



**First Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature**

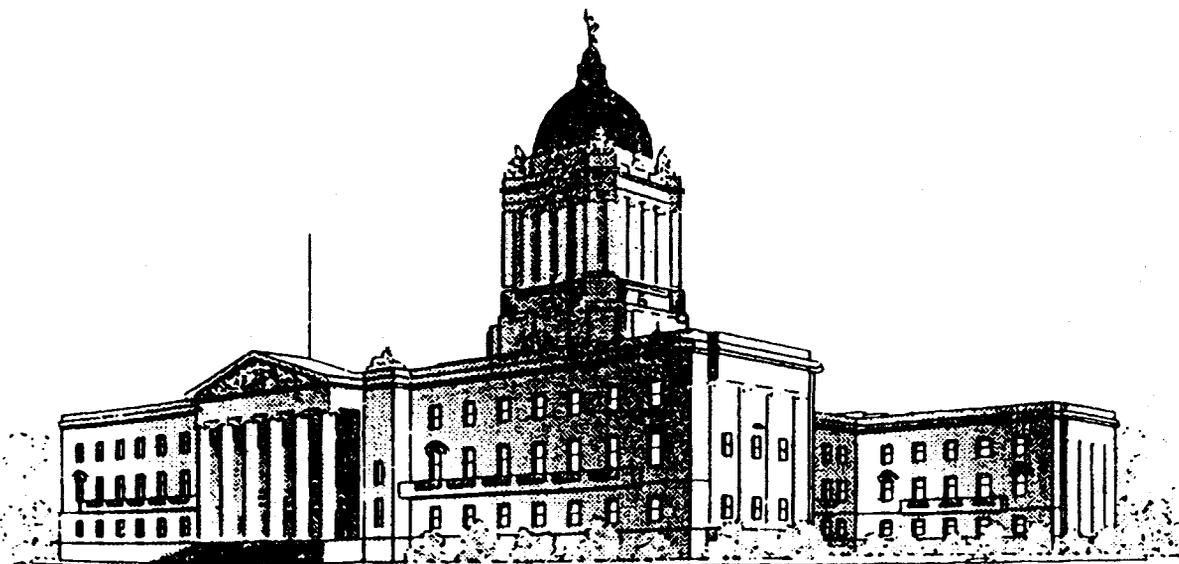
**of the**

**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report  
(Hansard)**

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Seventh Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
ASPER, Linda	Riel	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky, Hon.	Inkster	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew, Hon.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	P.C.
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MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, December 6, 1999

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

### PRAYERS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

##### Standing Committee on Industrial Relations First Report

**Mr. Daryl Reid (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations):** I am seeking leave of the House to do a report of the standing committee from this morning.

**Mr. Speaker:** Agreed? [agreed]

**Mr. Reid:** I beg to present the First Report of the Committee on Industrial Relations.

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Mr. Speaker:** Dispense.

*Your Standing Committee on Industrial Relations presents the following as its First Report.*

*Your committee met on Monday, December 6, 1999, at 10 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider bills referred.*

*At the December 6, 1999, meeting, your committee elected Mr. Reid as chairperson and Ms. Korzeniowski as vice-chairperson.*

*Your committee has considered:*

*Bill 3—The Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les jours fériés dans le commerce de détail*

*and has agreed to report the same without amendment.*

**Mr. Reid:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Wellington (Mr.

Santos), that the report of the committee be received.

**Motion agreed to.**

\* (1335)

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

##### National Day of Remembrance Ecole Polytechnique

**Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister responsible for the Status of Women):** I have a statement for the House.

Just prior to reading my statement, I want to advise members of the House that tonight at seven o'clock a candlelight vigil will take place to commemorate December 6 on the east side of the front doors of the Legislature.

Today, on this national day of mourning, December 6, 1999, we in this Legislature remember the women murdered in Montreal on December 6, 1989, Manitoba victims of violence and misogyny, and women everywhere who are abused simply because they are female. Some of us will remember those women we love who have been victims of male violence, our mothers, sisters, daughters or friends. Today we grieve, reflect and take stock but put aside our specific political agendas in favour of communal remembrance and commemoration.

On December 6, 1989, a heavily armed man entered Montreal's Ecole polytechnique, and after shouting "You're all a bunch of feminists," he murdered 14 women and seriously wounded 13 more.

Many women remember exactly what they were doing when they heard the news. They have told and retold their stories. Telling these stories was a measure of our pain and bewilderment, an attempt to understand the overwhelming juxtaposition of the perfectly pedestrian with the absolutely terrifying, to try

out, in my personal case, the terrible truth that on December 6, 1989, in my country, at a university, while I was making the next day's lunches, 14 women, some older, some younger than my daughters, were murdered. Ten years later, our national clarity is a sign that the lives of Canadian women changed that night. Our vulnerability as women became starkly apparent.

As members of this Assembly, we can never forget December 6, 1989, because 14 women were massacred in Canada where things like that do not happen and because the massacre symbolizes a possibility for all women.

Some ask, I know, why women still gather publicly to remember December 6, 1989. Shortly after the murders, I heard a CBC report on what was happening in Canadian women's shelters and women's service agencies on December 6, 1989. The litany of brutality was chilling, a long list of viciousness and hatred, certain evidence that the Montreal murderer was one among hundreds of similarly minded men who see women as inconsequential, disposable ciphers, not as living beings with the right to freedom and choice. I am repeating what we know. The violence in Montreal was not isolated. Since December 6, 1989, at least 91 women have been murdered by their partners, former partners, boyfriends, men who considered themselves boyfriends, even by total strangers—ninety-one women just wiped out, erased and often after years of brutality and humiliation. We must remember December 6 not only because of Montreal but because the violence is here and continues.

Earlier today I spoke about the importance of communicating these terrible truths to our children and grandchildren. Sadly, they need to know, but more positively, I told the group that in our remembrance we become witnesses to truth. We declare publicly that we know what is happening, we name it and we demand that it stop. Here in this Legislature, as witnesses, we tell our children that we value life, that we stand by our sisters, mothers, aunts, friends. Witnessing with all of you gives me strength and comfort. It is important to say that the courage and determination of women and men, some of them here in this Legislature, have made an enormous difference. Shelters now save

women's lives, counselling services help women to heal. Second-stage housing provides the support women need to transform their lives. People no longer tell jokes about domestic assault and abuse. There is much work to do, but the good news is that we are recreating our culture. We have made changes and we will, I fervently believe, make more.

Today is a day of mourning. As we remember Montreal we will remember real women with real names. Genevieve Bergeron, Helene Colgan, Natalie Croteau, Barbara Daignault, Ann-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Barbara Marie Klueznick, Maryse Laganiere, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michele Richard, Annie Saint-Armeault, Annie Turcotte. Let us remember too the women who were injured and remember the other survivors, family, friends, lovers and colleagues. Let us remember the four Manitoba women who in 1999 were murdered by men: Diane Laura Dunsford, Muriel Sandra Oneschuk, Angela Costa Craveiro, Noreen Lucinda Stevenson. Let us remember that violence forever diminishes all our lives and so let us renew our commitment to work for change.

In closing, I invite all members to join with this government to build a better world. Second, Mr. Speaker, I ask if, after the opposition's response to this statement, the House would agree to rise for a minute of silent remembrance.

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to recognizing the government official opposition critic, is there agreement to rise for one minute after the member has made her statement? [agreed]

\* (1340)

**Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River):** I would like to join with the Minister responsible for the Status of Women and thank her for her statement on the 10th anniversary of the Montreal massacre. I know all members of this House take this issue of violence very seriously and have worked toward trying to create a safer environment for all citizens. The murder of 14 women at the Ecole polytechnique in Montreal on December 6, 1989, was a tragic incident and it is difficult to believe that ten years have passed

since this sad chapter was added to Canadian history. These young women had built dreams, were ambitious and talented, and regretfully, through no fault of their own, these young women were not allowed to fulfill their dreams. It is painful to remember the Montreal massacre, but we must learn from it. We hope and pray that it will never be repeated, but sadly, violence against women, children and men continues on a daily basis across Canada and around the world. As we know all too well, abuse and violence affect everyone, regardless of gender, age, race, religion or socioeconomic group. It takes many forms, including physical, mental, emotional, sexual and financial abuse. Over the past few years, much has been accomplished in terms of helping Manitoba women and their families. For example, the Women's Directorate, in co-operation with groups such as the RCMP and the Winnipeg Police, launched the Keeping Safe at Work program to help those who work alone or who travel to and from work alone.

In co-operation with the Child and Youth Secretariat, the Women's Directorate developed the Manitoba Strategy on Youth Prostitution to help young prostitutes. The Victims Rights and Consequential Amendments Act was proclaimed earlier this year. Funding to rural victims services has been increased as well as funding to the Criminal Injuries Compensation program.

Manitoba was also the first jurisdiction in Canada to announce the Victims First emergency cellular telephone program for victims of stalking or domestic violence. Staff in the Crown Attorneys family violence unit was doubled. Manitoba has also passed tough antistalking legislation.

