

First Session - Fortieth Legislature  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
**and**  
**PROCEEDINGS**  
**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

*Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Daryl Reid  
Speaker*

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Fortieth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	NDP
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	NDP
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	NDP
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	NDP
BRIESE, Stuart	Agassiz	PC
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	NDP
CHIEF, Kevin, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	NDP
CROTHERS, Deanne	St. James	NDP
CULLEN, Cliff	Spruce Woods	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FRIESEN, Cameron	Morden-Winkler	PC
GAUDREAU, Dave	St. Norbert	NDP
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Liberal
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
HOWARD, Jennifer, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Richmond	NDP
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	NDP
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Swan River	NDP
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	Dawson Trail	NDP
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	PC
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
McFADYEN, Hugh	Fort Whyte	PC
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	NDP
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	PC
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	NDP
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	NDP
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PETTERSEN, Clarence	Flin Flon	NDP
REID, Daryl, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Kewatinook	NDP
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	NDP
ROWAT, Leanne	Riding Mountain	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	St. Paul	PC
SELBY, Erin, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	PC
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin	NDP
SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	NDP
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	PC
WHITEHEAD, Frank	The Pas	NDP
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WIGHT, Melanie	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 17, 2012

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

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

### Introduction of New Members

**Mr. Speaker:** Please be seated. Good afternoon, everyone. I am pleased to inform the Assembly that the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly has received from the chief electoral officer a letter indicating the election of Sharon Blady as the member for the constituency of Kirkfield Park. I hereby table the notice of return of the member elected.

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to you Sharon Blady, member for the constituency of Kirkfield Park, who has taken the oath and signed the roll and now claims the right to take her seat.

**Mr. Speaker:** On behalf of all honourable members, I wish to welcome you to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba and to wish you well in your parliamentary career.

And I also pleased to inform members that the Legislative Assembly—the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly has received from the chief electoral officer a letter indicating that the honourable Dave Gaudreau, member for St. Norbert, has been elected, and I hereby table the notice of return of the member elected.

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to you Dave Gaudreau, the member for the constituency of St. Norbert, who has taken the oath and signed the roll and now claims the right to take his seat.

**Mr. Speaker:** That better be it.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### PETITIONS

##### **Newborn Universal Hearing Screening Program**

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba:

And these are the reasons for this petition:

More than three in 1,000 newborns are born with educationally significant hearing loss, but Manitoba's current hearing screening program does not allow for every child to be screened.

Without early detection, children are now—are more likely to develop poor speech and language skills and also encounter social and emotional difficulties, which leads to poor academic performance.

Early diagnosis of hearing loss in newborns can make a considerable difference in a child's development because newborns can be provided with effective programs and support that foster developmental success.

While most other developed countries and many Canadian provinces have a newborn hearing screening program, Manitoba is lagging behind. There are only a handful of screening programs in the province while all other newborns can only be tested if they have a risk factor of hearing loss or if parents specifically request a test.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the minister of healthy living, youth and seniors to consider implementing a universal hearing screening program accessible to parents of all newborns in Manitoba.

This petition's signed by D. Drawbridge, O. Deneka, J. Wielgosh and many, many other concerned Manitobans.

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

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Standing Committee on Public Accounts First Report

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Chairperson)** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the First Report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

**Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk):** Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts presents the following—

**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 in the Legislative Building:*

- November 23, 2010 (5th Session–39th Legislature)
- December 16, 2011

#### **Matters under Consideration**

- Auditor General's Report—Operations of the Office for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010
- Auditor General's Report—Operations of the Office for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2011

#### **Committee Membership**

*Committee Membership for the November 23, 2010 meeting:*

- Mr. BOROTSIK
- Ms. BRAUN
- Mr. DERKACH (Chairperson)
- Mr. DEWAR (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mrs. DRIEDGER
- Hon. Mr. GERRARD
- Mr. JHA
- Mr. MARTINDALE
- Ms. SELBY
- Mr. STEFANSON
- Hon. Ms. WOWCHUK

*Committee Membership for the December 16, 2011 meeting:*

- Mr. ALLUM
- Ms. BRAUN
- Mr. DEWAR
- Hon. Mr. GERRARD

- Mr. HELWER
- Mr. JHA
- Mr. MAGUIRE
- Mr. PEDERSEN
- Mrs. STEFANSON
- Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS
- Mr. WHITEHEAD

*Your Committee elected Mr. MAGUIRE as the Chairperson at the December 16, 2011 meeting.*

*Your Committee elected Mr. DEWAR as the Vice-Chairperson at the December 16, 2011 meeting.*

#### **Officials Speaking on Record**

*Officials speaking on the record at the November 23, 2010 meeting:*

- Carol Bellringer, Auditor General of Manitoba

*Officials speaking on the record at the December 16, 2011 meeting:*

- Carol Bellringer, Auditor General of Manitoba

#### **Reports Considered and Passed**

*Your Committee considered and passed the following reports as presented:*

- Auditor General's Report—Operations of the Office for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010
- Auditor General's Report—Operations of the Office for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2011

**Mr. Maguire:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen), that the report of the committee be received.

**Mr. Speaker:** It's been moved by the honourable for Arthur-Virden—from Midland—Arthur-Virden, that the report of the committee be received.

My apologies, the—it's been moved by the honourable member for Arthur-Virden, seconded by the member for the Midland, that the report of the committee be received.

**Mr. Maguire:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the Second Report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to proceeding with the next, is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? [Agreed]

The honourable member for Arthur-Virden. My apologies.

\* (13:40)

## Standing Committee on Public Accounts Second Report

**Mr. Maguire:** So, Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the Second Report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

**Madam Clerk:** Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts—

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**Mr. Speaker:** Dispense.

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

### **Meetings**

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

- May 25, 2011 (5th Session – 39th Legislature)
- February 15, 2012

### **Matters under Consideration**

- Auditor General's Report – Audit of the Public Accounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010
- Public Accounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010 (Volume 1)
- Public Accounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010 (Volume 2)
- Public Accounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010 (Volume 3)
- Public Accounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010 (Volume 4)

### **Committee Membership**

*Committee Membership for the May 25, 2011 meeting:*

- Mr. BOROTSIK
- Ms. BRAUN
- Mr. DERKACH (Chairperson)
- Mr. DEWAR (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mr. DYCK
- Hon. Mr. GERRARD
- Mr. JHA
- Mr. MARTINDALE
- Mrs. STEFANSON
- Mr. WHITEHEAD
- Hon. Ms. WOWCHUK

*Substitutions made during committee proceedings:*

- Ms. BRICK for Mr. WHITEHEAD

*Committee Membership for the February 15, 2012 meeting:*

- Mr. ALLUM
- Ms. BRAUN
- Mr. DEWAR (Vice-Chairperson)
- Hon. Mr. GERRARD
- Mr. HELWER
- Mr. JHA
- Mr. MAGUIRE (Chairperson)
- Mr. PEDERSEN
- Mrs. STEFANSON
- Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS
- Mr. WIEBE

*Substitution made prior to committee proceedings:*

- Mr. WIEBE for Mr. WHITEHEAD

### **Officials Speaking on Record**

*Officials speaking on the record at the May 25, 2011 meeting:*

- Carol Bellringer, Auditor General of Manitoba
- Mr. Hugh Eliasson, Deputy Minister of Finance

*Officials speaking on the record at the February 15, 2012 meeting:*

- Carol Bellringer, Auditor General of Manitoba
- Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS
- Mr. John Clarkson, Deputy Minister of Finance

### **Reports Considered and Passed**

*Your Committee considered and passed the following reports as presented:*

- Auditor General's Report–Audit of the Public Accounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010
- Public Accounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010 (Volume 1)
- Public Accounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010 (Volume 2)
- Public Accounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010 (Volume 3)
- Public Accounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010 (Volume 4)

**Mr. Maguire:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Tuxedo

(Mrs. Stefanson), that the report of the committee be received.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts  
Third Report**

**Mr. Maguire:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the Third Report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**Mr. Speaker:** Dispense? Dispense.

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

**Meetings**

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

- March 8, 2012
- March 21, 2012

**Matters under Consideration**

- Auditor General's Report—Manitoba's Participation in Canada's Economic Action Plan—dated May 2011
- Auditor General's Report—Follow-Up of Previously Issued Recommendations—dated March 2011 (Sections 6 to 10, 14, 15 and 18)

**Committee Membership**

*Committee Membership for the March 8, 2012 meeting:*

- Mr. ALLUM
- Ms. BRAUN
- Mr. DEWAR (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mr. FRIESEN
- Mr. GAUDREAU
- Hon. Mr. GERRARD
- Mr. MAGUIRE (Chairperson)
- Mr. PEDERSEN
- Mrs. STEFANSON
- Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS
- Mr. WIEBE

*Substitutions made prior to committee proceedings:*

- Mr. FRIESEN for Mr. HELWER

- Mr. GAUDREAU for Mr. JHA
- Mr. WIEBE for Mr. WHITEHEAD

*Committee Membership for the March 21, 2012 meeting:*

- Mr. ALLUM
- Ms. BRAUN
- Mr. DEWAR (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mr. FRIESEN
- Hon. Mr. GERRARD
- Mr. HELWER
- Mr. JHA
- Mr. MAGUIRE (Chairperson)
- Mr. PEDERSEN
- Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS
- Mr. WHITEHEAD

*Substitution made prior to committee proceedings:*

- Mr. FRIESEN for Mrs. STEFANSON

**Officials Speaking on Record**

*Officials speaking on the record at the March 8, 2012 meeting:*

- Norm Ricard, Deputy Auditor General of Manitoba
- Ms. Linda McFadyen, Deputy Minister of Local Government

*Officials speaking on the record at the March 21, 2012 meeting:*

- Carol Bellringer, Auditor General of Manitoba
- Hon. Ms. SELBY
- Mr. Gerald Farthing, Deputy Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy
- Ms. Joy Cramer, Deputy Minister of Housing and Community Development
- Mr. Jeffrey Schnoor, Q.C., Deputy Minister of Justice and Attorney General

