we will continue to address our unfunded debt, and have budgeted \$20 million in '09-10 for further debt repayment and pension liability reduction. We anticipate, at a minimum, making a payment of a similar level next year. The balance that would otherwise be used for debt retirement will be used to address infrastructure, stimulate the economy and create jobs.

Mr. Speaker, we have a solid record of reducing taxes for Manitoba families and businesses while keeping budgets in balance, reducing debt and pension liabilities and increasing support for key services, from social housing to health care.

Le Manitoba est l'une des provinces les plus abordables du pays, grâce à un coût de la vie raisonnable et une qualité de vie élevée.

Translation

Manitoba is one of the most affordable provinces in the country, with a reasonable cost of living and a high quality of life.

English

We have reduced personal taxes to ensure Manitoba remains an affordable place to live.

Despite tough times, Mr. Speaker, budget '09 lowers taxes. We are implementing all the '09 tax commitments made in earlier budgets. We are also introducing tax savings to help maintain the purchasing power of families and the financial strength of businesses. In '09, Manitobans are realizing \$30 million in personal income tax savings.

Since 2000, the average Manitoba property owner has experienced significant tax relief. Statistics Canada reports property taxes have remained flat, while average growth in other provinces was 24 percent.

We continue to act on property taxes at a pace that reflects our current economy. This year, we will increase our basic Education Property Tax Credit to \$650. In future years, we will further increase this credit to fulfil our \$700 commitment.

We are also increasing the Farmland School Tax Rebate to 75 percent.

Small and medium-sized businesses employ thousands of Manitobans, providing much of the entrepreneurship and vitality in our economy. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to announce that we will become the first province to permanently eliminate the small-business income tax. This will ensure that Manitoba has one of the friendliest tax environments for small business in North America.

We remain committed to two previously announced business tax reductions: the general Corporation Income Tax rate will drop to 12 percent this coming July 1, and the phase-out of the general Corporation Capital Tax will continue, with final elimination by the end of 2010.

In the current economic environment, it is more important than ever to provide incentives for investment, innovation and skill development.

To do just that, we will:

- double the funding for the Community Enterprise Investment Tax Credit, providing \$17 million more in investment capital for small and medium-sized businesses;
- double the value of shares a business can apply for under the Community Enterprise Development Tax Credit, giving businesses increased access to capital;
- expand apprenticeship tax credits to include advanced-level apprentices;
- extend the co-op student and graduate components of the Co-op Education and Apprenticeship Tax Credit, the most comprehensive credit of its kind in the country; and
- we will parallel business tax changes announced in the '09 federal budget, including increased depreciation rates for manufacturing machinery and equipment, as well as computer systems.

The majority of Manitobans acting as primary caregivers are women. Those caring for family members or others may be eligible for the Primary Caregiver Tax Credit. We are now introducing changes to make it easier to access the credit for caregivers of people with disabilities.

We will also introduce tax initiatives focussing on the health of Manitobans and the health of the environment.

These include:

- increasing tobacco tax rates, which will rise by 1 cent per cigarette to 18.5 cents at midnight tonight;
- extending the Green Energy Equipment Tax Credit to include solar thermal systems in addition to geothermal systems;
- doubling the basic credit for agricultural producers who take action to protect riverbanks and lakeshore areas under the Riparian Tax Credit program beginning in '09;
- making the retail sales tax exemption for manure slurry tanks and lagoon liners permanent to help livestock producers meet their environmental responsibilities; and
- extending the Odour Control Tax Credit to the end of 2011.

To promote recycling, the Waste Reduction and Recycling Support Levy will be introduced on class 1 landfills, starting in '09. Revenues from this levy will be rebated to municipalities based on the amount of waste recycled. For example, the City of Winnipeg could expect to receive as much as \$2 million annually.

Funds will also be used to expand e-waste and hazardous waste recycling throughout the province.

Enhancing Health Care

Health care remains a top priority of this government. We will continue to move forward to make strategic investments and maintain quality of care for Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, the number of nurses and doctors in Manitoba has grown dramatically. Since '99, there are more than 1,800 additional nurses and 288 more doctors working today to meet the needs of Manitobans across the province. Budget 2009 invests funding to continue this work, including investments in the successful recruitment and retention of physicians, particularly in northern and rural Manitoba, and supporting training for advanced intensive care nurses.

Funding in budget '09 will expand the successful midwifery baccalaureate program to students in southern Manitoba.