These are a few of the very important initiatives implemented under the previous administration to help make sure Manitoba's women, children and families are safer. I look forward to working with the new administration to make sure we find more ways to make our society safer. That is why events such as the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women are important, because they once again help focus our attention on the very important issue of violence in Canadian society. We must continue our efforts to prevent all forms of violence, and in particular, the

violence directed to women and children and other vulnerable citizens. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** I rise to add my voice very briefly to—

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

**Mr. Gerrard:** I rise to add my voice briefly on this important and significant occasion, the 10-year anniversary of a very sad event. Clearly, all of us are interested in a safer and a more just society. It will take continuing vigilance on all our parts as individuals and collectively as a government. Let us continue to remember what happened 10 years ago and continue to work very hard to improve safety for women, for children and for others in our society. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Please rise for a minute of silent remembrance.

*A minute of silence was observed.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Please be seated.

\* (1345)

## TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Industry, Trade and Mines):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the following 1998-99 annual reports, copies of which have already been distributed: Manitoba Industry, Trade and Tourism Annual Report; the Economic Innovation Technology Council Annual Report; the Manitoba Trade and Investment Corporation Annual Report; and finally, the Annual Report for Industrial Technology Centre Special Operating Agency.

**Mr. Speaker:** Notices of Motion. Order, please.

Is it the will of the House to revert back to Ministerial Statements and Tabling of Reports? [agreed]

**Hon. Eric Robinson (Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs):** I would like to table

the Quarterly Report for the Communities Economic Development Fund for the quarter ended September 30, 1999.

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance):** I would like to table the Manitoba Hospital Capital Financing Authority Annual Report and the return, under Section 20, of The Public Officers Act.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### Bill 2—The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act

**Hon. Jean Friesen (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I beg that leave be given to introduce Bill 2, The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

**Mr. Speaker:** It has been moved by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Friesen), seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that leave be given to introduce Bill 2, The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act, and the same be now received and read a first time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery where we have with us today twenty-one Grade 11 students from St. Maurice School under the direction of Mr. Shaun McCaffrey. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Smith).

We also have twenty-two Grade 11 students from Teulon Collegiate under the direction of Mr. Al Reinsch. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns).

Also, we have thirty-eight Grades 9 and 11 students from Spring's Christian Academy under the direction of Mr. Brad Dowler. This school is in the constituency of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger).

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

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

### Income Assistance Workfare Legislation

**Mr. Gary Filmon (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Family Services.

After almost two decades, through good economic times and bad, of steady growth in the number of people on welfare in our province, the previous government, through deliberate public policy change, effected a significant reduction of 21,000 people off the welfare rolls and into the workforce after changes that it brought about in 1996.

Given that the Minister of Family Services has demonstrated many times in the past that he prefers dependency on government programs to self-sufficiency and in light of his unilateral decision to scrap workfare, something that Today's NDP did not run on in the election campaign, my question to the minister is: what does he plan to replace workfare with, and how much will it cost?

**Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Family Services and Housing):** Well, I think the first thing to observe is that the vast majority of the reduction in welfare caseloads has come at the municipal level, through the good work of the previous City of Winnipeg Social Services department, in co-operation with many social service agencies and with their programs which they put in place to assist people to cross bridges to real employment through their employment training programs, for example. I just would note that the municipal rolls decreased from 19,000 to approximately 12,000 at the point at which the one-tier system was forced into being by the previous government.

I think that in response to the previous question, Mr. Speaker, it has been our policy all along that people who are able to work should do so and be expected to do so. That has not changed. That has been the case in municipal welfare since the 1930s, 1940s. The expectation

in regard to work on the part of those who are able to work is very clear and remains in place as it has been. What we are interested in is effective job training, employment training. We are concerned about lowering barriers to crossing the bridges to opportunity and to permanent long-term work.

\* (1350)

### Substance Abuse Programs

**Mr. Gary Filmon (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Of course, Mr. Speaker, the training programs that he refers to have been in place since 1996, Opportunities for Employment, Taking Charge!, and many others, and also the number of reductions that he talks about at the municipal level amounts to a reduction of 7,000, which is just a third of the 21,000 total reduction. So, as much as, though, he does not want to give credit to the programs that have been put in place by the previous administration, he cannot dodge the fact that indeed it has happened as a result of that. Indeed, amongst provinces, Manitoba now has the second lowest percentage of its population on welfare, another tribute to the programs, both for training and for getting people into the workforce, that this government, the previous government, had achieved.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, the welfare bill that the minister has scrapped would also have required people with drug and alcohol problems to enter substance abuse programs in order to continue to collect social allowances. On October 27, the minister was quoted in the Winnipeg Free Press as saying: we know that compulsory treatment does not work.

Since the minister, Mr. Speaker, has all the answers, can he explain what alternatives he will be introducing to help people end their dependency on drugs?

**Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Family Services and Housing):** I think that I first should, perhaps, correct some erroneous information that the former Premier put on the record. The caseloads diminishing, starting in 1991-92, they were at 40,499; today, when you take into account the municipal caseload reduction as well, it is down

to 35,000. In other words, most of the reduction, virtually 90 percent of it, came in the short-term end of the spectrum, which is usually the end of the spectrum that is absorbed back into the workforce whenever there is any increase in employment. That increased employment has taken short-term recipients off particularly the municipal caseloads in the years prior to the one-tier implementation. Approximately 6,000 or 7,000 have come off that short-term load. Perhaps the former government would like to know that, in spite of that significant number of cases reduced, the only savings have been less than 10 percent of our costs because precisely those people were not on full social assistance, they were on partial assistance and short-term assistance. So, worthwhile as the reduction is, it is their same reduction we saw in the '80s. When the economy recovered, people came off short-term assistance; that was the pattern.

In regard to the training programs, it is interesting to observe that the Opportunities for Employment program with the Mennonite Central Committee was proposed to the government before the government came in with its changes in 1996. The Mennonite Central Committee came with their proposal and asked for the opportunity to work to help place people into good jobs for which they had been properly trained. The government took advantage of that proposal on the part of MCC and, in effect, co-opted them into their proposal. MCC led the way, as Mennonites have often led the way when it comes to terms of human compassion and concern for quality jobs in this province.

### Workfare Legislation

**Mr. Gary Filmon (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, the minister, again of course, did not answer the question. It is absolutely preposterous to suggest that government is wrong for taking advantage of local groups, community-based groups that have a good idea and a good proposal. I do not believe that government has all the answers; it is only the foolish Minister of Family Services who believes that. Absolutely ridiculous to suggest that government has all the answers. So now we have Big Brother saying we should not take advantage of local community organizations.

Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary is to the First Minister. When the Minister of Family Services announced unilaterally that he was scrapping workfare legislation, he said, and I quote: I have yet to meet an able-bodied or a capable social assistance recipient who does not want to work.

Since the Premier has appointed the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Sale) to cabinet, can he tell us: firstly, does he agree with that statement of his minister, and what will the additional cost to government be as a result of more people remaining on welfare?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, we did not scrap the legislation. The members opposite failed to proclaim the legislation. Why does the former Premier try to leave an impression in this Chamber that the legislation was scrapped by the new government? At the time we came into office—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Doer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we came into office and our suspicions about no program in place except a political prop, regrettably, were true. I regret to say that to the people of Manitoba. They had the opportunity to proclaim their own legislation; they failed to do so because there was nothing in place except straight partisan politics on behalf of the members opposite to lead to their ad campaign. We are not going to play politics with the disabled people of Manitoba. They may want to play politics with disabled people of Manitoba; we are not going to do that.

I recall Mr. David Martin's presentation to the committee where he asked us not to force his membership to have to starve to death to deal with the legislation put in by the Tories because they were not consulting with the disabled community. We feel, Mr. Speaker, that when we rebuild—

\* (1355)

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

**Mr. Doer:** I would refer members to the Hansard—[interjection] Well, if they do not read Hansard, we do, and if they do not listen to the disabled community, we do, and we will continue to do so.

Mr. Speaker, in place today is a provision for social workers working for the Province of Manitoba to do as much as they can to have people work and give them an opportunity to work on social assistance. There is also the iron fist in the legislation that provides for consequences for able-bodied people who have the opportunity to work and fail to do so to take the consequences. We voted against a 20 percent decrease in nutrition for babies in Manitoba, again something we are proud to do. We believe in prenatal and natal programs, something the members opposite do not. Having said that, programs like Student Social Allowances that allow people to get off welfare would have been cut by members opposite. We are going to rebuild opportunities for people and help get them off welfare with real programs, not partisan politics.

**Mr. Filmon:** The member opposite knows that the legislation did not impact on a disabled community. He knows that, and he deliberately—sorry. I cannot say deliberately. He persists in misrepresenting it. He is wrong.

Mr. Speaker, my question then: if the First Minister says they did not scrap the workfare legislation, will he then proceed to proclaim it?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, David Martin was never consulted by members opposite before the legislation came in. He was representing the Society for Manitobans with Disabilities. I listened to him, I read his brief, I read Hansard. If the former Premier has failed to do so, I regret that.

So, Mr. Speaker, we moved 12 amendments to the legislation. After those amendments were defeated, the government of the day had the opportunity to pass the legislation and proclaim it. They did not do so because this was just a political prop for partisan purposes. The elements of our amendments, the elements of our amendments that put in addiction programs, training programs, work opportunity programs,

that consult with disabled people, that deal with people who want to get off welfare and will get off welfare, we will work with them to get them off welfare, and we will be proud to do so. We are not going to play politics with the most vulnerable people in our community.