**Reports Considered and Passed**

*Your Committee considered and passed the following report as presented:*

- Auditor General's Report—Manitoba's Participation in Canada's Economic Action Plan—dated May 2011

**Reports Considered but not Passed:**

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

- Auditor General's Report—Follow-Up of Previously Issued Recommendations—dated March 2011 (Sections 6 to 10, 14 and 15 concluded consideration but not section 18)

**Mr. Maguire:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer), that the report of the committee be received.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Standing Committee on Crown Corporations  
First Report**

**Mr. Bidhu Jha (Chairperson):** I wish to present the First Report of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

**Madam Clerk:** Your Standing Committee on Crown Corporations presents—

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**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:*

- June 1, 2009 (3rd Session – 39th Legislature)
- November 17, 2009 (3rd Session–39th Legislature)
- March 8, 2010 (4th Session – 39th Legislature)
- October 25, 2010 (4th Session–39th Legislature)
- May 30, 2011 (5th Session – 39th Legislature)
- April 4, 2012

**Matters under Consideration**

- Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008
- Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2009

- Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010
- Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2011

**Committee Membership**

*Committee membership for the June 1, 2009 meeting:*

- Hon. Mr. BLAIKIE
- Mr. BOROTSIK
- Mr. CULLEN
- Mr. JHA (Vice-Chairperson)
- Ms. MARCELINO
- Mr. MCFADYEN
- Mr. REID (Chairperson)
- Hon. Mr. SELINGER
- Mrs. STEFANSON
- Mr. WHITEHEAD
- Hon. Ms. WOWCHUK

*Committee membership for the November 17, 2009 meeting:*

- Mr. BOROTSIK
- Ms. BRICK (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mr. CULLEN
- Mr. DEWAR
- Mr. GRAYDON
- Mr. JHA
- Hon. Ms. MARCELINO
- Mr. MCFADYEN
- Mr. REID (Chairperson)
- Mr. SARAN
- Hon. Ms. WOWCHUK

*Committee membership for the March 8, 2010 meeting:*

- Mr. BOROTSIK
- Mr. CALDWELL
- Mr. CULLEN
- Mr. DEWAR
- Mr. GRAYDON
- Hon. Ms. IRVIN-ROSS
- Mr. MCFADYEN
- Mr. REID (Chairperson)
- Mr. SARAN
- Mr. WHITEHEAD (Vice-Chairperson)
- Hon. Ms. WOWCHUK

*Committee membership for the October 25, 2010 meeting:*

- Mr. BOROTSIK
- Ms. BRICK (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mr. CULLEN
- Mr. DEWAR
- Hon. Ms. HOWARD
- Hon. Ms. IRVIN-ROSS
- Mr. MCFADYEN
- Mr. PEDERSEN
- Mr. REID (Chairperson)
- Ms. SELBY
- Hon. Ms. WOWCHUK

*Committee membership for the May 30, 2011 meeting:*

- Mr. BOROTSIK
- Mr. CULLEN
- Mr. DEWAR (Vice-Chairperson)
- Hon. Ms. HOWARD
- Mr. MARTINDALE
- Mr. MCFADYEN
- Mr. REID (Chairperson)
- Mr. PEDERSEN
- Hon. Mr. ROBINSON
- Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS
- Hon. Ms. WOWCHUK

*Committee membership for the April 4, 2012 meeting:*

- Mr. ALLUM
- Hon. Mr. CHOMIAK
- Mr. CULLEN
- Mr. DEWAR
- Mr. HELWER
- Mr. JHA
- Hon. Ms. MARCELINO
- Mr. MARCELINO
- Mrs. STEFANSON
- Ms. WIGHT (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mr. WISHART

*Your Committee elected Mr. JHA as the Chairperson at the April 4, 2012 meeting.*

*Substitutions received during committee proceedings:*

- Mr. McFadyen for Mrs. Stefanson

*Officials from Manitoba Hydro speaking on the record at the June 1, 2009 meeting:*

- Mr. Bob Brennan, President and Chief Executive Officer

*Officials from Manitoba Hydro speaking on the record at the November 17, 2009 meeting:*

- Mr. Bob Brennan, President and Chief Executive Officer
- Mr. Vic Schroeder, Chairman

*Officials from Manitoba Hydro speaking on the record at the March 8, 2010 meeting:*

- Mr. Bob Brennan, President and Chief Executive Officer
- Mr. Vic Schroeder, Chairman

*Officials from Manitoba Hydro speaking on the record at the October 25, 2010 meeting:*

- Mr. Bob Brennan, President and Chief Executive Officer
- Mr. Vic Schroeder, Chairman

*Officials from Manitoba Hydro speaking on the record at the May 30, 2011 meeting:*

- Mr. Bob Brennan, President and Chief Executive Officer
- Mr. Vic Schroeder, Chairman

*Officials from Manitoba Hydro speaking on the record at the April 4, 2012 meeting:*

- Mr. Scott Thomson, President and Chief Executive Officer
- Mr. Bill Fraser, Chairman

#### **Reports Considered and Passed**

*Your Committee considered and passed the following reports as presented:*

- Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008

#### **Reports Considered but not Passed**

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

- Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2009
- Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010
- Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2011

**Mr. Jha:** I move, seconded by the honourable member from Burrows, that the report of the committee be received.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Standing Committee on Crown Corporations  
Second Report**

**Mr. Jha:** I wish to present the Second Report of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

**Madam Clerk:** Your Standing Committee on Crown Corporations—

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**Mr. Speaker:** Dispense? Dispense.

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

**Meetings**

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

- July 8, 2009 (3rd Session – 39th Legislature)
- June 6, 2011 (5th Session – 39th Legislature)
- April 11, 2012

**Matters under Consideration**

- Annual Report of The Workers Compensation Board for the year ending December 31, 2009
- Annual Report of The Workers Compensation Board for the year ending December 31, 2010
- Annual Report of the Appeal Commission and Medical Review Panel for the year ending December 31, 2009
- Annual Report of the Appeal Commission and Medical Review Panel for the year ending December 31, 2010
- Five Year Plan of The Workers Compensation Board for 2009 to 2013
- Five Year Plan of The Workers Compensation Board for 2010 to 2014
- Five Year Plan of The Workers Compensation Board for 2011 to 2015

**Committee Membership**

*Committee Membership for the July 8, 2009 meeting:*

- Hon. Ms. ALLAN
- Ms. BRICK (Vice-Chairperson)

- Mr. CULLEN
- Mr. DEWAR
- Mr. FAURSCHOU
- Hon. Ms. IRVIN-ROSS
- Mr. MARTINDALE
- Mrs. MITCHELSON
- Mr. REID (Chairperson)
- Hon. Mr. RONDEAU
- Mrs. TAILLIEU

*Committee Membership for the June 6, 2011 meeting:*

- Mr. ALTEMEYER
- Ms. BRICK
- Mr. BRIESE
- Mr. DEWAR (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mr. GRAYDON
- Hon. Ms. HOWARD
- Hon. Ms. MARCELINO
- Mr. REID (Chairperson)
- Mrs. ROWAT
- Mrs. TAILLIEU
- Hon. Ms. WOWCHUK

*Substitutions received during committee proceedings:*

- Mr. CULLEN for Mr. GRAYDON
- Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS for Mr. ALTEMEYER

*Committee Membership for the April 11, 2012 meeting:*

- Ms. BLADY
- Mr. BRIESE
- Hon. Mr. CHIEF
- Mr. DEWAR
- Mr. GOERTZEN
- Hon. Ms. HOWARD
- Mr. JHA (Chairperson)
- Mrs. ROWAT
- Mr. SARAN
- Mr. SCHULER
- Ms. WIGHT (Vice-Chairperson)

*Substitutions received during committee proceedings:*

- Mr. EICHLER for Mrs. ROWAT

*Officials Speaking on Record at the July 8, 2009 meeting:*

- Doug Sexsmith, President & CEO

**Officials Speaking on Record at the June 6, 2011 meeting:**

- *Michael Werier, Chairperson*
- *Doug Sexsmith, President and CEO*

**Officials Speaking on Record at the April 11, 2012 meeting:**

- *Michael Werier, Chairperson*
- *Winston Maharaj, President and CEO*

**Reports Considered and Passed**

Your Committee considered and passed the following reports as presented:

- *Annual Report of The Workers Compensation Board for the year ending December 31, 2009*
- *Annual Report of The Workers Compensation Board for the year ending December 31, 2010*
- *Annual Report of the Appeal Commission and Medical Review Panel for the year ending December 31, 2009*
- *Five Year Plan of The Workers Compensation Board for 2009 to 2013*
- *Five Year Plan of The Workers Compensation Board for 2010 to 2014*

**Reports Considered but not Passed**

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

- *Annual Report of the Appeal Commission and Medical Review Panel for the year ending December 31, 2010*
- *Five Year Plan of The Workers Compensation Board for 2011 to 2015*

**Mr. Jha:** I move, seconded by the honourable member for Burrows (Ms. Wight), that the report of the committee be received.

**Motion agreed to.**

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

**Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee**

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have a statement for the House.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Her Majesty the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. It is with a great sense of pride that I rise on behalf of all

Manitobans to offer sincere congratulations to Her Majesty the Queen on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee that recognizes her 60 years as Queen of Canada.

Since February 6th, Canadians from coast to coast to coast have been marking this historic event. Manitoba is proud to join with all the provinces and territories in celebrating this extraordinary milestone, which has only occurred once before in the history of our monarchy.

Her Majesty's first visit to Manitoba was as a princess and at that time, and on her many visits since ascending the throne, the people of this province have more than repaid the great affection that she has always shown them.

Her most recent visit was in 2010 with His Royal Highness Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh. She presented on that occasion a stone from Runnymede to serve as permanent symbol right here in Manitoba of the rights of the people and of the limitations of power.