Since '99, we have added more than 2,000 new drugs to Pharmacare, and the average benefit paid has risen from \$1,211 in '98-99 to \$2,542 in '08-09.

Since '99, the costs of Pharmacare have risen more than 220 percent. We remain committed to providing quality Pharmacare coverage while maintaining affordable deductibles for Manitobans. We are making changes to the program to reduce the effect of income increases on Pharmacare deductibles. This means that for more than 70 percent of recipients, increases will be less than \$5 per month.

We are implementing additional improvements to the emergency care in Manitoba. Budget '09 also includes funding to hire more emergency room staff and add new ambulances to our provincial fleet.

Manitoba is recognized as a leader in reducing wait times. Significant investments have shown results for Manitobans. For example, the median wait for hip and knee surgeries was 31 weeks in January '07. Mr. Speaker, the median wait time was 15 weeks in January '09.

Nous continuons à investir dans des programmes innovateurs pour améliorer l'accès des patients aux soins de santé.

Translation

We continue to invest in innovative programs to improve access to health care for patients.

English

Budget '09 provides funding to expand the successful Advanced Access initiative, helping clinics reduce wait times by modernizing scheduling systems so patients can access their doctor in a more timely fashion.

Budget '09 provides more funding for capital investments in addictions and mental health. We are continuing the development of the Magnus Centre, a multi-agency facility in Winnipeg that will offer a comprehensive range of services under one roof.

We will continue our work with Aboriginal communities and leaders to enhance access to primary and acute health-care services, as well as healthy living programs.

Stronger Families

A strong and thriving province must work for the good of all its residents. Investments in education and training, economic development and job creation not only build our economy, but also support poverty reduction efforts and improve the well-being of Manitobans.

Since '99, we have introduced a number of measures to support Manitoba families and reduce poverty. Increases to the Education Property Tax Credit reduce the tax burden on low-income Manitobans, especially women. Increases to the minimum wage have strengthened the purchasing power of more than 28,000 minimum-wage earners and their families. Our investments in social housing and the Manitoba Shelter Benefit have also made a difference for Manitobans in need.

As well, today, 40 percent fewer Manitoba children are living in poverty than a decade ago, but there is still work to be done. We must ensure we create conditions for Manitobans at all income levels to have the opportunity to be successful.

We will create a new program called Rebound, to provide training and employment opportunities for Manitobans to support skill development and reduce the need for income assistance.

Today, we are also proud to announce further enhancements to the Manitoba Shelter Benefit, including raising income eligibility levels and additional support for some Manitobans receiving Employment and Income Assistance.

Through the Northern Healthy Foods Initiative, the Province co-ordinates projects to promote nutrition and build capacity to access healthy foods. Our government will take further action on food security to ensure Manitobans have access to healthy and nutritious food.

We continue to act on recommendations to protect Manitoba children through the Changes for Children program, our multi-year plan of action to strengthen Manitoba's child welfare system. We are funding increased supports for children in care, as well as hiring more workers to focus on prevention and protection and an improved case management system.

Budget '09 also includes funding to:

- continue support for the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Strategy;

- expand mental health crisis stabilization services in Thompson and the Interlake to provide short-term intensive care and treatment for youth in the community; as well as
- implement the second phase of Tracia's Trust, the Province's sexual exploitation reduction strategy.

* (15:10)

Recent studies say that affordable child care is one of the top priorities for women. We continue to make child care a priority in budget '09, providing funding to support:

- additional child-care and nursery school spaces;
- wage increases for child-care centre staff of 3 percent, effective July 1;
- investments in a record number of training spaces initiated last year;
- new spaces this year; as well as
- recruitment and retention initiatives.

Nous devons continuer d'appuyer les personnes handicapées au Manitoba en veillant à ce qu'elles aient accès aux services nécessaires pour réaliser leur plein potentiel.

Translation

We need to continue to support people with disabilities in Manitoba, ensuring they have the services they need to reach their full potential.

English

Budget '09 provides increases for community living supports for Manitobans with mental disabilities and will enhance access to applied behaviour analysis services for preschool and school-aged Manitoba children living with autism.

Building Manitoba Communities

Manitoba's urban communities are centres of economic development and growth. Over the last decade these communities have grown, taking possibilities and turning them into opportunities.

Budget '09 continues to support urban communities.

For services such as affordable transit, road maintenance and repair, and public safety, the City

of Winnipeg will receive more than \$213 million in funding, an increase of \$10.5 million over '08 levels.