**Mr. Filmon:** Mr. Speaker, I wish that the Premier would not misrepresent the circumstances. Mr. David Martin was not only consulted about the legislation, he sat in the former minister's office in the consultation process. I invite the Premier to call Mr. Martin to verify that. So if the members opposite are not going to scrap the legislation, then will the Premier commit to implement the legislation by proclaiming it?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Martin did meet in the minister's office about an hour or two before the government introduced the legislation in Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, that is in his brief. The former minister and the former Premier should know that in the brief from the Society for Manitobans with Disabilities and with the people from Harvest that are on the front lines of this issue, they implored the government to take the time to meet with them to achieve the objective of giving people a job and opportunities, a community service on the one hand but not rush it so disabled people, the hearing impaired, and others would be cut off on the other hand. You did not have the time. You did not have the time because your agenda for politics was more important than the vulnerable people in our society.

Mr. Speaker, you had almost over 11 years to meet with those people to deal with this issue. You failed to do so because your political ads imported from Ontario were more important than people in Manitoba. We will work with our vulnerable community and come up with positive ways to get them off welfare and on to jobs.

#### **Income Assistance Workfare Legislation**

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** In a recent article in the Winnipeg Sun, Mr. Frank Wesley, an aboriginal man, is quoted as saying: Before the handouts in the 1960s, we had worse

housing, but we were healthier. Then we became exposed to a social life where handouts replaced work. We must regain our self-esteem and discipline.

Mr. Speaker, could the Minister of Family Services humbly explain to Mr. Wesley why he is scrapping workfare, rather than doing everything in his power to move Manitobans off social assistance and into the dignity of a job?

**Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Family Services and Housing):** Mr. Speaker, under the kinds of training programs that we would like to see in place, some of which are in good shape at this point—particularly, I think the MCC program is working quite well—we need more flexible daycare so the people who lose employment are not faced with the fact that they also lose their daycare in two weeks, a clause put in by the former government which punishes people who lose their employment and then are unable to find replacement employment within two weeks. They then lose their daycare. What kind of intelligent policy of keeping people at work is that?

We are also concerned with the fact that the government of the day, when it jammed this legislation through in the dying days of the session as a stick to beat on people and divide Manitobans during an election, they did take the time to write out to the community and find out how many of their friends supported this legislation that they were jamming through. I would just like to tell the House that I have a letter here from a former Premier to dear fellow Manitoban, which I am prepared to table.

\* (1400)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

#### **Point of Order**

**Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, Beauchesne 417 is very clear, that matters should be as brief as possible and not provoke debate.

The honourable minister is avoiding the question that has been put to him. I only wish he

would have answered the question. Maybe he will take that opportunity after the next one.

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

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, I notice that the Opposition House Leader got up at the exact time that it looked like an embarrassing moment was facing the opposition.

I suggest that the answer is very important to the question.

**Mr. Speaker:** May I remind all honourable ministers that answers to questions should be as brief as possible, should deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Family Services, please answer the question.

**Mr. Sale:** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to answer the question in regard to the quality of the training opportunities that we intend to be offering to people who are on social assistance. We know that there are totally inadequate services for people with addictions. We know that there is not flexible daycare in place. We know that people do not get the skills they need in order to make a secure and permanent transition to the workforce, because some of the programs the former government had in place simply created a revolving-door syndrome in which people went out into subsidized jobs, the subsidy ended and people fell back onto social assistance.

We do not think those kinds of training programs are good enough. We are going to work with the training community, the business community and the social assistance community to put in place the kinds of programs that would make for success moving into full-time, long-term quality employment.

**Mrs. Driedger:** I think Mr. Frank Wesley would be extremely disappointed with that answer.

My question to that same minister is: what guarantee can he give Manitobans that we will see the continued yearly decline of welfare caseload numbers that we have experienced since introducing welfare reforms in 1996?

**Mr. Sale:** Mr. Speaker, I have met now with approximately a hundred advocates or social assistance recipients. I have met with staff from the line department of the department that is now headquartered on Rorie Street. I have given instruction to my department that the quality of our training programs is to be assessed very carefully, that we are to look for every single barrier that there is created by the previous government or left in place by the previous government that prevents people from making successful transitions, whether it is the way our rent allowances are developed, whether it is our daycare system, whether it is their failure to put in place adequate and reasonable addiction treatment programs, their cutting of the Student Social Allowances Program where they say that they want kids to be in good jobs and never to come on social assistance, and then they cut the program that would have allowed them to finish school.

We will not do silly things like that. We will continue to help people make the transition from social assistance to permanent jobs, and we will do it with all the energy we have and all the energy they had, Mr. Speaker.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Can the Minister of Family Services explain his statement that workfare will not help welfare recipients find work, when in Ontario since their workfare legislation was implemented—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mrs. Driedger:** —in Ontario, since their workfare legislation was introduced, they have been successful at getting 412,000 people off welfare. That equates to 12 people an hour since 1995, and, in turn, it has saved Ontario taxpayers \$2.8 billion. What is this government going to do to help us see those same kinds of successes?

**Mr. Sale:** Mr. Speaker, the Premier of Ontario has been more successful than any previous Premier in getting people onto social assistance and into poverty, particularly child poverty, and into homelessness and into unemployment. The fact that by draconian measures he has pulled people off social assistance and into homelessness on the streets of Toronto is not the prescription that we want for the people of Manitoba.

### **Aboriginal Gaming Policy Request for Proposals**

**Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the minister of northern and native affairs. The other day I asked him a question in regard to the number of casinos that he has been talking about being established over the next short while here in Manitoba.

I have in my hand a document in regard to the briefing to the minister in which it has been outlined that a two-person selection committee will be established, that the criteria for the principles of the RFP are to be completed by November 15 of this year, 1999. The RFP document is to be made available by January 3, 2000, and the closing date for proposals for the selection committee by March 31, for the decision by May 31.

I wonder whether the minister can confirm that that is the fast-tracking that has been taken by this government to get the casinos ongoing here in Manitoba.

**Hon. Eric Robinson (Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs):** As I indicated to the member on Friday, the discussion is ongoing between ourselves and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs with respect to casino possibilities in Manitoba. I cannot say at this point because there is no final agreement as to the form and timetables that the member indicated will take place depending on the outcome of those discussions we are having with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs.

I will say, however, that we are working on the premise of the previous government's Bostrom report that was released in 1997. On

that basis, our discussions are continuing with the AMC.

### **Consultations**

**Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale):** The minister also indicated that in the Bostrom report there was reference to a use of the Saskatchewan model as part of the discussion process for making decisions. In the Saskatchewan model, there was a fair amount of public discussion in regard to the community involvement and whether the communities would be consulted with the casinos that are going into their constituencies.

Can the minister indicate that there will be public consultations before any additional casinos are established here in Manitoba?

**Hon. Eric Robinson (Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs):** I indicated in the previous answer, Mr. Speaker, that we are working on the basis of the Bostrom report. Anybody who takes the opportunity of reading the Bostrom report will see that there are certain things that are required, including social impact studies. It is on that premise that we are pursuing our dialogue with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable member for Southdale, with his final supplementary.

**Mr. Reimer:** Can the minister then indicate, as he has mentioned that there are discussions going on with AMC, will there be discussions taking place also with the communities that are involved in and around where casinos are being considered so that there is a discussion not only with the AMC but the consultation with the public in and around the area?

I know this is a very delicate position for them, but, Mr. Speaker, these are issues that I think the public of Manitoba is very concerned about because of the proliferation of new casinos in and around Manitoba. The public is asking these questions.

**Mr. Robinson:** Mr. Speaker, I do not want to predetermine the outcome of the discussions that this government is having with the Assembly of

Manitoba Chiefs, which I indicated on Friday was being conducted on a government-to-government basis. I think it would be unwise for me to predetermine what the outcome will be.

I can say, however, that it is being done very carefully. It is based on the recommendations of the Bostrom report that the previous government failed to act upon, but we have taken it upon ourselves to move with the report and fast-track the opportunities for First Nations people to address many issues, including housing and the social conditions on reserves throughout this province.

\* (1410)

### **Aboriginal Gaming Policy Off-Reserve Casinos**

**Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte):** Mr. Speaker, we are well aware of the current interest by some of Manitoba's First Nations in the construction of casinos. Last week, in answer in Question Period, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, and I quote, made this statement: We shall make the House and the member aware of the timetable we are looking at in establishing on-reserve casinos in the province of Manitoba.

In clear contradiction to this statement is a briefing note to the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, which I have right here, which indicates that they have the right for gaming facilities to be located anywhere in Manitoba.

My question is to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Will the minister advise this House on the timetable for the establishment of off-reserve casinos and their proposed locations?

**Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Once again, I would like to thank the member for the question.

We are committed to the Bostrom report. Within the Bostrom report it states, if the member has read the Bostrom report, that First Nations communities, in consultation with other groups, as well as a number of different First Nations communities, will determine where these casinos shall be located.

For example, they make reference in the Bostrom report to Saskatchewan, where they have a casino in Yorkton right in the community.

**Mr. Loewen:** I take from that answer that the current government is looking at both on-reserve and off-reserve casinos in clear contradiction of the minister's statement last week. In light of his comment today, I would like to ask the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs: what steps will be taken to ensure that local communities will be consulted and have input prior to the establishment of a casino in their community?

**Mr. Lemieux:** With regard to consultation, in order to have a casino, in Yorkton for example, it was the municipal government as well as the federal government, under the Criminal Code of Canada, that they had to speak and talk to each other. I am sure the local municipal government has the authority and, based upon their election, have the authority from people of that community to go ahead and proceed with an urban reserve and a casino in their community.