Again, on behalf of all Manitobans, I offer sincere and heartfelt congratulations to the Queen, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the honourable First Minister.

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** And I, too, would like to take this opportunity to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee marking the 60th anniversary of Her Majesty's ascension to the throne.

During the course of Her Majesty's reign, the Queen has served citizens throughout the Commonwealth with great duty and devotion. Having travelled more than any other sovereign in history, Her Majesty has visited Canada 22 times alone since her coronation and has made a lasting impression on the citizens of this great country.

The Queen has spared no opportunity in joining Canadians to celebrate our own monumental occasions and achievements, including her attendance at Canada's centennial celebrations in 1967, our first Olympic Games held in Montréal and many other significant events for Canadians over the years.

Indeed, Her Majesty's service to our country since she courageously ascended to the throne at the

young age of 26 has gained widespread admiration and affection from Canadians.

The Queen's reign has been marked by an emphasis on charity and public service, and Her Majesty has participated in more than 600 charities and countless medal ceremonies. Throughout the year, 60,000 deserving Canadians, including 900 Manitobans, will be honoured with a Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Medal for their significant contributions and achievements following in the Queen's tradition. With a resurgence of well-grounded support for the monarchy, this year's Jubilee celebrations are certainly being marked with great enthusiasm.

I'm sure I speak for many generations of Manitobans when I say that we are honoured to have Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II as our head of state, but, more importantly, as a loyal patron of Canada.

Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Does the member for River Heights have leave to speak? *[Agreed]*

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Thank you. I rise to join others in the Chamber in celebrating and honouring Her Majesty the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

We are honoured that the Queen has been able to visit Manitoba on a number of occasions, that she has been able to visit, during the 60 years, Canada on many occasions. And I would recognize one particular occasion that was precisely 30 years ago, on April 17th, 1982, when she was here to sign the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and certainly it is—was a momentous occasion, and it has made a big difference to many Canadians that we have the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

And it was significant that when the Queen was here two years ago, she brought with her the stone from Runnymede, again, emphasizing the rights of people and the limitations of what we have and what we do. I salute, as do others, the Queen and recognize and honour her today.

Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the honourable member. Any further ministerial statements?

\* (13:50)

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Seeing none, before we move to question period, I would like to draw to the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have today recipients of this year's Celebration of Excellence in Teaching. The Minister's Awards went to Sharen McDermit of David Livingstone School for the Teaching Excellence Award for early years; Barbara Hamilton of École Seven Oaks Middle School for the Teaching Excellence Award for middle years; Steven Deighton of Joseph H. Kerr School for the Teaching Excellence Award for senior years; Rosanne Massinon of Carman Collegiate for the Outstanding New Teacher Award; Adrian Deakin, April McKnight and Robert Striemer from Shaftesbury High for the Team Collaboration Award; and Gordon Campbell of École Saint-Avila for the Outstanding School Leader Award. These are the guests of the honourable Minister of Education (Ms. Allan).

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

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Budget Deficit Elimination Timeline

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** It is good to be back in the House and to see members opposite, a little later than we would have liked, but better late than never, and we're happy to be back in session.

Mr. Speaker, three years ago the Premier said that he would eliminate the Province's deficit within five years. Seven months ago he said that his government was ahead of schedule in eliminating the deficit.

I wonder if the Premier can indicate today whether his government is still ahead of schedule in eliminating the Province's deficit.

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** The member obviously wouldn't want me to scoop the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) when he presents his budget very soon, but I can tell him that we are working towards the 2014 deadline for balancing the books. We're doing it while protecting front-line services, achieving efficiencies in how we manage government, investing in education and

infrastructure and those things that we ran on and said that we would accomplish in the election.

It's obviously a challenging task in the face of the great recession that we've gone through and some of the natural disaster challenges we've seen in Manitoba, but we remain committed to coming back into balance while doing those things that protect what Manitobans count on most, things like health care and education.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, before the 4th of October the Premier was ahead of schedule in moving the Province's books toward balance. He said five years ago—three years ago it would be balanced within five years; he said seven months ago he was ahead of schedule.

I want to ask the Premier: What happened after October 4th that added \$600 million to his deficit?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my previous answer, we're working towards the 2014 objective of bringing the books of Manitoba back into balance while protecting front-line services, not laying off doctors and nurses and front-line staff, while continuing to invest in education and infrastructure. These are obviously challenging times. The Minister of Finance will present his budget. The forecasts will be made available to people. The effort here is to continue to make Manitoba one of the best places to live and work and to do it in an affordable fashion.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, this is—it's a very different message that we're hearing today from the one that we heard in September of 2011. Seven months ago, before the election, he was ahead of schedule eliminating the deficit; following the election, suddenly \$600 million was added to that year's deficit, more than doubling last year's deficit.

I want to ask the Premier what he meant back in September when he said he was ahead of schedule. Was he deceiving Manitobans, or can we give him the benefit of the doubt and just assume that he was incompetent?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, the member will remember himself that—his miscalculation on his health-care expenditure.

The difference is this: We were able in the last year to cope with the flood of the millennium, actually, in Manitoba. We recognized the investments that are required to protect people during that. We have made those appropriate investments.

We still remain committed to balancing the budget by 2014. The caucus, the ministers, all the members of this government have worked with great diligence and intensity to find the way forward in Manitoba while continuing to invest in those things that matter to Manitobans—health care, education, protecting front-line services—while achieving efficiencies in how we deliver services to the people of Manitoba, while retaining Manitoba's affordability advantage, and, importantly as well, by having a plan to grow the economy, to grow the economy so that all Manitobans can participate in labour markets, can earn a income, can look after their families. These are the objectives that we seek to further in today's budget and will pursue with great diligence over the next four years, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Lake Manitoba Flooding Financial Compensation Application Process**

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** It's been almost a year since the man-made flood on Lake Manitoba. Those affected were assured by this NDP government there would be an easy one-step form to fill out for compensation. The flood victims were repeatedly assured that the money would flow quickly and efficiently. Mr. Speaker, I've heard from many of those affected around Lake Manitoba and this has not been the case at all.

Mr. Speaker, my question is: Why has this government failed Manitobans when it comes to prompt delivery of flood compensation? These flood victims deserve answers.

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures):** I think it's very important to put on the record that we're dealing with the flood of the millennium and a cleanup and rebuilding that is unmatched to Manitoba since the 1950 flood.

We've had 30,000 applications for a variety of programs. We've already paid out over \$600 million in compensation; and at Lake Manitoba we've had 7,000 applications, have paid out \$55 million in assistance.

Mr. Speaker, we've done a lot, but certainly there's much more to do. And I want to put on the record how much we appreciate the efforts of our dedicated staff, the municipal officials and the many stakeholders, who have been working very hard in this very challenging circumstance.

**Mr. Eichler:** Mr. Speaker, on May the 30th of 2011, the Minister of Agriculture said, and I quote CBC, that this government will have a single application

and that money would flow very quickly. That single application never materialized and flood relief certainly wasn't flowing very quickly. Shame on this minister and this government for not keeping their word to flood victims.

Mr. Speaker, why is this government's plan going to fail all of Manitobans? When are they going to make this right, the way it should be, and flow the money to these flood-compensation people?

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, I want to repeat. Perhaps, the member missed it, but we have already, with 30,000 applications, flowed over \$600 million in the system.

In terms of Lake Manitoba, we have flowed \$55 million in assistance. Hoop and Holler: over \$6 million for 636 claims.

I can run through the various different components, but I want to assure the member that we recognize this is the biggest recovery, the biggest challenge, we've dealt with since the 1950 flood. We've made significant progress, but until we have rebuilt all of the flood-affected areas, we will not stop working, 24-7, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to put it on the record, again, our appreciation for the excellent work that the staff, and the municipalities and the stakeholders out there, who've got us this far. Is there more to do? Absolutely, but we're working on it 24-7, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Eichler:** Mr. Speaker, Manitoba families have a right to fair compensation. They deserve it in a timely manner. This is not the case in the flood of 2011. Many Manitoba families have been run around in circles, promised everything under the sun. This is not the simple task that they make it out to be. It's very complicated and very time consuming. The high level of frustration on answers from this government. Some of those people, actually, are here today in the House today. They deserve answers, not more runaround from this NDP government. They want to hear what this government is going to do to resolve this issue.

Will the minister assure flood victims these issues are going to be fixed today, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, I want to put on the record, Mr. Speaker, that one of the key things that we did in this flood is go above and beyond disaster financial assistance, a program that's been in place for many years under federal-provincial guidelines.

For the first time ever, we provided assistance to cottage owners in this province, recognizing the unique nature of the flood.

We put in place comprehensive supports for our agricultural community. And I want to give credit to both the former minister and the current Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) for working with our agricultural stakeholders.

And I want to stress again that, indeed, in many cases we were coming up with compensation programs that were unique. By the way, entirely funded by the provincial government, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to stress that we recognize there are still claims outstanding. We're working with those claimants. We're putting additional staff in to speed up that process, Mr. Speaker, but we have paid out \$600 million and we have a total of 30,000 claims. That's of historic proportions, and we're not done yet.

\* (14:00)

### Lake Manitoba Flooding Crown Lands and Government Property Cleanup

**Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie):** Mr. Speaker, as the level of Lake Manitoba slowly drops, the destruction of lakefront properties around the lake is becoming more apparent.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship (Mr. Mackintosh) explain what the government's intentions are regarding cleanup of Crown lands and government properties around the lake?

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures):** I think it's important to put on the record that one of the greatest success stories of a very challenging flood was the degree to which we, as Manitobans, came together with the emergency outlet. And I want to put on the record that we said that we would target November 1st and we put it in place, and, in fact, due to that and the various other factors in around Lake Manitoba, we are now able to point to the time this year when we'll be below flood stage in a flood of one-in-400-years for Lake Manitoba.