We have examined the issue of funding for ambulance services in the city of Winnipeg. As a result, the city will receive \$4 million in new funding, reducing costs to the city and taxpayers and increasing our commitment for emergency care.

As part of our commitment to reducing the effects of climate change, budget '09 includes close to \$3 million in additional operating funding for Winnipeg transit services.

Often the best ideas for neighbourhood revitalization come directly from the communities themselves. Neighbourhoods Alive! helps community organizations in designated areas rebuild their neighbourhoods.

In budget '09, funding will continue the expansion of this successful program in seven Winnipeg inner-city neighbourhoods: Daniel McIntyre, St. Matthews, Centennial, West Alexander, North Portage, Dufferin and St. Johns, as well as five other centres across Manitoba: Dauphin, Flin Flon, Portage la Prairie, Selkirk and The Pas.

Lorsque de nouveaux arrivants débarquent au Manitoba, il est important de faciliter leur intégration dans la vie économique et sociale de la province.

Translation

When newcomers arrive in Manitoba, it is important we ease their transition into our province's social and economic life.

English

Budget '09 continues to encourage immigration and help people make Manitoba their home. Our investments will continue to foster welcoming and inclusive communities across the province.

Mr. Speaker, budget '09 includes funding to support communities outside Winnipeg today and build the foundation for growth in the future. In '09, Manitoba's municipalities and communities will receive \$84 million, a more than \$4-million increase in funding over '08 levels for roads, transit, public safety and other municipal infrastructure and service priorities.

In addition, we are increasing funding for rural economic development initiatives by 8.7 percent over last year.

A key government priority is ensuring the food that Manitobans eat is safe. New legislation was introduced last fall to strengthen food safety systems as food moves from our farms to the forks of Manitoba families.

Budget '09 includes funding to expand our food safety programs, including:

- increasing inspections of provincially registered food processing and manufacturing facilities;
- introducing on-farm food safety programs for livestock producers;
- developing and implementing a food safety database; and
- creating a food safety strategic plan.

We are investing in value-added food processing in Brandon and Neepawa, which will help position Manitoba during ongoing negotiations regarding country-of-origin labelling.

We are enhancing the Rural Entrepreneur Assistance Program for full-time, small and home-based businesses, by making more businesses eligible for it.

We continue to support producers with our business risk management programs, including increased funding for our AgriStability program, and providing enhanced coverage for forage crops and soybeans through our AgriInsurance program.

We continue to work with livestock producers as they invest in improved nutrient management technologies and systems.

We will invest in resources for the Province's animal welfare program, as well as enhancements to laboratory capacity to help producers with diagnosis and treatment of animal diseases to maintain Manitoba's high-quality livestock and processed livestock exports.

We are also working with our partners from Aboriginal organizations and communities on development initiatives, local and regional infrastructure projects and new opportunities to build strong, vibrant communities.

Budget '09 includes support for technology training through the Northwest Community Futures Development Corporation, which supports 13 communities in northwestern Manitoba.

We will also establish a GO Centre in Northern Manitoba to support the production of local healthy foods.

Seniors in our rural and northern communities will have continued access to community-based programs that provide support services, such as congregate meal programs that keep seniors in their communities longer.

Supporting Safety

When it comes to safety, Mr. Speaker, people need to feel safe in their homes and their communities, at work and at play. We have worked with communities, organizations and local neighbourhood groups to reduce crime. In fact, Mr. Speaker, auto theft in Winnipeg has decreased by approximately 66 percent since 2004.

Total costs for police, prosecutions, courts and corrections have increased \$24 million since budget '08. To enhance the safety of Manitobans and offset these costs, we are increasing court costs, small claims courts filing fees and fines for speeding by a total of \$4.3 million.

Police officers lead our efforts to prevent and address criminal behaviour and work hard to keep Manitoba communities safe. Mr. Speaker, we are supporting hiring 10 new police officers for the city of Winnipeg and one new officer for Brandon.

Manitobans have also been asked to provide input into changes to The Provincial Police Act, to ensure the legislation will meet the needs of both the police and the citizens they protect.

Recently, construction has been completed on the expansion of the Milner Ridge Correctional Facility, and this year construction will begin to replace the Women's Correctional Facility.

We will continue to expand the successful Lighthouses program, which helps prevent crime by supporting youth and providing community-based recreation opportunities.

The SafetyAid program will be further expanded to support seniors in rural and northern Manitoba, as well as enhancing a program to help victims of crime obtain restitution ordered by the court.