**Mr. Loewen:** Given that the minister is quoted in this weekend's Free Press as saying our position has always been no expansion in the city of Winnipeg, I would ask the minister that, given that cities and municipalities have the right to hold referendums regarding locations of VLTs in the communities, will this minister and his government guarantee that all cities and rural municipalities will have the right to hold referendums before a casino is opened in their community?

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I am sure we all want to hear the answer.

**Mr. Lemieux:** Mr. Speaker, there are many options on the table right now. Those issues are going to come forward, but this previous government are the ones who cut off and ended negotiations with First Nations people, and they forget about the economic benefits to the First Nations community. They had 11 years to do so, 11 years to consult with the First Nations community, and they sat on it and sat on it.

### **Point of Order**

**Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, Beauséjour 417 again is

very clear: "Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate."

But, Mr. Speaker, the honourable member did not answer the question. Will there be a referendum? It is very simple. Yes or no?

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable official Opposition House Leader does not have a point of order.

### **Beef Industry Processing Plants**

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** Mr. Speaker, in discussions that I have participated in, in the last couple of days with the beef industry in this province—again members of this Legislature want to thank the beef producers for the luncheon they put on today in the basement—it is interesting to note that the beef industry has had a very significant growth pattern over the last 10 years, significantly different from what happened in the previous 10 years. We are wondering, and I would like to ask the minister what discussions she has had with the processing industry to encourage and/or re-establish the beef processing industry in this province and whether she has asked the cattlemen's association in this province what their views are and how this should happen and when this should happen.

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food):** I thank the honourable member for his question. Certainly the lunch that the beef producers put on this afternoon is just a demonstration of the quality of food that we have here in Manitoba. We were all very pleased to have the opportunity to share in the food. As with any other product we produce here in Manitoba, we want to look at getting the most possible value that we can. I have had discussions with the Manitoba Cattle Producers on this issue. They are interested in looking at how we can certainly add value to the beef, but at the present time they are also looking at how they can build up their herds in Manitoba so that that industry will grow in this province.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Speaker, the beef industry has seen some very dramatic changes over the last

decade in basically changing from a cow-calf operation which it had evolved to in the previous decade in this province.

Since the previous government let the processing industry go and allowed Alberta to assume it, we have now become—

**Mr. Speaker:** Could you please put the question.

**Mr. Penner:** —an industry that backgrounds—

### **Point of Order**

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** I just want to remind the member—ask you to call him to order—that the supplementary questions require no preamble, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Government House Leader does have a point of order. There is no preamble for supplementary questions. Could the honourable member please put his question.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask, then, the minister, whether she recognizes the impact that the feeder cattle industry has had and the expansion that we have seen in backgrounding cattle and in finishing cattle and whether she supports that initiative and whether she is going to have specific discussions with the packing industry to try and re-establish that industry in this province.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Speaker, of course I understand the value of the beef industry in this province, and of course I will have discussions with the beef industry and the processing industry, but we will take advice from the beef industry of what they want done in this province.

\* (1420)

### **Manitoba Beef Commission Re-establishment**

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** I would like to ask, then, the minister: is it her intention to revert back to where they were some 10-15 years

ago and re-establish the Manitoba Beef Commission as they saw it before? Is that their intention? Is that how they are willing to or wanting to proceed with the beef industry in this province?

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food):** Now we know who is starting the rumours. We know that it is this member across the way that is going out to the beef industry and telling them that the NDP plans to bring back the Beef Commission, because that is what they have been telling us.

Mr. Speaker, I had discussion with Mr. Petkau this afternoon about that particular issue. I told him that if he heard it anywhere, it certainly was not from us. It has to be people like the member across the way who is starting those kinds of rumours. There is no truth to them.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable member for River Heights has the floor, please.

#### **Henteleff Tree Nursery Development**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** My question is for the Minister of Conservation.

It has come to my attention that part of a unique and important natural area, the Henteleff tree nursery, is being considered for development. Under the present policy of the government of Manitoba, in this booklet, *Applying Manitoba's Natural Lands and Special Places Policies*, the policy for urban areas indicates that the Manitoba government will provide and seek technical knowledge and advice; review existing urban plans to ensure natural cultural and heritage resources are identified; develop guidelines and programs for their protection, conservation; and establish a planning, design and management process.

My question is: has the Henteleff tree nursery been evaluated according to the above policy, what position has the province taken, and what advice is being sought?

**Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Conservation):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question because it is one of the issues that I have been reviewing in the last little while. I want to just simply tell him this afternoon that our government recognizes that there are concerns regarding the development of the Henteleff tree nursery and our staff continue to look over the issue. Our department is also committed to sustainable development that ensures the protection of the natural environment.

I also want to advise the member that we want to bring all those parties together who are interested in that area to see if we can find a mutually acceptable resolution to that today. That much I can give him today.

**Mr. Gerrard:** My supplementary question to the Minister of Conservation, a follow-up, given such natural areas. What is the minister doing in terms of a plan for the whole Red River basin, given the importance of this in flood protection and the IGAC report, as well as the preservation of natural areas?

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Conservation, with a very short answer.

**Mr. Lathlin:** Mr. Speaker, let me also advise the member that the Department of Conservation is prepared to provide technical knowledge and assistance, as well as our staff people, to the people interested in keeping that area the way it is now.

I should also advise the member that apparently this is not a new issue. It is an issue that has been lingering now, according to the files that I read, so it has landed on my desk now and that is why—

**An Honourable Member:** It is a serious matter.

**Mr. Lathlin:** It is a very serious matter. I wonder why the previous government never took any action.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable member for River Heights, with a very short question.

**Mr. Gerrard:** My final supplementary to the Minister of Conservation. Would planning for the Henteleff tree nursery fit in with projects like the Rivers West, which envisages a parkway up and down the Red River?

**Mr. Lathlin:** Mr. Speaker, I was about to inform the member that one of the issues that has been lingering surrounding this particular area has been jurisdiction. I am advised that the city has sole jurisdiction on this piece of land but that previous stakeholders have been approaching government for quite awhile now to intervene somehow to sustain that area and maintain it as a natural space.

**Mr. Speaker:** Time for Oral Questions has expired.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Trans-Canada Trail Foundation

**Ms. Linda Asper (Riel):** Mr. Speaker, this government's Culture, Heritage and Tourism minister announced on December 4, 1999, that Manitoba's 900-kilometre stretch of the Trans-Canada Trail will receive \$2.125 million in provincial funding to develop the province's section of this cross-Canada initiative. The Trans-Canada Trail has been selected as the province's signature millennium project. The minister declared that it will provide a lasting legacy of recreation, physical activity, heritage and natural and cultural opportunities for Manitobans and visitors to the province. The Trans-Canada Trail is a recreational trail linking the three oceans bordering Canada. Once completed, it will be the longest continuous trail in the world, measuring 15,000 kilometres. Manitoba's funding will also provide for the development of spur trails connecting to the main Trans-Canada Trail.

\* (1430)

The Manitoba Recreational Trail Association has been designated by the Trans-Canada Trail Foundation, in conjunction with local trail associations, to develop Manitoba's section of the trail. The MRTA is co-ordinating the selection of routes and the locations of pavilions and markers. Manitoba Culture, Heritage and

Tourism will work in conjunction with MRTA on this project in order to ensure its success. Thank you.

### Balanced Budget Legislation

**Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, prophecy can be a dangerous thing, and predictions throughout history have been shown to be far off the mark. However, there have been those predictions that have come hauntingly close to fruition. Today I have the odious task of making my own prophecy in relation to Bill 2, The Balanced Budget, Debt Repayment and Taxpayer Protection Act.

Despite a commitment during the election to keep balanced budget legislation, Today's NDP appear to be heading back into their original view put forward in 1995 when this bill was introduced and passed by our government. Back then, the NDP considered this bill to be a political gimmick. They said that it does not correspond with any economic theory known to personkind and called it one of the most dangerous pieces of legislation. Now Today's NDP refuse to commit themselves to maintaining Bill 2 as it stands without amendment. Granted, and we acknowledge, that they intend to add some provisions in relation to Crown corporations; however, once they open Bill 2, they, not unlike a kid in a candy store, will simply be unable to contain their enthusiasm for wholesale changes, changes that threaten the progress of our province which has been achieved since Bill 2's passage.

Mr. Speaker, I suspect that after the downfall of Today's NDP in four years, Manitobans will find themselves left with not the toughest and most comprehensive balanced budgeted legislation in Canada but a watered-down shadow of its former self. I suspect Today's NDP will amend the legislation to allow them to do what they do best, run deficits, raise taxes without penalty. Unfortunately, it is the people of Manitoba that will pay for Today's NDP's slide down this slippery slope. Thank you.

### Devils Lake Outlet

**Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk):** In 1998 and earlier on this year as well, the NDP caucus

raised the issue of the proposed outlet for Devils Lake, North Dakota, with the former government. We were concerned about the potential impacts of saline water and foreign organisms from Devils Lake being channelled into the Red River system. The impact on Manitoba fisheries and on natural habitat was seen as potentially devastating. Since that time, regrettably the proposal has moved very quickly. This has effectively revised the Garrison Diversion debate and concerns about interbasin transfer.