I want to stress again that many areas—we are still at the point where we're above flood stage and I want to put on the record again that flood cleanup is going to be a significant challenge both this year and in the case of flood damage, particularly with our bridges and our affected roads, into next year as well.

So I want to assure the member this is a high priority for this government. It's a high priority for all Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Wishart:** Mr. Speaker, an essential part of flood recovery process involves cleaning up the shoreline and properties around Lake Manitoba. People affected by this devastating man-made flood deserve answers as to when this restoration work will take place.

Will the minister commit to specific timelines for the cleanup work so the people with Crown lands whose lives have been affected by flooding on Lake Manitoba can be restored to normal as soon as possible?

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, I think it's very important to note, Mr. Speaker, the historic nature of this flood. We were dealing with a flood of one-in-300-years on the Assiniboine, one-in-350-years in terms of the Souris, and particularly downstream, the Souris and the Assiniboine.

In Lake Manitoba we're dealing with what our scientists are now calling, at a minimum, a one-in-400-year flood. This, Mr. Speaker, dwarfs anything since the cleanup of 1950. And Manitobans who were around in 1950 will tell you that it was a very significant cleanup that took many, many, many years.

We had the advantage of the fact we put in place programs that did not exist for that cleanup. We had the advantage, by the way, of our staff and our municipal staff and the many stakeholders who've identified the key issues. I want to assure the member that just as providing the kind of assistance in compensation has been a priority, continues to be a priority, right from day one we recognized that until every Manitoban is back home, until we've done full cleanup, the flood fight of 2011, now into 2012, will not be complete.

### Private Property Cleanup

**Mr. Wishart:** Mr. Speaker, the ongoing presence of debris and damaged property is not just isolated to people located on Crown lands around Lake Manitoba. Many private property owners around the lake are also struggling to clean up debris.

Will the minister assure private property owners that they won't be forgotten during efforts to clean up

debris on—or caused by man-made flood on Lake Manitoba? Or will this be many years as well?

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the member opposite that last year when people around Lake Manitoba said, don't forget about us, when they said, do something about the levels on the lake—notwithstanding it was historic flood, a flood of historic proportion, a one-in-400-year flood—we worked—we spent several months building something that would have taken five or six years normally with the outlet out of Lake St. Martin, which has significantly lowered the level of the lake.

So we were there in terms of the floodfighting, working with people in and around Lake Manitoba and many areas across the province. We will be there in terms of the cleanup, and absolutely cleanup is a major priority. We want to get people back in their homes. We want to rebuild in and around Lake Manitoba; in fact, we want to rebuild in around the rest of the province.

It—will it take time? Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have 80 bridges throughout the province that are impacted by the flood and it—that number may increase. But are we going to face that challenge just as we did in fighting the flood 2011, we're going to face that challenge in 2012.

### Lake Manitoba Flooding Financial Compensation Programs for Residents

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz):** Mr. Speaker, the farmers, ranchers, property owners, municipalities and First Nations bordering Lake Manitoba understood that they were being sacrificed to save other Manitobans from flooding. The NDP government said it would put programs in place to cover lost revenue, to cover damages caused by their decisions, to make sure that the Lake Manitoba residents are compensated for all of their losses caused by the intentional 2011 Lake Manitoba flooding.

I ask today: Why has the Premier not kept those promises to flood victims?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** In fact, Mr. Speaker, the member will know that we put in place unprecedented levels of resources and programs above and beyond the disaster financial assistance program agreed to by the federal government. We put in special programs for Lake Manitoba. We put in special programs for the Hoop and Holler

program. We put in place a special program for the Shoal lakes people affected by the Shoal lakes' rising waters and we have delivered over \$575 million of compensation, as we speak today, over \$600 million.

There are many, many applications for assistance. We are going to, and we have already, put additional resources onto that. Staff inside the government have been reallocated in unprecedented numbers to address the application process and the compensation process. Staff in the Department of Conservation have been out working on protecting properties and helping people fight the flood and then recover from the flood.

We are not finished yet. There are more things that have to be done. There are more resources that will flow. We anticipate that the total costs of this flood will exceed or come very close to a billion dollars before we're all finished.

So we're well down the road; we've got more work to do. We know that recovery is very difficult for the people experiencing it. We know the stress levels have been very high for the people that—experiencing it, and I want them to know we're not finished working with them to get them back to normal conditions.

**Mr. Briese:** Mr. Speaker, promises made, promises broken.

The 2011 Lake Manitoba flood was man-made and it isn't over. Thousands of acres of land are still under water, much of what is unusable and requires long-term rehabilitation. Thousands of properties have been destroyed. Thousands of people still can't return to their homes and properties.

Mr. Speaker, this NDP government promised to cover property rehabilitation, promised long-term loss of income coverage and promised to cover costs caused by the intentional flooding. They broke their word.

When is this government going to honour its commitments, stop blaming everyone else for Lake Manitoba flooding and actually keep their promises?

**Mr. Selinger:** Every program we've announced we will honour and proceed and make those resources available to people based on the assessments that are done of their actual need and what compensation can be made available to them; 575 to 600 million dollars of compensation has already flowed. There will be hundreds of millions of dollars of more resources

that will flow before this process and this recovery period has been completed.

It is a very difficult, unprecedented event that has happened to the people around Lake Manitoba and in the Interlake region. We recognize that, which is why we put this unprecedeted amount of resources in place to address it, resources above and beyond what we have budgeted for. Obviously nobody could anticipate this. We are moving on that. We have put those dollars out front and we will continue to process applications as rapidly as possible and respond to the real needs of producers and farmers and families and businesses and communities in that area. We will continue to move forward until we have fully addressed all the priorities we have identified under the programs we announced in the spring and will honour.

**Mr. Briese:** Mr. Speaker, the people of Lake Manitoba believed this NDP government would be true to its flood-related promises, and what did they receive? No long-term rehabilitation, no long-term loss of income coverage, no full coverage for their losses, deductibles on programs, thousands of claims rejected, municipalities borrowing money to play flood costs and then having the interest claim on that money rejected, Crown lands taken away from producers that had to disperse their herds.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier admit today that the promises made were simply election promises that he had no intention of keeping?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, not only will we honour all the programs we announced and not only will we follow through on them, but if any individual feels that they have been mistreated in the compensation they've been awarded or the process through which they have gone, we have put in place an individual who will be—act as an appeals commissioner, Mr. Ron Bell. He's the former president of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities. He has spent countless hours in the area talking to people that have been affected by the flood, and I know he will act without fear or favour to impartially review any appeals that people have.

We are—we want to ensure that there's a fair process. We want to ensure the resources are made available. We would flow—we want to flow them as rapidly as possible at a level that will address the real needs of people when we know we have 30,000 applications. That is an extraordinary number of application for an unprecedeted event which has left some people in very dire circumstances, and all the

needs as properly assessed and appraised will be addressed through the programs we have put in place.

### **Lake Manitoba Flooding Financial Compensation for Dairy Producer**

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** Well, here's one, Mr. Speaker, that I had mentioned to the Premier back in January that's fallen through those cracks.

\* (14:10)

Mr. Speaker, due to the 2011 Souris River flooding, dairy farmer Fred Neil was ordered to evacuate his family and 230 head of dairy cows. In spite of doing everything he could to save his livelihood, he has still received only a fraction of the compensation for his losses. He had no income for five months. He had to build a dike around his home and dairy. He had to replace lost feed and 13 animals that died. Mr. Neil did what the Premier said last spring: Do what you need to do to protect yourself and we'll look after you.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister responsible explain to Mr. Neil and his family why, nearly a year later, they have only received a fraction of their compensation?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** I thank the member for raising the specific family and individual's issues. I did follow up after he raised it with me and took it to the Department of Agriculture where the deputy minister reviewed the circumstances. He is paying attention to it. I understand there has been some compensation flowed, and the department will look after that particular individual's needs within the parameters of the programs we announced, and we will do everything we can to ensure that he gets treated fairly.

And if he does not feel he is treated fairly, he will have the ability to appeal to an independent commissioner who will give a review of his circumstances without fear or favour and try to do the right thing with the programs we've made available.

**Mr. Maguire:** Mr. Speaker, I've written to the Premier. I've written to the minister responsible for disaster financial assistance and the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) outlining the uniqueness of Mr. Neil's case. It's the only dairy in Manitoba that was given an evacuation notice, and

Mr. Neil followed it as required. The dairy producers of Manitoba, Keystone Agricultural Producers, and Manitoba Agriculture officials have all met on the Neils' behalf with the minister as far back as January, with at least the Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister responsible again: What steps are being taken to finish processing the family's flood claims in a timely fashion so they don't have to go out of business waiting for their compensation?

**Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** It's a great honour—first of all, I'd like to acknowledge the fact that I've been chosen Agriculture Minister, and it's a great pleasure to be here today.

Regarding the case that's been brought forward today, Mr. Speaker, it has been in discussion and we—at this point in time, the staff is tentatively looking at the case and reviewing it at this point in time, but I think it's probably in our best interest to keep it within the helm of the department and the opposition party for now till we get further clarification to deal with the problem that may exist in—till we get further information. So if that's satisfactory, thank you.

**Mr. Maguire:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I welcome the minister as well.

But Mr. Neil, as with most dairy farmers, he carries business loss insurance, for the minister's acknowledgement. However, it's only good for losses on his farm. The sad irony is that if Mr. Neil had irresponsibly left his 230 dairy cows to drown, he could have been paid, but he did the right thing. He chose the correct, humane, and common sense action and evacuated his whole herd. The cows were gone for nearly five months, Mr. Speaker. The herd was among the top 10 producing dairies in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, some funds for crop loss were issued, but for hundreds of thousands of dollars in long-term outstanding claims—it's not just a few dollars; hundreds of thousands of dollars in claims—will the minister in charge of this case investigate the delays in payment? And Mr. Neil should not have to be forced out of business because of government delays.