Réduire la violence familiale et offrir des lieux sûrs aux victimes est une autre façon de veiller à la sécurité des femmes et des enfants manitobains.

Translation

Reducing family violence and providing safe places for victims is another way to ensure the safety of Manitoba women and children.

English

Budget '09 includes increased funding for shelter renovations, improved shelter security and expanded services for children in Winnipeg, including the expansion of a low-conflict access program.

Increased funding for the ice jam mitigation program, along with the addition of a second Amphibex, will further protect Manitobans from floods. We are expanding hydrologic services to further support flood protection efforts.

Renewing Environmental Resources

Investing in the emerging green economy today will position Manitoba to be an economic leader in the future.

Manitoba's green strategy is already benefiting our province. We continue to support the development of hydro-electric projects in northern Manitoba to create clean energy sources that fuel the economy and reduce the effects of climate change.

Manitoba Hydro is a key partner in our fight against climate change. Arrangements have been made for sales of clean hydro-electric power into Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Manitoba Hydro has partnered with Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation on the construction of the Wuskwatim generating station, development work continues on Conawapa dam, and talks are currently under way for the hydro-electric development of the Keeyask generating station.

The governments of Canada and Manitoba, along with Manitoba Hydro, have committed more than \$60 million for northern Aboriginal pre-project training related to hydro-electric development in northern communities. To date, 2,000 Aboriginal Manitobans have received skills assessments and training for employment on new dam projects.

Manitoba Hydro is also in negotiations to develop a new 300-megawatt wind farm project, further diversifying our energy resources. And we are continuing to invest in expanding geothermal power. These continuing investments in wind, geothermal and other alternative energies are an important part of our climate change action plan.

To further support Manitobans making energy efficient improvements to their homes, Manitoba Hydro will reduce the interest rate on its popular Power Smart Residential Loan program from 6.5 percent to 5 percent.

Our green strategy includes programs to ensure Manitobans can access environmentally responsible options for recycling unwanted electronic equipment and household hazardous waste.

Mr. Speaker, we are increasing support to our recycling initiative for electronics recycling. We are also expanding funding to continue the collection and disposal of household hazardous waste to keep products out of Manitoba landfills.

The office of the Fire Commissioner will research and develop ways to incorporate more environmentally friendly and safer practices for building construction in Manitoba.

*(15:20)

We will continue to invest in our natural resources by:

- working with Manitoba fishers to establish a new governance framework for Lake Winnipeg; and
- undertaking more scientific research to support nutrient reduction options;

We are also:

- developing long-term objectives for nutrient reduction in the Lake Winnipeg basin;
- investing additional resources for the inspection of livestock manure storage facilities and on-site waste-water facilities;
- investing in the growth and development of conservation districts to deliver more effective land and water management; and
- funding the Nature Conservancy of Canada to protect natural environments in Manitoba.

We are developing a new wetlands protection and restoration initiative, including the restoration of the province's largest marshes, including Delta Marsh. This will help reduce greenhouse gases, improve drought resistance and water quality, enhance flood protection and restore wildlife habitat.

Healthy forests are important to the ecosystem. To protect the environment and support our recreation and ecotourism industry, we have

introduced legislation to prohibit logging in 80 out of 81 provincial parks and all future parks.

Les parcs provinciaux et terrains de camping du Manitoba offrent d'excellentes occasions de loisirs dans l'ensemble de la province.

Translation

Manitoba's provincial parks and campgrounds provide tremendous opportunities for recreation across the province.

English

The new Duff Roblin Park Reserve in St. Norbert is part of our commitment to support recreational and economic opportunities along an expanded floodway.

In tough times, families may look for recreation opportunities close to home. To encourage Manitobans to see more of their magnificent province, there will be no entrance fees to provincial parks for the next two years.

Budget '09 also commits to the development of a new provincial campground, as well as recreation and infrastructure upgrades to current parks and campgrounds, such as bicycle paths in Birds Hill Provincial Park. And we continue to support east-side Manitoba First Nations communities in their bid to develop a UNESCO World Heritage Site by investing in research and management planning.

Vibrant Culture

Manitoba's cultural spirit brings energy to our communities and enjoyment to our lives. Our artists use their creativity and immense talents to celebrate our diversity and our achievements. Investing in the arts builds our cultural strengths, and we support the production, exhibition and publication of art across the province.

Mr. Speaker, we are increasing operating grants to major agencies and other arts, recreation, heritage and sports organizations by 2 percent in budget '09, effective this July.