Upon being elected into office, our Premier (Mr. Doer) took immediate action on the issue. He flew to Ottawa, and he met with Bill Clinton and raised the issue with him. Later in October, our Premier led a delegation, with the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin), to Washington and effectively lobbied against the passage of the North Dakota water resources act which would have granted full funding for the Devils Lake outlet. On November 23, our Premier went to Devils Lake to see the situation first-hand and to raise Manitoba's concerns directly with the Governor of North Dakota and the people of that state.

This government will continue to work in co-operation with the federal government and other stakeholders to protect Manitoba water resources for the future of all Manitobans. Thank you.

#### **Winkler, Manitoba**

**Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina):** Today I would like to speak about the Town of Winkler. The town has recently been announced as one of the three short-listed communities for the federal government's Smart Communities Demonstration Project, Manitoba selection. Under its Smart Communities Demonstration Project, the Government of Canada will be selecting one smart community from each province, one in Canada's North, and one aboriginal community. Each of the communities that is selected will be in line to receive a \$5-million matching grant over the next three years. The money is to be used for funding expanded information and communication technology.

\* (1440)

This project, which has been dubbed the Winter Millennium III project, has two distinct arms. The first is a smart retirement tower that has been planned for the downtown. It will contain seniors' living units and a wellness clinic. The tower is going to be attached to the Winnitoba Mall. The funding from the federal government would be used to develop a centrally linked health monitoring system for the tower.

The second of the millennium's project arms is a welcome centre. The centre would house a year-round tourism office, a museum and a conference centre. It would also feature state-of-the-art technology to assist in areas like distance education, audio presentations and cultural pursuits. An electronic shopping mall featuring Winkler business would also be part of the project. The proposals put forward by Winkler for this project would be most beneficial to the community, and I hope they are successful in implementing them. Both the retirement tower and the welcome centre would be great additions to the town.

I would like to congratulate Winkler on this insightful plan. Their placement on the short list is well deserved, and I wish the town all the best in the final selection process taking place this spring.

#### **National Day of Remembrance**

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows):** Today, December 6, is Canada's National Day of Remembrance Respecting Violence Against Women. Ten years ago today in Montreal, a gunman ruthlessly took the lives of 14 women at Ecole polytechnique.

This morning I had the privilege of attending and taking part in a ceremony to commemorate this day at Sisler High School. I would like to commend the students and staff at the school for the ceremony this morning and also for commemorating this event every year for the last 10 years. Today they had a white-ribbon, candle-lighting ceremony which included a song by students, a dramatic reading, a dance called "Missing You" choreographed by one of the staff and performed by the same

person, Sofia Constantini, the lighting of a main candle, the lighting of 14 candles, and performance by the Nellie McClung Singers.

It is very appropriate that students, both boys and girls, and staff at Sisler High School and elsewhere remember this event, and it is important that all of us dedicate ourselves, or rededicate ourselves, to eliminating violence against women. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### House Business

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I understand there are two agreements, and I am wondering if you could canvass the House to determine if there is leave to proceed on two fronts: No. 1, that the House sit tomorrow, that is Tuesday, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, to deal with the Throne Speech Debate. The second is the consent to move to Royal Assent on Bill 3 immediately. It is possible we could require report stage and third reading.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there leave to sit tomorrow morning at 10 a.m. and to pass Royal Assent today? [agreed]

### REPORT STAGE

#### Bill 3—The Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Amendment Act

**Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Mines (Ms. Mihychuk), that Bill 3, The Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Amendment Act, be reported from the Committee on Industrial Relations and concurred in, by leave.

**Motion agreed to.**

### THIRD READINGS

#### Bill 3—The Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Amendment Act

**Hon. Jean Friesen (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** I move, seconded by the

Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin), by leave, that Bill 3, The Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les jours fériés dans le commerce de détail, be now read a third time and passed.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Mr. Speaker:** I am advised that His Honour the Lieutenant Governor is about to arrive to grant Royal Assent to Bill 3, The Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Amendment Act. I am therefore interrupting the proceedings of the House for Royal Assent.

## ROYAL ASSENT

### Bill 3—The Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Amendment Act

**The Acting Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms (Mr. Dennis Huyda):** His Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

*His Honour, Peter Liba, Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Manitoba, having entered the House and being seated on the throne, Mr. Speaker addressed His Honour the Lieutenant Governor in the following words:*

\* (1450)

**Mr. Speaker:** May it please Your Honour:

The Legislative Assembly, at a special session, passed a bill, which, in the name of the Assembly, I present to Your Honour and to which bill I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

**Madam Deputy Clerk (Bev Bosiak):** Bill 3, The Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les jours fériés dans le commerce de détail.

*To this bill the Royal Assent was announced by the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly as follows:*

**Mr. Clerk (William Remnant):** In Her Majesty's name, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor doth assent to this bill.

*His Honour was then pleased to retire.*

**THRONE SPEECH DEBATE**  
**(Fifth Day of Debate)**

**Mr. Speaker:** To resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. Vital (Ms. Allan) and the amendment thereto moved by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Filmon). When this matter was last before the House, the debate was standing in the name of the honourable member for Dauphin-Roblin (Mr. Struthers) who has 36 minutes left.

**Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin-Roblin):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me the opportunity to resume a few comments on the Speech from the Throne.

On Friday, I was speaking and making the comment that the class of 1999 seems to have really been doing a good job of figuring out some of the rules of this place, as a person in the class of '95 who in some instances learned the hard way some of the rules around this Legislature and in committee rooms. I am thinking of one time in particular when the member from the former riding of St. James and myself went to learn all about Estimates and ended up asking one question after the next in Rural Development, not really knowing what we were doing, I must admit. I can admit that now that it is four years ago, but we learned as we went along, and I am sure that many of the members of the class of 1999 will also learn as they go along.

*Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

Another example that I would like to point out for the class of 1999, we can do very powerful things in this Legislature. We actually can make the clock move ahead. It means speeding the rotation of the whole earth, I realize that, but we can do that in this building. The first time it happened when I was in this Legislature, I was sitting and minding my own business, as I usually do around here—[interjection] Except when the member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) is involved, then I kind of stick my nose in, but all in fun, of course.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we were debating some legislation, and we came to what seemed

to be a natural end to the debate. There was about, oh, if I remember correctly, 20 minutes of debate remaining, and somebody got up and decided they were going to call it six o'clock, and I did not know what that meant. Little did I know that meant I could go home and have a life outside of this building, which on that particular day I remember appreciating very much, but I had to get an explanation from somebody who had been here a little longer than I had at the time. So I want to encourage the class of 1999 to approach any of the returning members of the Legislature or any of the staff here at the Legislative Building who are very capable to answer any questions. As a matter of fact, I probably would recommend you talk to the staff before you turn to any of us returning MLAs in case we give you the wrong steer and you end up committing some of the errors that we have made in the past here in the Legislature.

I want to offer a welcome, as well, to the returning MLAs, those who were successful in being re-elected to the House. I know that the work that you put in on behalf of your constituents has paid off in your re-election. I, also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, want to pay particular thanks to those candidates, whether it be from the Liberal Party or the Conservative Party or the New Democratic Party or any of the other parties in that last election—sometimes I think we tend to forget about those who ran, put forward their ideas, worked hard to represent their parties in constituencies and did not quite make it here to the Legislature. I would hope that they try again, and I wish those candidates all the best in their future runs to get to this Legislature. It is important that every political party have a group of people, a group of Manitobans who do, in fact, put their names forward, and I encourage Manitobans to keep putting their names forward to run in elections for whichever party they choose, to hopefully one day become members of this Legislature.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this may be an appropriate time for me to acknowledge the career of the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Filmon), to acknowledge the years that the member for Tuxedo has spent in this Legislature representing, in his case, not only the members of his constituency but representing a political

party and the people of Manitoba as Premier from 1988 to 1999.

No matter which political party you represent in this House, each and every one of us I believe must indicate that the time that any member spends in this House is valuable. The amount of time that the former Premier and his family put forth in representing the people of Manitoba is appreciated, I believe, by Manitobans. I know, speaking for myself, I appreciate the amount of time the former Premier put into serving Manitoba, and I would like to express on my part my thanks for his involvement in Manitoba politics over the last 11 years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are very fortunate I think to be elected to work in the greatest building in the province, greatest not only in terms of its architecture and the meaning of many of the aspects of this building but also the history and the tradition that is involved and that is steeped in this Manitoba Legislature. If anybody wants to get a lot more detail than what I can give them on the history of this building, I would recommend a tour. Arrange a tour downstairs in Tourist Information, and the staff who are involved in those tours can very much point out the significance of the different architectural and historical points in this building.

There are a couple of messages I think that we have to draw from this building. One is a recognition of the hard work of Manitobans to not only construct the building in the first place but construct the laws and the regulations by which we live. In my mind, there is no underestimation of the value of the work that is done in this building. There is also a warning, I think, that needs to be said about this building. It is the kind of place where if we are not vigilant at all times, we can become sheltered here. We can lose touch with the people out there in Manitoba who have sent us here to represent them.

\* (1500)

I would like people to not only marvel at the beauty of the dome that rises at the top of this building, but I would also like you to understand that that dome can act like those domes in the

old Maxwell Smart show where the cones of silence would come down over the heads of people, and when the cones came down over top of individual people, the people who were under those cones would yell back and forth at each other. They would say all kinds of things back and forth to each other, and none of them heard what each other was saying.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not want the dome at the top of this building to turn into a cone of silence like what used to be in that Maxwell Smart show back in the 1960s when I was a kid listening to it. It is absolutely incumbent on each and every one of us, all 57 MLAs, to not allow that to happen, to not allow that dome to allow us to yell back and forth at each other in here and never listen to what is going on outside of this Legislative Building. On the one hand, this is a great place to work, but on the other hand, mainly because it is such a fantastic place to work, we sometimes get too wrapped up in what is happening here and we forget about what is happening outside throughout the rest of Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have been listening very carefully to some of the speeches that have been made in support and some of the speeches criticizing the throne speech that this government presented. I want it to be absolutely clear that I believe that throne speech was an excellent presentation of this government's willingness and this government's commitment to Manitobans.