**Mr. Selinger:** Again, Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Arthur-Virden for raising this issue. We have followed up on it. Senior officials in the Department of Agriculture will review the

circumstances. I'm glad he's identified that there has been—the farmer—dairy producer in question had business interruption insurance. All of those facts will be looked at. They will be reviewed with respect to the programs that we have available.

And support has been offered so far. If additional support can be offered within those programs, it will be made available. And if the individual, the dairy producer, is unhappy, he does have an appeal mechanism. That appeal mechanism is independent and will give an impartial review of the circumstances and render any additional help that that appeal commissioner deems is necessary and required.

### **Home Care Services Program and Care Level Reductions**

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** Mr. Speaker, Keith Bergen has suffered from cerebral palsy his entire life, and up until recently managed quite well, making his own meals, clothing himself, and was generally self-sufficient with some Home Care assistance.

For the past 30 years, Home Care program has allowed the Medox Health Services to bathe him, covering the costs and maintaining a regular schedule. However, three months ago Manitoba Home Care stopped covering the cost, claiming that the service was too expensive and that the government could provide a service at a reduced rate.

Mr. Speaker, with that reduced rate came a reduction in quality of care. I'm appalled that Keith Bergen has not been given a proper bath by Home Care for three and a half months.

I ask the Minister of Health: Why did the Manitoba Home Care terminate this arrangement and why has Keith not been given a proper bath since that time?

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** Indeed, all families in Manitoba have a right to expect excellence from our Home Care program, and this particular individual would be no different. I thank the member for raising this issue with me. I do commit to him, absolutely, that we will investigate the circumstances that are causing this particular individual to not receive the care that is believed to be appropriate for him. We'll get to the bottom of it, and work to amend the situation swiftly.

**Mr. Graydon:** Keith Bergen has been a productive member of society and has learned to live and work with his disability, going to work every day with a minimal of support. However, more recently, because of his feelings of uncleanness, he's reluctant to go to work, he rarely socializes before or after work, and feels trapped inside his own home. Mr. Speaker, three and a half months without a proper bath is unacceptable.

I ask the minister: Why would Manitoba Health subject a person to this type of torture?

**Ms. Oswald:** Well, the member opposite quite eloquently points out how important the services of Home Care are for Manitobans. And, indeed, we're ensuring that we are expanding our Home Care program, Mr. Speaker, not cutting it back. The circumstances, as presented by the member, are indeed very concerning. No Manitoba family, Mr. Bergen included, should be experiencing any sort of situation where home care is required and, indeed, they are reportedly not getting the service that they need. I absolutely commit to the member, without delay, to investigate the situation and make right any situation that has been created that is incorrect.

Home care is a jewel in Manitoba and, indeed, in a nation. We were the founders of home care, Mr. Speaker. We will not retreat from being the best in the nation on what we provide for Mr. Bergen and, indeed, for all Manitobans.

**Mr. Graydon:** It seems that the minister hasn't paid attention. Three and a half months of red tape. Mr. Speaker, the level of care Keith Bergen has received is simply appalling. The red tape Keith and his family have had to cope with is unacceptable. His physical and mentally—he is physically and mentally harmed, a vulnerable person in a wheelchair.

When will the minister commit to ensuring that Keith Bergen receives the health service he so desperately needs? And when will the minister commit to ensuring his quality of life and pride are restored?

**Ms. Oswald:** Again, as I've said in my previous two answers, we will confirm, indeed, that all of the information that's coming forward today is in fact accurate. Without delay, we will review with this individual any additional supports that can be provided to this individual. And I also want to reiterate, Mr. Speaker, that it's our commitment to be

expanding Home Care, to be providing additional hours.

We know that members opposite have been making suggestions otherwise that are wholly inaccurate. We want to ensure that all Manitobans know that when they need the services of Home Care for their loved ones, for their parents, their grandparents, any member of their family, that Manitoba Health and the extremely skilled workers that—in our Home Care program are there to provide dignity, respect and all of the supports that Home Care provides.

Again, I will ensure that we investigate without delay and provide the supports that this individual needs to live a very productive life.

### **Mathematics Education Student Competency**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, as the Premier is well aware, there are major problems with math education in the province at the moment. Our students have among the lowest math scores in the nation, as reported to *Maclean's*. Instead of building a generation of math whizzes, the NDP approach is creating a Tower of Babel where teachers can't understand textbooks, students can't understand teachers, and parents and teachers have no idea what the other is talking about.

As today is budget day and math understanding is particularly important, I ask the Premier: What is he doing to improve math education in Manitoba?

\* (14:20)

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** I thank the member for the question. Core competency in things like mathematics and, even more fundamentally, the ability to do arithmetic, is an important part of our curriculum.

The math curriculum has been updated by the department, in co-operation with the experts in the field, and we will take further advice from those people that specialize in mathematics. It's a very important part of the teacher training process to ensure that people are going to teach math, or other computational skills, have the ability to do that. And we look forward to the new curriculum being implemented and as well as supporting greater excellence in education—not just in math but also in the sciences, also in the applied sciences, as well, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, the grassroots reality is far different from the Premier's rhetoric, and this is important—Education Week. Anna Stokke, who's a math professor, a constituent of River Heights, has said the Premier has created a never-ending cycle of innumeracy, students who are poor at math.

This is particularly worrying for the future of our young people, and it's also worrying that the Premier has so often committed to having a balanced budget in the past, is now running a budget with a deficit of about \$1 billion. Many of us are concerned that the problems in math education and NDP math may be contributing to the increasing problems of this government in balancing its budget.

I ask the Premier when he will address this never-ending cycle of innumeracy in Manitoba.

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that the member from River Heights tries to mix together more than one of his own agendas. The issue of mathematics education and competency in that regard is very important. The announcement that we made in January, and the education funding increase this year, included \$800,000 directed towards the mathematics curriculum in Manitoba, improving the math curriculum, improving professional development for teachers.

Some of the experts in mathematics in Manitoba, which have raised their voices expressing their concerns, have been in direct contact with the minister, have been in direct contact with senior officials in the department. There will be public opportunities for all the experts to come together, both on the math side as well as the educational side, to look at how they can work together to improve mathematics outcomes in Manitoba.

We've put more resources to it, we are collaborating with the community to improve the math scores, and we are committed to excellence in education. And this is just one of the dimensions that we will be pursuing, not only with resources, but with the appropriate level of expertise and professional development in Manitoba.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, the Premier is trying to paper over what is happening right now in Manitoba, both with students in the classroom and with his budgeting process.

The never-ending cycle of innumeracy, Mr. Speaker, the fact that the PISA scores for Manitoba students are among the lowest in Canada, and

plummeting, and the poor ability of all too many students to perform adequately in math has been called a human tragedy, happening right here, right now, in our province.

Individually, it's affecting our young people. Collectively, the lack of emphasis on good math skills and good processes is leading to waste and mismanagement in taxpayers' dollars.

When will the Premier stand up for ordinary Manitobans and ensure students have proper math skills and not NDP math?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, the issue that the member raises is one that we believe is important—improving excellence in education, including in mathematics, including arithmetic, basic computational skills. And that is why the curriculum has been revised, along with other provinces in western Canada and in the territories. They've developed a common math curriculum. We dedicate similar resources to training of teachers. We are looking at additional resources to support that. We have some excellent people in our universities here that know their mathematics. We're in close touch with them about their ideas on how we can improve the curriculum.

We have no inhibition whatsoever in taking good advice on how we can improve our math curriculum in Manitoba as well as our arithmetic computational skills. We want an appropriate balance between the fundamental skills of computation and the conceptual ability to understand and apply mathematical ideals—ideas to real-life situations and allow students to go on in post-secondary education with the support of excellent teachers.

Today, we have in the audience teachers that have received outstanding recognition for the kind of teaching they do. We will work with those teachers in the area of mathematics to ensure further excellence in Manitoba.

#### **Immigration Settlement Services Management by Federal Government**

**Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples):** Mr. Speaker, the federal government recently announced changes to the way immigration settlement services will be delivered. Could you please speak about these changes?

**Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism):** Manitoba's Provincial

Nominee Program has been a very big part of the economic success of this province over the last decade, and to remove the local portion of this program and move it to Ottawa puts everything at risk.

Over the last decade we have brought in—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Order, and we were doing so well.

I just want to advise members of the House I'm having difficulty hearing the response to the question that's been posed by the honourable member for The Maples, and I would ask for the co-operation of all honourable members to ensure that I can hear the question, because if there was a breach of the rules I'm sure you would want me to comment on that.

The honourable member—minister.

**Ms. Melnick:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The success of the Provincial Nominee Program accounts for 77 per cent of immigration in Manitoba. Over a hundred thousand newcomers have come, 25,000 of whom have settled in rural Manitoba in over 130 rural communities.

The real question here is to Ottawa, Mr. Speaker: If it ain't broke, why bother trying to fix it?

#### **Hog Industry Government Support for Processing Plants**

**Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland):** Mr. Speaker, Manitoba's pork industry has begun to recover from years of market and trade-related challenges. There are lucrative export markets for our quality pork products, however, one of the biggest hurdles for the industry to overcome is this very government.

Three thousand jobs in Brandon and Neepawa are at risk if this government does not stop using the industry as their political weapon. Brandon Mayor Shari Decter Hirst stated in January, and I quote—*[interjection]*—as long as the minister is on it. Brandon Mayor Shari Decter Hirst stated in January, and I quote: We also need to understand, though, what the unintended consequences of the hog moratorium is on communities like Brandon, a community like Neepawa, any community that is relying on agriculture for its bread and butter. End quote.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) ensure these jobs will in fact be secure?

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship):** I believe we had a different tone in the Legislature just heading into the election campaign when we had discussions on The Save Lake Winnipeg Act, and I believe the members opposite at least tried to convey quite a different attitude about protecting our great lake, and I would expect that they would do the same after the election, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Pedersen:** Mr. Speaker, the Province's hog moratorium does not allow producers to replace aging facilities with modern state-of-the art facilities. Without replacing or upgrading these facilities there's a likelihood that Manitoba processors will be faced with scaling back or looking elsewhere for hog supplies.