We continue to invest in recreation opportunities to ensure Manitobans have access to activities that support healthy lifestyles and enhance social connections in communities around the province. This year, we will provide funding for several initiatives, including constructing a new community hall in Grandview and the completion of an aquatic centre in Arborg. We are also continuing to fulfil our

commitment to fund the development of bicycle paths in the city of Winnipeg.

Manitoba's filmmakers and musicians produce extraordinary works of art, and we continue to support their efforts. We are increasing our grant assistance to several organizations, including On Screen Manitoba and the Western Canadian Music Alliance, to support their continued success.

The Manito Ahbee Festival celebrates Aboriginal culture: We will continue to provide operating grants to ensure the festival showcases the talents of Aboriginal Manitobans for many years to come.

Nous devons aussi protéger le riche patrimoine du Manitoba. Pour ce faire, nous fournissons des fonds pour la conservation des ruines dans le parc provincial du Monastère-des-trappistes à Saint-Norbert et pour la célébration du centenaire de la naissance de Gabrielle Roy, l'un des plus grands écrivains du Manitoba.

Translation

Manitoba's rich heritage must also be protected. To do so, we are providing funding for the preservation of the ruins at the Trappist Monastery Heritage Park in St. Norbert, as well as celebrating the centenary of Gabrielle Roy, one of Manitoba's greatest writers.

English

Major sporting events are another opportunity to promote our province. We are pleased to support the '09 Allen Cup in Steinbach, the '09 National Aboriginal Hockey Championships in Winnipeg and the Memorial Cup in Brandon in 2010. We are also a key participant in planning a bid to host the World Fire and Police Games in 2015.

Next February, the Olympic Games are returning to Canada for the first time in more than 20 years. Budget '09 includes funding to tell Manitoba's story to the world at this event.

Modernizing Government

When it comes to a modern government and an effective civil service, which is vital to the economic stability and future success of Manitoba, government must embrace different ideas and perspectives, reach out and listen to the needs of the people we serve and act in the best interests of Manitobans.

Since '99-2000, Manitoba's total per capita expenditure growth has been among the most

moderate of all provincial governments. We continue to strive to provide better services without increasing the cost of government.

Prudent control, management and use of public resources are key to making government more efficient, accountable and transparent, while delivering results that matter to Manitobans.

In tough economic times, it is especially important for government to make the best use of public resources. To do this, we will manage our staff vacancies and reduce overhead costs.

It is also important that information is easy to find and understand. We continue to reduce red tape and make it easier for people to find information and streamline access to government services.

We have used technology to develop innovative ways of providing services to Manitobans. Through our Web site, manitoba.ca, people can now apply for child-care assistance, book a campsite at a provincial park or apply for a student loan, while businesses can manage their tax accounts.

Government is also streamlining and improving services for businesses. This includes the Manitoba Business Portal, a user-friendly, Web-based gateway for a wide range of information and services for businesses and entrepreneurs.

The provinces and the federal government have agreed to reduce the red tape on infrastructure projects by making application processes easier. This results in more efficient environmental and regulatory reviews and ensures we get shovels in the ground sooner.

Recently, all provinces signed amendments to the Agreement on Internal Trade to ensure effective dispute mechanisms and establish full labour mobility across the country.

Conclusion

Mr. Speaker, budget '09 is planting the seeds today for growth tomorrow.

This is a balanced budget, with a strong plan to focus on the priorities of Manitobans and address economic uncertainty, including:

- planning for long-term prosperity with investments in infrastructure, education, training and job creation, while increasing access to credit and investment for businesses;

- supporting vital services and enhancing the environment; and
- modernizing government.

Le budget 2009 présente un plan qui nous permettra d'affronter directement ces défis et de placer notre province dans une position qui lui garantira un avenir solide et prometteur.

Translation

Budget 2009 has a plan to confront challenges head on and position our province for a strong and promising future.

English

Mr. Speaker, this plan supports our vision of Manitoba as a place where all can live and prosper with dignity.

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Messages

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, I have two messages from His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, as well

as the budget documents, which I would like to table, so everyone can have a pleasant evening reading them this evening.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Please stand for the reading of the messages.

The Lieutenant-Governor transmits to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Estimates of sums required for the services of the province for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2009, and recommends these Estimates to the Legislative Assembly.

The second message: The Lieutenant-Governor transmits to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Estimates of sums required for the services of the province for capital expenditures and recommends these Estimates to the Legislative Assembly.

You may be seated.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that this House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: The House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, March 25, 2009

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