I think it deserves not only the support of myself as the MLA for Dauphin-Roblin, but I think if members opposite were to objectively look and look carefully at all the good things in that Speech from the Throne, that they, too, would understand that those are the priorities of Manitobans, that what is spelled out in the Speech from the Throne in a clear manner, a clearly understandable fashion that everybody can understand, that is straightforward, that encapsulated the commitments that this government made during the election, that Manitobans agreed with on September 21, then the members across the way, I am sure, if they were to approach this in an unbiased, objective fashion, that they would see that indeed this is a document worthy of their support.

The criticism, one of the criticisms that I have heard, is that it is too vague. Well, the throne speech is not a document as detailed as a budget. For example, is not as detailed as the Estimates that will be forthcoming from this side of the House, from government ministers on this side of the House. The idea is not to be detailed in a Speech from the Throne. The Speech from the Throne, in practice and through tradition in this House and in other Houses in the British parliamentary system, set in a broad way the general directions of a government.

So why then would the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Filmon) jump up and down and yell and scream about it not being detailed enough? It does exactly what a Speech from the Throne is supposed to do, and it did that in a very straightforward manner.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the speeches that I have heard, comments coming from the other side, do not include the \$37 million in SmartHealth that this government tossed out the window. So if members across think that they can sell me a bridge, well, have I got a smart health plan for them.

I want to just pay a little bit of attention to another criticism that was put forward by the Leader of the Opposition in which he referred to all members on our side of the House as tax consumers, consumers of taxes, as opposed to somebody else—he was not quite sure of this, he was kind of vague and lacked detail—but as opposed to somebody else who does not consume taxes but somebody who creates revenue.

Now, the problem with his argument is that, just to take his argument to a logical end in which he asserts that everybody on the government side are tax consumers, then I suppose he speaks with a certain amount of experience, seeing as the salary that he has collected as the MLA for Tuxedo and the huge salary that he has collected as Premier for 11 years and the pension that the member will collect once he leaves this building makes him one of the biggest tax consumers in the province.

So I suppose I, as a teacher and school principal in the past, should not feel too badly

about being called a tax consumer by the Premier, seeing as he has consumed a lot more taxes than what most of us around this Legislature have over the last 11 years or so.

But I think it is un-Manitoban on the part of the Leader of the Opposition to be pointing fingers at not just people on this side of the House but people on both sides, because I do note, and I must say I was very, very impressed by a speech by the former teacher and now member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Smith). I was very impressed with the speech of the member for Fort Garry when I heard her talk about dealing with special needs kids. I think, judging by that speech, that the member for Fort Garry is worth a lot more than being referred to as a tax consumer. I do not even want to get into the argument about those who have married into money to produce, or those who have inherited their parents' businesses and are getting off and are somehow being referred to as tax creators.

Now, there are several points that need to be made quickly about the throne speech. First of all, this throne speech reiterates our commitment to Manitobans to fix up the mess in health care that this government left behind. This throne speech very clearly indicates our support for nurses, our commitment to ridding Manitobans of hallway medicine. It looks at rural health issues like emergency medical services and dialysis and rural doctors and probably now, eventually, after many years of not looking at prevention, we are going to take a serious look at preventing Manitobans from becoming sick before they end up in our health care system.

The last point that I want to talk about just briefly is education. One of the biggest problems with the education system over the last 11 years comes on the funding side, partly but not so much the amount of funding but the predictability of funding. As someone who is responsible for a budget at a school when I was a school principal, the part of the whole funding puzzle that bugged me the most was that I could not make any kind of long-term decisions when it came to funding because I could not trust the Education minister to give a figure, to give an education amount—[interjection]

\* (1510)

When I was the principal of the school at Rorketon, the member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) was the Minister of Education followed by the former member for Fort Garry and the former minister, Mr. Clayton Manness, formerly representing Morris. I could not trust those people to make decisions that were good for our school and then stick to them. The one thing that was sure was that there was always a decrease in the amount of funding. We did not know from one year to the next just where it was going to be. You cannot have schools operate on that basis.

Just to wrap up, I am very pleased that I have been given this opportunity to put my support behind the Speech from the Throne, and I look forward to voting in the same way that I have just indicated. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you very much.

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a privilege to be here today and to offer a few thoughts on the throne speech. This is my second opportunity to be able to speak in the House. The first one was on the ag debate.

I would like to extend congratulations to the new Speaker. I know that he will find the job to be an interesting and challenging position, and I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we look forward to working with you over the years.

I would also like to welcome the six new pages and wish them well as they gain valuable first-hand exposure to the Manitoba political process. To our retiring Clerk, who is not in the Chamber right now, I would like to say all the best in your future endeavours and thank you for so capably interpreting the rules of this House. I do not know how we will ever replace someone by the name of Binx Remnant. In fact, during my swearing in ceremony, my nieces came up, and they said: you know, only somebody by the name of Binx Remnant could work in the Legislature. They just found him most intriguing.

To the other newly elected members and seasoned veterans, I look forward to working with you all. As a newly elected member, I am honoured to be here and would like to extend my

thanks to the residents of Springfield for electing me as their MLA. I would just like to state for the record that the Springfield constituency is a little bit of a misnomer, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in that it actually comprises two rural municipalities, the R.M. of East St. Paul and the R.M. of Springfield. The next time we have the opportunity, I would like it reflected as such.

It is a large area and it actually spans suburban and rural, and I have gotten to know it well. I again would like to thank the residents for electing me as their MLA. I have extremely large shoes to fill as my predecessor Glen Findlay and his wife, Kay, were wonderful representatives for the constituency. I will try to offer the same reasoned approach to politics that Mr. Findlay so ably provided.

As I canvassed my constituency during the election, I found that I had a friend alongside with me as I went door to door. Most of the people knew of my friend, and all of those who knew him had a very good impression of him. He had left a very strong mark with them. You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that friend was Glen Findlay. I would like to thank him for the reputation and for the stellar standing he took in the community, and I found that out when I was going door to door.

I come to a new position as a member of the Legislative Assembly with some experience that I am sure will prove extremely valuable as I perform my duties. I have had the privilege of being a businessman, and some nine years ago my wife and I started a small import business. We ran some ads and sent out some catalogues which has now ended up being an almost full-time business, certainly leading up to the Christmas, and then we decided to get in a little bit deeper. We opened up two businesses at The Forks: Christmas Traditions at the Forks and Espresso Junction at The Forks.

I have a partner, and he and I came up with the concept and went through with the tenant improvements and started up business. It is probably best if you do not know what you are getting into when you get into it, because you do not see all the mistakes you are going to make, and we certainly made our share of them. We have had a lot of fun. We have been able to

serve a lot of Manitobans. One of the joys that I have had is because The Forks is so central to Winnipeg, it tends to be a place where people bring guests and relatives and friends from out of town. The amount of people that I have gotten to meet and we have got to know is just phenomenal.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I actually do not think I met a resident from out of town who did not have kind things to say about Winnipeg and our province. Often people would say—I will not say from where they came. They would say: wow, we did not know there would be this modern city. I do not know what they expected, but—

**An Honourable Member:** They are people from Brandon.

**Mr. Schuler:** Actually, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the honourable member for Brandon (Mr. Smith) made some comments. I have to tell you that the citizens of Brandon have been great supporters of my business, and I thank them greatly. I certainly appreciate the support I have gotten from all areas of the province and from across the country.

We certainly have gotten to know a lot of people. We have built a lot of relationships. I find a lot of people like to come to Winnipeg. They like the people. They like the friendliness. They like what there is to see. Frankly, they like the shopping. So the private sector has certainly been a place where I feel very comfortable. Business with all its challenges and its ups and downs has done very well for myself and my family, and I would like to thank Winnipeg and Manitoba for these opportunities.

I also had the privilege of being elected as a school trustee in the River East School Division, and I know this whole House will agree with me that River East School Division is the best school division in the province and probably the best school division in the country. I know this House will certainly agree with me on that position. I was elected—my first time—and then I was re-elected just recently. I got to learn what politics was all about. I was taught how to learn how to count when it came to votes. As one of the trustees so aptly put it, there are nine trustees, always count, it takes five. We learned

that very quickly and within three years, actually, after the third year I became chairman of the board, and I enjoyed my time as a school trustee. We did make difficult decisions. Probably one of the hardest things, and the hardest learned lesson, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was when you are dealing with the public. Even if you are making a courageous decision, a tough decision, an unpopular decision, be open and aboveboard with the public.

I know we had to close down McLeod School. It just was not viable, and we made the error of making the decision in camera and coming out with a decision. It was the right decision, but it was not the right way of doing it. It was certainly a learning experience for myself and has been an experience that I have been able to carry over through all the rest of my years that I served on the board, in that, be transparent. You know, be open about the decisions you make. It bodes you well.