Mr. Speaker, how will the Minister of Agriculture ensure these plants remain fully utilized and competitive in the world markets? How will he ensure that the 3,000 jobs in Brandon and Neepawa will be secure?

**Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** Thank you so much for that question, MLA for the Midland.

As you all know, we're all facing certain issues and such being COOL thing—COOL registration, and I understand that your opposition party along with the federal counterparts can support us on trying to change the regulations regarding the COOL. So let's work together and move forward in making the hog industry more viable in the province of Manitoba. Thank you very much.

\* (14:30)

**Mr. Pedersen:** Mr. Speaker, the minister has not given Manitoba hog producers or processors any assurances this government has any understanding of the consequences of the policies that they have imposed on the industry. Surely, the minister must recognize the importance of these 3,000 processing jobs to the provincial economy.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister provide concise cost estimates for the manure treatment procedures that he has been quoting? Are these methods economical? Are the time frames achievable? Will the Manitoba hog industry be competitive with other jurisdictions in North America?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, we would call on the members opposite, of course, to be accurate in terms of conveying what the expectations are of those that impact on Mother Earth in this province. But we can certainly advise the members opposite that we recently had discussions, the Minister of Agriculture and the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and myself and other senior officials, with the Manitoba Pork Council.

We are entirely heartened by their approach, their willingness to work with us to make sure that pork production in Manitoba is one of our great success stories. We know that we can continue to build on this one, as well as we can continue to build and see the growth in Brandon that we've seen recently. And that is what we are pledged to do, Mr. Speaker, in co-operation with the pork industry.

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

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Major Jay Fox

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz):** I rise today to honour the life of Major Jay Fox, a dedicated family man and a respected farm leader. He died unexpectedly in a tragic farm accident in December 2011 on his family's Steadfast Ranch near Eddystone. He was 32 years old.

Jay was born in Lloydminster, Saskatchewan, into a family with deep roots in the cattle industry. From a young age he began working with livestock, eventually starting his own ranch. In his youth, Jay was active with the local 4-H club and later served as the president of the Canadian Junior Hereford Association. The skills that he acquired through these activities served him well later in life.

Jay strongly recognized the importance of giving back. In spite of his hectic schedule, he still made time for the local 4-H and grazing clubs, the Dauphin and area beef show committee, and the Manitoba Beef Producers. Jay served as a director and as president of Manitoba Beef. During his time with Manitoba Beef Producers, the industry faced considerable challenges, like the BSE crisis, and excess moisture conditions and flooding. Jay worked diligently, trying to ensure producers' needs were being met. He also spent several months as acting general manager of the organization.

Jay and his wife, Angie, were honoured and—as Manitoba's Outstanding Young Farmers in 2008, a

testament both to the quality of their operation and their dedication to the industry. Jay will be remembered for his tremendous work ethic, his sense of humour, his ability to bluntly express an opinion on an issue.

Most importantly, Jay will be remembered for their incredible devotion that he showed to his family. Jay is deeply missed by his wife Angie and their children, Devon, Charlee, Porter and Major, the other members of his immediate and extended family and his large circle of friends. He is also remembered by the directors and staff of Manitoba Beef Producers, the Eddystone 4-H Club, the Westlake Grazing Club, Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers Program and the many other organizations with whom he was involved.

I had the pleasure of knowing Jay personally. Although Jay left us too soon, he leaves behind a proud legacy for his family and for the industry. Major Jay Fox was truly—was a truly remarkable young, farm leader, wise beyond his years, and all members of this House mourn his passing.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### All-Weather Road Network

**Mr. Frank Whitehead (The Pas):** Every day, people living in northern Manitoba deal with unique challenges. Isolated residents have difficulty maintaining food supplies, accessing emergency health and social services and finding training and employment. These are complex issues, but part of the solution is simple: roads. Building a network of roads to connect these communities with the rest of a provincial road system will not be easy, but it is increasingly necessary.

The provincial government has completed several studies and community consultations and established the East Side Road Authority. Construction has begun on the 1,000-kilometre, all-season road network, which will improve the quality of life for thousands of northern Manitobans.

The monumental project will require significant investments of time and money, but the benefits to all Manitobans will outweigh the costs. Most of the roads will follow current winter road routes. This means that as construction continues, the Province will have fewer winter roads to build and maintain. The new network will simplify transportation to and from the region, reducing the cost of living for

residents. Last, but certainly not least, road construction offers opportunities for training and employment.

The East Side Road Authority is engaging First Nation citizens to undertake preconstruction work and has invested over \$30 million directly into east side communities; 175 local residents have already received training in construction, first aid, heavy equipment operation and more. Over the next 15 years, at least \$315 million will be invested in jobs, training and local economies.

The total cost of the road network may reach \$3 billion but it—and it could take up to 30 years to complete. So far, the federal government has only contributed to one small piece of this project, even though they will be a major beneficiary of the road network. If the federal government would offer a meaningful contribution to one of the most significant and potentially beneficial infrastructure projects in Manitoba's history, the all-season roads could be completed much sooner. A more equitable Manitoba is a stronger Manitoba—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I hate to interrupt the member's statement. Is there leave for the member to conclude his remarks? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Whitehead:** And all governments have a responsibility to ensure northern communities can access the same opportunities available to those in the south.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### Community Newspaper Day

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Manitoba Community Newspaper Day. This is the eighth celebration since I first proposed the idea in a private members' resolution.

Manitoba Community Newspaper Day honours the valuable contribution local journalism plays in our communities. It's a form of journalism that one can find in just about every local restaurant, community centre, waiting room, lunchroom, clubhouse and reception area across any Manitoba community.

Naturally, many Manitobans prefer to read their local newspapers because they are inclined to connect with the stories on a familiar and personal level, rather than the national or daily news

publications. They are known as the headliners, the banners, the posts, the bulletins, the weeklies, the heralds, the carillons, the times, and so many others whose names ring in our ears as a testament to their everlasting popularity. In fact, it is not uncommon to poll a community and find readership between 75 and 80 per cent in many cases.

It is my pleasure to honour the many volunteers and dedicated community members who are committed to this form of journalism as advocates of civic life and community spirit. Often they are simply passionate spokespeople for a given local perspective. Whether professional, a business person, an ethnic connection, a youth advocate, a special interest researcher, community worker or a farmer, they all perform a vital service to their community and I truly admire them and wish them all the best.

Furthermore, community newspapers are necessarily adapting to keeping up with change in information technology, printing and sourcing, which has come with its benefits and drawbacks. Although the way things are done may change slowly over time, I believe community newspaper organizations will always have the appreciation and the recognition and interest of their local readership.

So it's truly an honour today, as today is Community Newspaper Day, April 17th, I rise in recognition of the eighth annual Community Newspaper Day.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### Immigration Settlement Services

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Mr. Speaker, last week Manitobans learned of the federal government's unilateral decision to cancel the settlement component of the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement. This decision is a disappointing step backward and puts Manitoba's economy and growth at risk.

Since 1998, Manitobans' Provincial Nominee Program has been a big part of our province's economic success. Taking management of settlement services away from Manitoba and moving it to Ottawa will take away the successful local focus and put our economy at risk.

Our Manitoba model for immigration works by partnering with more than 200 community service providers. They work hard to ensure newcomers to Manitobans-Manitoba have access to arrival

orientation, labour market supports, adult language training and integration services. These are the supports that immigrants need to become contributing members of Manitoba's economy.

Mr. Speaker, 77 per cent of Manitoba's immigrants come through the Provincial Nominee Program. Because of our successful model, an independent evaluation of PNP participants showed 85 per cent of respondents were working after three months and 83 per cent of respondents were working in their fields or a related field.

\* (14:40)

Last year, nearly 16,000 new Canadians moved to Manitoba, and, over the last 12 years, over 100,000 new immigrants have settled in our province. Many of these new Manitobans have settled in neighbourhoods like in my constituency of Concordia and across Winnipeg, but also, importantly, more than 25,000 of them have chosen to move to rural Manitoba, contributing to the economic development of over 130 communities.

Mr. Speaker, given the success of Manitoba's integrated approach to this immigration, I urge all members of the Legislative Assembly to join me in denouncing this unilateral decision of the federal government that will hinder the effectiveness of this vital program for new Manitobans.

#### Manitoba Co-operatives

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of co-operatives in Manitoba and a proud and rich heritage across as many as six generations, all the way back to the early '20s-20th century. Indeed, Manitoba co-operatives have played a major role in cultural, communal and economic development of Manitoba across the extensive history.

Today, more than 400 co-ops provide products and services to over 800,000 members across Manitoba, a figure which both inspires and encourages proud Manitoban co-operative members across the province every day.

Manitoba co-ops are recognized as part of a global society within the United Nations International Year of the Co-operatives, to recognize the contribution of co-operatives to social economic development, especially with regard to poverty reduction, employment generation and social integration.

Manitoba co-ops reflect the overall success of 9,000 co-ops across Canada with approximately 5.9 million co-op members.

Worldwide, the co-operative sector has approximately 800 million members in over a hundred countries and supports approximately a hundred million jobs. The strength of co-operatives worldwide seems to be something of an enigma in our increasingly competitive world, yet they are also evidence of communities rising every day to meet the specific needs of the people they serve.

One only has to look to rural and remote Manitoba to find communities where co-operatives run deep. In 1937, for example, the St. Malo caisse populaire became the first financial co-operative to be incorporated in Manitoba.

Co-operatives are based on values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity, which one must realize is amongst the values that most Manitobans—such a great place to makes Manitoba such a great place to live and encourages the next generation of Manitobans to be as industrious and valuable to their communities in the future.

Co-operatives are based on international-recognized principles such as voluntary open membership, democratic member control, financial participation of the members, autonomy and independence, education, training and information for members, co-operation with other co-ops and concerns for the community, which, fundamentally, agree with many of the values and principles found in our free and fair democratic society.