\*(1520)

I would like to go on and speak a little bit about my constituency. I am very pleased to be the representative for the Springfield constituency, which offers a unique blend of rural and urban interests. For all the MLAs and listeners today, I would encourage all the members of this House to pay a visit to my constituency, for it is home to a number of popular attractions. One of these is the Dugald Costume Museum. I know everybody has been there many times. It is a wonderful place to be. It is unique in North America. The seasonal display of men's and women's and children's clothing is presented in a tableau vivant, or living-picture style. The collection of over 35,000 artifacts spans some 400 years.

A pioneer home, circa 1886, is open daily during the summer months for interpretative tours. The Victorian-style tearoom serves cream tea, and they usually have some crumpets or something. For those of you who want to take a little drive and visit real good country, come out to Springfield country and have some tea and crumpets in the summer. I know Stan is just waiting. It is the first time he has heard about it and he is going to rush out next summer. It is worth the trip to Springfield by the way, Stan.

Another well-known attraction is the Cooks Creek Heritage Museum. If you have not been down in the Cooks Creek area, you have to go. The grotto is just something else to see. You know, I do not think you can really believe it until you have seen it. It is such a unique exhibition and a history behind it. This whole area features Slavic and religious artifacts, a carpenter shop, blacksmith and farm machines, pioneer homes.

Then they also have a celebration in the summer called the Cooks Creek Heritage Days celebrations. I would caution everybody, because when you go, and of course all of you are going to want to come, come a little bit earlier, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I will tell you parking is a premium. It is so popular. It is a great time to come out with your children. It is very much a family-friendly kind of a thing and the food is just unbelievable. Really, I mean the value you get. There is nothing like a good sausage and varenycky or perogies. Just outstanding, and I recommend it highly to you.

Perhaps the best and most well-known attraction in the Springfield constituency is Birds Hill Provincial Park. It features hills and ridges formed by ancient glaciers. Birds Hill Provincial Park has a lake, oak and aspen forests, native prairie wildflowers, deer, waterfowl and songbirds. Facilities include camping, swimming, hiking, cycling and skiing trails, picnic sites, a riding stable, a restaurant, a beach concession and a convenience store.

This past summer, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Birds Hill Park was the site for some of the excitement of the 1999 Pan Am Games. The triathlon, equestrian, cycling and roller sport events were held in the park as part of the celebration of sports, and I know the events were a great success. I personally took part in going to a lot of the games. There is one thing about cheering for a professional team and there is another thing about cheering for your own country's teams. That was when I really found the difference and it was so exciting to be there. I will not go any further on that, but just to be at some of these Games, and I know the Games at Birds Hill Park were just outstanding. The legacy of the Pan Am Games live on, thanks to park enhancements that include a revitalized

lake, new sand, a beach safety program, landscaping and development of more beach day-use areas. Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would urge you to come out to the Springfield constituency and see what is new and improved in this wonderful park.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would now like to add my voice to this Throne Speech Debate, and as I told one of my colleagues, I always feel like I should call it the throne whisper debate, and put a few words on the record about the new administration's pronouncements or lack thereof. Governing the province requires a sound game plan, and I am afraid the throne speech makes it abundantly clear that, alas, our new government does not have a game plan.

The NDP's pre-election commitment to balanced budgets and tax relief was put to the test during the throne speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Anything short of a steadfast pledge to avoid red ink in '99-2000 unfortunately confirm suspicions that this new administration is going to be soft on deficits. Yes, they are going soft. The new government can only enjoy the confidence of Manitoba taxpayers by committing to rein in the spending, balancing the books and providing tax relief.

The new administration must be willing to commit to the promises it made before and during the election. For example, in response to a Canadian Taxpayers Federation letter to the new Premier in October, '99, the First Minister (Mr. Doer) acknowledged that "Manitobans clearly voted for strong health care and education systems as well as for tax relief."

It is unfortunate that the throne whisper did not echo the Premier's (Mr. Doer) remarks and commit to a balanced budget and competitive taxes. This new administration was elected to fulfill a series of promises it made to Manitobans during the recent election. Among these was a much-vaunted commitment to balanced budgets and to managing Manitoba's economy in a fiscally responsible manner. I find it most disturbing that a mere two months later into their mandate they are already on the verge of breaking this most important election promise and in turn of mortgaging the province's financial future.

During the spring session of this Legislature, Today's NDP, having seen the light of fiscal responsibility, supported the previous administration's balanced budget, knowing that it was best for the province. During the recent election, Today's NDP ran on a platform where they promised to maintain the balanced budget legislation and not run a deficit. Manitoba's tough balanced budget legislation had already worked for four years, and the NDP vowed to make it part of their game plan, to make it five years.

Unfortunately, this commitment now seems to be missing from the playbook. Alas, Manitoba's expectations are all too quickly being dashed by the new administration. The Finance minister has outlined a plan to lower the deficit but does not appear committed to erasing it. Frankly, the obligation to balance the budget falls on the shoulders of the government in power. Running a deficit when it is not necessary will not inspire public confidence in the managerial skills of the new administration. This lack of confidence will quickly move beyond the concerns being raised by Manitobans to encompass bond-rating agencies, business investors and the like and will threaten Manitoba's economic well-being. The new administration must stop crying wolf over a perceived deficit and go about the business of managing the province's finances in a fiscally responsible manner. That is what they were elected to do.

So does Today's NDP not have a definite plan to manage the province? Alas, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think not. As opposition members, we intend to be vigilant. We will continue to keep a close eye on the province's finances. We will press for controlled spending and tax relief for all Manitobans.

In no way should the NDP electoral victory be mistaken as a province-wide rejection of tax relief. Manitobans want and expect tax cuts. There is a tax gap with other provinces, and the new administration must take steps to address it in order to make sure Manitoba remains competitive with other jurisdictions.

As a businessman I have grave concerns about the throne speech and its lack of attention

to the provincial economy. My family and I operate a business that sells merchandise relating to Christmas.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am going to use an analogy that, yes, I think even the members on the other side will be able to understand. I will lay it out very simply about how I think the finances should be administered.

Laying the roots for a healthy provincial economy is not unlike that of the tree grower tending to his plot of Christmas trees. In this case the inputs are not fertile soil, regular watering and disease checks. However, the basic growing procedures are the same. The fertile environment necessary for the creation of a sound provincial economy includes one in which the province's finances are managed in a fiscally responsible manner. Stan, are you listening? The environment is also one in which the government's sound fiscal policies attract a wide variety of businesses, industry and investors to consider investing in the province. One could call these inputs the fertilizer required for sustainable growth.

\* (1530)

The healthy economic environment is further nurtured by the province's politicians bringing forward balanced budgets and a taxation system that does not act as a deterrent to further growth and development. The resulting strong and diversified economy is not unlike that of the healthy Christmas tree sending out a stable root system. You could say in both cases that the strong base, either economic or root system, will protect both the economy and the tree during times of economic downturn or drought, whichever the case may be. Once the tree and the economy have been nurtured, they can be built upon further.

In the case of the former, the tree is cut down and the trimming begins. Lights are strung and ornaments carefully added. Caution is taken not to add ornaments that the tree's branches cannot withstand. If candles are used to light the tree, they are diligently tended to ensure the tree does not burn down. The tree is watered regularly to make sure the needles do not drop off in an untimely fashion. In this way

the integrity and the beauty of the Christmas tree are preserved for as long as possible.

Similarly, the provincial economy must also be carefully tended to, to ensure its brilliance and longevity. The taxation environment must be conducive to employers and employees alike. Balanced budgets, like carefully placed Christmas tree ornaments, will ensure that the province's finances are well managed. Careful economic management will help ensure that the province's debt is paid off in a timely manner, thereby freeing up needed resources for future economic development. The province's resources, like the needles of the Christmas tree, must be managed with an eye to sustainable development. Potentially combustible threats to the provincial economy, such as successive unbalanced budgets and costly deficit financing, must be extinguished before they can be allowed to threaten the economy.

By following these simple but logical plans, we can not only enjoy the beauty of the Christmas tree but also the vitality that has come to permeate the Manitoba economy in recent years. I hope that Today's NDP will take a lesson from the Christmas tree growers and nurture our provincial economy in an equally responsible manner.

I have a number of concerns with the throne speech that I would like to address. I note with interest in your throne speech that you state, thanks to our elders and ancestors, they have a strong base on which to build. Yes, it is important that you acknowledge the sound economic management tools utilized by the previous administration.

Today Manitoba is one of the strongest economies in the country, enjoying a diversified business and industrial base and one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country. Manitoba's fine economic standing is in no small part due to the sound fiscal policies expounded under the previous administration. You would do well to follow our lead and to create an economic environment conducive to having a wide variety of businesses grow and prosper. Thanks to the strong and progressive fiscal policies put in place by the previous

government, the Manitoba economy has never been in better shape.

As an MLA who represents both rural and urban constituents, I was disturbed by the lack of recognition of the needs of rural Manitobans in the throne speech. There are only two references to rural Manitoba in the entire speech. Given the crisis facing our agricultural producers—several days ago we had a debate on that—and the impact it has had on our rural communities, this brevity speaks volumes. Similarly, the throne speech contains only one reference to the issues facing both downtown Winnipeg and downtown Brandon.

Just as we rely on a healthy rural economy, we also must rely on a healthy urban environment. Both sectors must be vibrant in order for the provincial economy to prosper. Does the new administration have no concept of the work that lies ahead of them in balancing rural and urban interests, knowing that the two sectors' economic interests are deeply entwined? The decision to combine the Rural Development and Urban Affairs departments into one department is bound to have a negative impact on one or both of these sectors.