It is truly an honour to recognize such an important institution which means so much in our individual communities, but also in Manitoba, Canada, and, indeed, the world.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Grievances. Grievances?

#### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Seeing none, I wish to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today from Springs Christian Academy, 37 grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Brad Dowler. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for St. Boniface, the honourable First Minister. On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here today.

And, for the information of members, we have joining us here today in the loge to my left, we have Mr. Lloyd Axworthy, the former member for Fort Rouge, and in the loge to my right, we have Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski, the former member for St. James. Welcome to both of you for joining us here today.

And also, I'd like to draw honourable members' attention to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us here today Nonie Struthers, Neil Brown and Alex Struthers, who are guests of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers). And we have Kevin Reid, who is the son of the Speaker.

Welcome to all members.

#### House Business

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader):** I wonder if I could ask for a short recess so we can prepare the Chamber and the gallery for the delivery of the budget speech.

**Mr. Speaker:** It's been requested that this House have a short recess prior to the budget speech. Is that the will of the House? [Agreed]

And I wish to draw to the attention of the members of the public who are with us here today in the gallery, that please be advised that you need to have a special pass in order to observe the budget presentation this afternoon and that the pass for question period does not grant access for the budget presentation. So only those in attendance who have a budget pass will be allowed to stay for the budget presentation. All others who do not have the special pass will be required to exit the gallery. I thank you in advance for your co-operation.

The House will recess and we will ring the bells for a minute to remind members to come back to the Chamber.

*The committee recessed at 2:46 p.m.*

*The committee resumed at 2:57 p.m.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Would all members please take their places. Order, please. Order, please.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

#### BUDGET ADDRESS

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice

(Mr. Swan), that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

***Motion presented.***

**Mr. Struthers:** Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to present Budget 2012.

Depuis plus de dix ans, notre gouvernement travaille de concert avec la population manitobaine à la mise en œuvre réussie d'une formule qui assure une croissance stable et durable.

***Translation***

*For more than a decade, our government has worked with Manitobans to implement a successful formula for steady, sustainable growth.*

***English***

For more than a decade our government has worked with Manitobans to implement a successful formula for steady, sustainable growth. We have protected front-line services and supported businesses while making responsible choices and keeping an affordable high quality of life for families. We have invested in education and training, rebuilt roads in communities, helped entrepreneurs develop new products and services and welcomed more skilled immigrants than ever before.

\* (15:00)

As a result, our economy has steadily created thousands of good jobs. Our population is growing and getting younger.

In recent years, however, Manitoba has faced a number of challenges. In the fall of 2008, a financial crisis sent shock waves through the global economy. Around the world, jobs were lost and many families saw their savings disappear. We faced a choice. While some called for reckless, deep cuts to key services, we chose a different path. Mr. Speaker, we took action—we put families first.

Our balanced approach protected jobs and the services families depend on the most. Manitoba did better than most during the crisis, exceeding the national average for economic growth by more than a percentage point each year. Over the last five years, we have led the country in economic growth. In short, our balanced approach worked.

In fact, *Maclean's* magazine called this success the Manitoba miracle. Manitobans know this resiliency and optimism in the face of challenges is not a miracle. It is just the way we do things here in Manitoba. We look out for each other; we build our

future. As a government, we reject both reckless cuts and irresponsible spending. It may not be flashy but it works.

Last year, Manitobans faced challenges much closer to home. Unprecedented flooding affected homes, businesses, farms and First Nations communities. The damage was extensive and some families are still unable to return to their homes.

We worked with Manitobans to face the challenges of this flood and fought the battle on many fronts. It has cost nearly a billion dollars to fight the flood. The price was high, but we refused to let Manitobans face this flood on their own. Mr. Speaker, we would do the same again.

Budget 2012 continues to move Manitoba forward, by focusing on what matters most in these uncertain times. We know our fundamentals are strong but we see more dangers ahead. The effects of last year's flood are still being felt. There is uncertainty in the global economy. Some of our largest trading partners face severe economic problems. And growth in major federal transfers to Manitoba has been flat for three years in a row, making it difficult to meet growing demands for important services, such as health care and education.

Budget 2012 protects Manitoba from the economic storms on the horizon. Our balanced approach is responsive enough to meet the challenges coming our way today and tomorrow. It contains innovative, responsible ways to reduce spending and increase revenues. These allow us to continue to invest into things that matter most to Manitoba families. Mr. Speaker, this means more money for schools, roads and hospitals, at the same time as we reaffirm our commitment to return to balance by 2014.

Governments around the world continue to confront the need to contain spending while providing important services. In lean times, families and businesses find ways to ensure that they have money for the things that they need.

Our government is also doing its part to reduce spending while ensuring the needs of Manitobans are met. Mr. Speaker, this year core government spending is decreasing by 3.9 per cent. The budgets of 10 departments are being reduced or frozen. Spending increases are targeted to key front-line services: health, education and training, infrastructure, public safety and services for families.

We are balancing expenditure reductions with modest, fair measures to increase revenues without raising any major tax rates. We have already reduced expenditures. We have successfully negotiated a pause in wage increases with many parts of our public sector. We have managed spending in the health-care system by increasing efficiencies and legislating a cap on administrative costs for regional health authorities.

The search for savings remains a priority. Budget 2012 introduces more responsible, innovative ways to reduce the cost of government. We will reduce the number of regional health authorities from 11 to five, to streamline services. We will cut the number of Crown corporations by merging the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission and Manitoba Lotteries.

We will work with municipal governments to encourage more regional co-operation. We will continue a 20 per cent rollback on salaries for government ministers. We will defer wage increases and reduce office expenses for members of the Legislative Assembly. We will reduce travel costs in every government department, and we will reduce the number of government appointed agencies, boards and commissions by 20 per cent. These measures will reduce duplication and result in more efficient use of public resources. Mr. Speaker, these are ways a modern government adapts to today's challenges.

Using these and other measures, we will achieve \$128 million of savings in year, the equivalent of an additional 1 per cent reduction in program spending. Manitobans have the lowest personal debt per capita in Canada, and they understand the need to balance spending with revenue.

Some have called on us to implement a harmonized sales tax, some have called on us to raise the provincial sales tax, while others have called for health-care premiums. Some have said that we should delay a returning to balance indefinitely.

Instead, we choose to protect front-line services by striking a balance between new efficiencies, spending reductions and fairly generated revenues.

There are no increases to personal, corporate or provincial sales tax rates in this budget. Our retail sales tax rate remains second lowest in the country. As in other provinces, the retail sales tax will now be applied to some personal services such as spa

services, as well as premiums for property, liability and group life insurance.

These measures will help ensure the long-term sustainability that service-of the services that Manitobans value the most.

Health care has always been our top priority. Mr. Speaker, we are focused on expanding care instead of costs. Improvements in Home Care, Pharmacare and community-based care are smart investments that allow us to control costs while continuing to provide the services Manitobans need and want.

We are building and opening new health-care facilities and investing in new equipment. QuickCare clinics, same or next day medical appointments and primary care networks will help take pressure off emergency rooms.

We will also train and hire doctors, nurses, physician assistants, nurse practitioners and health technologists to provide quality front line care. We promise that all Manitobans will have access to a family doctor by 2015. Mr. Speaker, we will keep that promise.

We will provide faster cancer testing and treatment and provide free cancer drugs for all patients, allowing more patients to remain at home during treatment.

To encourage a reduction in tobacco use, the tobacco tax will be increased by 2.5 cents per cigarette.

Education is the key to our province's future success. In Budget 2012, we are providing \$25 million more in funding for public schools.

In addition to building and renewing schools across the province, Manitoba parents and students will see the difference with new schools opening in the fall, new gyms being built and new state-of-the-art science labs.

\* (15:10)

Moving forward, we will continue to focus on smaller class sizes, beginning with an additional \$4 million this year for schools to start reducing class sizes to 20 students. Stronger programming will improve reading and math skills.

In 2008, we promised families we would fund 6,500 child-care spaces and strengthen our child-care system. Mr. Speaker, at the end of this year, we will have delivered on that commitment. A total of 54

child-care centres are being built or expanded. We continue to support better training and wages for child-care workers. Budget 2012 makes targeted investments to support Manitoba families.

We are taking action to increase the supply of rental housing by adding market-rate rental and affordable housing units through a request for proposals for private sector development. We are building toward our commitment of creating 1,500 new, affordable and social housing units over five years, with continued investments this year.

Mr. Speaker, this budget also includes funding for firefighters, as well as police officers and cadets on our streets and in our communities. We will also add additional resources to the criminal justice system. We have provided funding to the City of Winnipeg to hire 20 new firefighters this year and are also providing funding for four new firefighter paramedics in Brandon.

We are national leaders in investing in innovative programs that support a strong start for children and youth. This will strengthen communities and reduce crime.

During uncertain economic times, we must build on our strengths to grow the economy. We have a successful strategy to keep our economy strong and growing. We will continue to invest in education and training opportunities for the jobs of tomorrow. We will continue to encourage immigration and supports for new Manitobans and help Manitoba businesses create new jobs.

We are providing additional funds for our colleges and remain committed to supporting future college expansion. Strong and predictable funding to our universities will ensure academic excellence, affordability for students, more timely completion rates and better recognition of educational experience between institutions. Manitoba businesses need skilled workers. This year we will increase the number of apprenticeships and provide more rural and northern training opportunities closer to home.

Mr. Speaker, unlike the 1990s, our population is growing rapidly and getting younger. People are coming to Manitoba in record numbers and are putting down roots, building new homes and creating good jobs. These results are no accident. They are the result of Manitoba's internationally acclaimed immigration model, a pillar of our economic success. By linking our selection process to this—our settlement programs, we ensure that newcomers fit

into Manitoba's economy better than anywhere else in the country. In fact, Manitoba's immigrants have the lowest unemployment rate in Canada. This success is now under threat from the federal government's unilateral decision to cancel the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement.

Mr. Speaker, we are standing up for Manitoba and we will fight to keep immigration at the centre of a strong provincial economy.

Hydroelectricity is Manitoba's oil, only green and renewable. Mr. Speaker, our government is fundamentally committed to a strong, growing and publicly owned Manitoba Hydro. We have confirmed more than \$7 billion in new, long-term contracts for Manitoba power. Projects like Bipole III, Keeyask and Conawapa will grow our power exports, create jobs and keep rates affordable for Manitoba families. We will create an energy opportunities office and a fund to help Manitoba businesses take advantage of the economic opportunities arising from these investments. We will also work at the national level to build an east-west power grid, to supply more clean energy across our country.

Manitoba firms have developed an impressive reputation for innovation, reliability and quality. We continue to support business innovation, helping firms develop and bring new products and services to market. And we are listening to entrepreneurs in this province. Starting in 2012, one-half of the Manitoba Research and Development Tax Credit has been made refundable for in-house research and development. We are moving forward with private sector partners to pursue the establishment, in Winnipeg, of the first bilingual world trade centre to provide Manitoba businesses access to a global network.

Small businesses are a cornerstone of Manitoba's economy. Mr. Speaker, our government was the first in Canada, and still the only one, to eliminate the small business tax, helping them create more jobs. Small businesses have provided new ideas on how to cut red tape. So this year, we will reduce how often small businesses have to file sales tax. We recognize that additional adjustments to business taxes are required to help fund priority supports for businesses. So we are increasing the capital tax on financial institutions to 4 per cent. The dividend tax credit is reduced to 8 per cent.

When we first took office in 1999, many people had given up on downtown Winnipeg. Some said

that there was nothing we could do. We took a different view. And today, we see the culmination of a decade of downtown investments and partnerships with the private sector. Just days ago, when David Thomson was asked about this resurgence, he said: It's no secret the leadership of this province has been inspired.

Coming from such a leader, this is a true compliment. Our government was proud to work with David Thomson, Mark Chipman and everyone at True North to fight through the opposition to build the MTS Centre. And, as we all know, Mr. Speaker, in the weeks after our last budget, Manitobans took to the streets to welcome home our Winnipeg Jets.

Some of the flagship new investments in Manitoba are retail developments. From the former stadium and arena sites at Polo Park, to the IKEA development opening this fall, these are exciting, high profile changes. We also know that life is changing in other ways. Families today have hectic schedules, and Manitoba stores face pressures from cross-border shopping and competitors online. In keeping with such changes, we will loosen the restrictions on Sunday shopping. We will work with business and labour and consult with the public to ensure that more Sunday shopping does not mean less quality time together for working families.

The Canadian Museum for Human Rights will attract tourists from around the world, and make Manitoba a global hub for human rights research, expertise and education.

The business community shares our confidence in Winnipeg's downtown. There are more than \$400 million in private sector investments, in new commercial and residential development under construction or in development.

\* (15:20)

We are building on this momentum and encouraging further development in downtown Winnipeg by: partnering with the City to support work now under way on the sports, hospitality and entertainment districts; turning surface parking lots into places to live, work and play; and supporting the expansion of the Winnipeg Convention Centre.

We were excited to unveil the first phase of rapid transit in Winnipeg. Our government is committed to funding one third of future phases to expand the rapid transit network, and we are moving forward with the City of Winnipeg on a quarter selection process to build the next phase of rapid

transit to the University of Manitoba and our new stadium.

Brandon has seen its own renaissance and the streetscape of the Wheat City is changing rapidly. Our government continues to support Brandon's efforts to revitalize its downtown. Ongoing support is being provided to Renaissance Brandon and we are working with the City of Brandon and the private sector to assist in the redevelopment of the historic McKenzie Seeds building. We will build on this momentum and continue to create new housing in Brandon and revitalize underutilized buildings in the downtown area.

Our government is investing in recreation opportunities to improve the quality of life for Brandon and western Manitoba residents. Work continues on the Brandon University Wellness Centre, the Brandon family YMCA and improvements to the Brandon Sportsplex pool.

Agricultural producers have faced difficult times in recent years and Manitoba farmers know that AgriInsurance is their first line of defence. In 2012, producers can take advantage of improvements to the excess moisture insurance top up, forage establishment insurance and the forage restoration benefit.

Cette année, nous allons aussi affecter 1,5 million de dollars au fonds de développement économique pour les Métis, qui appuie le développement des entreprises dans les communautés métisses à l'échelle de la province.

#### ***Translation***

*We will also contribute \$1.5 million this year to the Métis Economic Development Fund, which supports business development in Métis communities across the province.*

#### ***English***

We will also contribute \$1.5 million this year to the Métis Economic Development Fund which supports business development in Métis communities all across our province.

One hundred years ago this year Manitoba's borders were extended north to the 60th parallel bringing the province an ocean coastline, forests, mineral resources and water power. We will continue unlocking northern Manitoba's economic potential by creating more education, training and job opportunities for northern families.

Work will proceed on Manitoba's next hydro project in partnership with First Nations communities. A new mining academy in Flin Flon will open later this year, and work is under way on new education and training facilities in Thompson and in The Pas.

We will continue to work with First Nations partners on the World Heritage site project by developing a cultural and ecological tourism industry that can fully realize the potential of the largest protected area in the North American Boreal Shield.

Manitobans know how devastating flooding can be for families and communities. Last year's record-breaking flood washed away homes and businesses, affecting thousands of Manitoba families. Parks, roads and bridges were not spared, and rebuilding will take time.

Our province has a long history of learning from major floods and making investments in flood mitigation to prevent future damage and hardship for Manitoba families. Our response to the 2011 flood will be no different. Our government is continuing to support Brandon to recover from the 2011 flood. Funding will be provided this year to improve flood preparedness and raise flood protection to 1-in-300-year levels. We will also improve flood protection along the Assiniboine River and around Lake Manitoba while reviewing where future flood mitigation investments and improvements can be made.

The gas tax, which is the main way we fund infrastructure projects, has been frozen since 1993. Last year our infrastructure took a devastating hit from the flood. A two-and-a-half-cent increase to the gasoline tax will support the extensive rebuilding needed after the flood, ensure stable ongoing funding for public infrastructure and provide funding for projects in the future.

The motive fuel tax will be adjusted by the same amount. We are also aligning the tax base on market gas with Saskatchewan. Vehicle registration fees will increase by \$35 per vehicle. Mr. Speaker, every cent raised in these ways will be invested in roads, bridges and other infrastructure, guaranteed.

Last year, we made a commitment to provide the equivalent of one percentage point of the provincial sales tax to support investment in municipal infrastructure and public transit. This investment rose with the success of our Manitoba economy. This year, it is expected to grow by almost \$23 million to

\$262 million. Manitoba is the only province to enshrine this commitment in legislation.

We continue to move forward with our 10-year highway renewal plan, and we are ahead of schedule on our commitment to invest \$4 billion over 10 years. This year, we will build and renew thousands of kilometres of road and renew many bridges and overpasses. We will continue to invest in the east side road network to link isolated communities, create training opportunities and jobs and bring down the cost of living for northern families.

Over the next year, we will maintain partnerships with First Nations, for First Nations leadership, to engage the federal government to advance this important road link. We continue to support environmental protection and innovation.

This year, we will take steps to make it easier for families to recycle electronics and household hazardous waste, preserve wildlife habitat, restore Lake Winnipeg while protecting all our lakes and rivers, and help Manitoba position as a leader in electric vehicle technology.

Work is also under way on a comprehensive, multi-year environment strategy for Manitoba. We are committed to keeping Manitoba affordable.

Mr. Speaker, tax cuts delivered since 1999 will save Manitobans more than \$1.2 billion in lower taxes this year. This keeps Manitoba one of the most affordable places to live and encourage businesses to grow. We are following through on our commitment to increase the basic personal exemption by \$250 this year, as well as increasing the seniors' maximum property tax credit by \$75 to \$1,025.

This year, we will introduce legislation to guarantee that Manitoba families will pay the lowest combined bills in the country for electricity, home heating and auto insurance. We will also hold tuition fees and Pharmacare deductible increases to the rate of inflation, improve student aid and lower the cost of milk for remote northern communities. We support enhancements to the Canada Pension Plan that will help ensure adequate retirement income for Manitobans.

We are also reaffirming our commitment to support hard-working Manitobans with regular increases to the minimum wage. This year minimum wage will increase by 25 cents on October 1st.

Mr. Speaker, on a personal note, I think today of my grandfather, Stan Paul, who worked nearly 40

years with the RM of Swan River, building the roads and the bridges that connected farmers and families to each other and their communities. Today, we carry on the work of those like my grandfather who built our province. We are building a bridge from where we were to where we want to be. Budget 2012 takes firm steps to spend less money and spend it smarter. We balance these with modest and fair revenue increases. All of these changes will support front-line services, our focus on what matters most in uncertain times.

\* (15:30)

Together we are building a Manitoba where every family gets the health care they need when they need it. Together we are building a Manitoba where strong schools and training opportunities are giving young people a good start in life.

Ensemble, nous bâtonnons les routes et les ponts qui relient les collectivités et renforcent notre économie.

#### ***Translation***

*Together we are building the roads and bridges that connect communities and strengthen our economy.*

#### ***English***

By focusing on what matters most, we will move Manitoba forward through these uncertain times toward an even brighter future. Merci. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I move, seconded by the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson), that debate be adjourned.

***Motion agreed to.***

#### **Messages**

**Mr. Struthers:** I have two messages from Her Honour, the Acting Administrator, as well as the budget documents, including the statement summarizing the poverty reduction and social inclusion strategy, which I would like to table.

**Mr. Speaker:** Please rise.

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, 2013, and recommends these Estimates to the Legislative Assembly.

And 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.

Please be seated.

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan), that this House do now adjourn.

***Motion agreed to.***

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you.

This House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

**Tuesday, April 17, 2012**

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