I am pleased to see that the Premier (Mr. Doer) and the Finance minister (Mr. Selinger) are finally calling the report from Deloitte and Touche what it actually is, a financial review. It is not an audit of the government of Manitoba or any of its entities. Fortunately, you have both given up the misleading notion that the Deloitte and Touche document is an audit. Manitobans clearly know the difference between a review and an audit, and they want the new administration to live up to the commitment of the previous administration and indeed your own election promise. They want your administration not only to balance the '99-2000 budget but also to balance all future budgets. They want you to continue paying down the province's debt, a debt that continues to hamper the full development of our province's economy potential.

I note with interest in the throne speech that the current administration mentions that Manitobans voted for improvements in the basic services that government provides and for

sustainable tax reduction other than a continuation of the 1.5 percent tax reduction and personal income tax announced in the previous administration's '99-2000 budget. There is no further mention of immediate tax reduction. Manitobans are expecting tax cuts, but you have not given any real indication in your throne speech of your ongoing commitment to tax cuts and how you plan to achieve that. Does Today's NDP have no definite plan to put more money into Manitoban taxpayers' pockets?

You say in the throne speech that your government is committed to future reductions to property and small-business taxes. I know first-hand that the small-business person plays a critical role in the Manitoba economy by helping to diversify our economic base and by employing thousands of Manitobans.

A case in point would be Workers Compensation. When I got into business some seven years ago, I was paying about \$1,200 fees for Workers Compensation. Thank goodness that the Conservative government took the old Workers Compensation in hand and cleaned it up to the point that this year I was paying some \$260. That is a major reduction in the cost to my business, \$1,200 all the way down to \$260, and that is just one of my businesses.

It is very important that these kinds of things be looked at, tax relief, and that we do not have the kind of Workers Compensation Board that we had 10 or 15 years ago. That is so hard on small business. I look forward to seeing you fulfill this commitment. I only hope that you will do it quickly and efficiently.

As a former school trustee with the River East School Division and as a parent, I was especially interested in the portions in the throne speech pertaining to education. Today's NDP has vowed to build a modern, responsive education system that will prepare our youth for the challenges of the new economy, but already contradictions are appearing in your plans for the province's education system. Immediately upon assuming power, your government ordered the removal of the Youth News Network from Manitoba schools. The YNN system provides approximately \$200,000 in technological resources to schools that sign up. Does the new

administration have any intention of making up the lost revenue?

On the YNN, I know at River East School Division, when we started to discuss the whole issue, we debated it as a board and we thought probably it would be best to proceed with it and try to leave the ideological basis out of the discussion. You know, if we are going to fear anything that is new, we would never have had flight, we would never have had the automobile, we would never have tried anything new. I am not saying YNN is the best thing, but what we wanted to do was bring it in and have a fair and open dialogue within our school division to allow students, to allow the parents, to allow our teachers, our administration, the public, to have an input.

What the current government has done is cut all that off at the knees. I think that was very untimely. I know it probably played very well for politics. But for those school divisions that were going on the six-month trial period and wanted to see what effect it was, trying to see what good might come of it, and perhaps there was not going to be any good in which case you would take the six-month window and you would get out, at least give it that opportunity, at least put your ideology aside, at least not play politics with it and just let it go through.

\* (1540)

Unfortunately, it does not look like the current government will come to its senses and just allow the boards to have that autonomy to deal with that particular issue. That concerns me greatly. It would appear that the new administration is not interested in public private ventures. It would appear that they are not interested in allowing school boards the autonomy to make decisions that they were elected to make in the interests of their divisions. School boards, Mr. Deputy Speaker, must have the right to make decisions about what is best for their individual divisions and to respond to the needs of the electorate that put them into office.

The new Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) does not appear to be interested in allowing school boards to make their own decisions. Given that, can we count on a series

of weekly directives from his department as to how education will be administered in Manitoba? Do Manitobans want to be subjugated to management by memos? We have seen that in several instances, YNN was one of them, and even the Grade 3 exam which I have great concerns that it was so quickly cancelled. I know in our division, we used it as a means to find out where we were having difficulty in our elementary level.

I am just going to take a moment here, I am glad the Minister of Education is present. What we found out was we would take the exam at the end of Grade 3, and those students would move on to Grade 4. Where we found that we had difficulty, we had several classes where they absolutely bombed in a particular field or in some cases all fields. What it allowed us to do was take the summer and go back and say, now, why did they perform so poorly as a class? Often it was a teacher had taken ill or taken leave, perhaps there were one or two or three substitute teachers, and there was not that continuity of education coming to the students.

What it allowed, for instance, River East School Division has about a \$75-million budget. You have some room within which to move your money and we could put much needed resources into those classrooms, we would catch them at Grade 4. Now, without that mechanism there and if you go with a Grade 6 exam, what happens is you might still find that the class, say, in Grade 3 had a bad year. By the time they get to Grade 6, they are still struggling. After Grade 6 they graduate, you cannot catch them as a group anymore once they have moved into Grade 7.

That is where we found the Grade 3 exam—and maybe the politics of it just took overhand to the point where there was not that reasoned discussion anymore, but I wish the minister would have taken a bit more reflection in that, because it was a really good tool for school boards to decide where to put that funding. You know, we have students at risk, early reading, and all those kinds of programs, and where do we focus those monies? Because just to throw it out as a blanket is not really a good enough approach, but getting them at Grade 3 sort of gives us an indication where they were. Then at

Grade 6 again, I would repeat and for the minister's benefit, the problem with Grade 6 is a lot of parents then decide after Grade 6 either private school or they go to different junior high schools and so forth, and then it is very difficult to catch them.

I would tell people during the election, you know, not having a Grade 3 exam and allowing those students to continue to go through is basically condemning those students to mediocrity because once they have hit Grade 7 they are so dispersed, and it is very difficult to hone in and try to find those students again.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that was a little bit of a sidebar, and I am glad I have had the chance to explain my points to the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell).

You also state in the throne speech that your administration will provide stable and predictable investments in our public schools. We have repeatedly asked your administration in Question Period to explain how you intend to provide funding for our public schools; however, we have yet to hear a definitive plan of how you intend to finance schools. I will be most interested to hear your explanation of how you will be "providing increased funding in accord with the rate of economic growth." How do you intend to define economic growth, and how will this be translated into funding for our schools? Should the province experience a recession and face negative economic growth, does that mean you intend to cut education funding accordingly?

Your administration is also committed to making post-secondary education more affordable. Again, we have had a hodgepodge of answers in this House during Question Period, when we have tried to get your administration to define how you will make university and college education more affordable for Manitoba students. Are you going to provide a tuition rebate as some of your members have said, or are you going to offer a tuition cut? If you offer students a tuition rebate, will anything be done to prevent Manitoba's colleges and universities from hiking tuition and in turn wiping out any gains that students may have made?

Manitoba's students deserve to know what your intentions are when it comes to financing

post-secondary education. Does Today's NDP have any definitive plans as to when these changes might be implemented?

During the election and in the throne speech, Today's NDP talked about doubling college spaces in Manitoba over the next five years. Again we have heard no definitive plans from your administration as to how this province will be implemented. I agree it is important that we examine the variety of post-secondary training opportunities available to Manitobans. We have to make sure our citizens are competitive in an increasingly competitive global economy. I will be most interested to hear a detailed plan of how college spaces will be doubled. Where will the funding for this expansion come from? Will new infrastructure be required? Can you find enough instructors to teach the new courses offered? These are but a few questions that need to be answered, so that we can ensure Manitoba's college and university students continue to be well served by their education system.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as the opposition critic for Labour, I took particular interest in the same section of the throne speech pertaining to labour issues. I note that you have committed to "an annual review of the minimum wage."

What will this review entail and how does this new administration plan to implement changes to the minimum wage? Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, mindful of the time, I would like to say to the Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett), you know, reviewing the minimum wage is not necessarily something that small business has a problem with, but perhaps every year is a little bit excessive. I would like to spend some time with the minister perhaps at another date, explain to her how difficult that is, that it is a very careful balance when you are in small business. A lot of the employment tends to happen at Christmastime which can really bring up your cost of business. and I would urge the minister to take great caution when she starts playing with the minimum wage, particularly when they are talking about a yearly review. With extreme caution I would recommend they proceed with this.

Will there be consultations not only with labour, but also with the business community to

arrive at reasonable schedules of changes to the minimum wage? I know that many business people were particularly concerned by the inclusion of a minimum wage review in the throne speech and require clarification from the government, and when will this clarification be coming? I would suggest to the minister, you might have all the answers and you might know what your plan is, but that does not necessarily relate to the business sector, and perhaps a bit of communication to small business would be a good idea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that the purpose of the Department of Labour is the promotion of safety, health and fair and equitable treatment in the workplace, the enhancement of public safety, the fostering of a stable labour relations climate, the support of workplace training and adjustment. I look forward to working with the new Labour minister to ensure that Manitobans, employers and employees alike, are treated fairly when it comes to labour issues. In fact, I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the House to ensure that Manitoba's economy continues to grow and prosper, that our growth will continue to make Manitoba one of the best provinces in which to live, work and to raise our families, as my wife, Tanya, and I are currently doing.

My only hope is that Today's NDP will start to define what definitive plans they have for running this province. In the past few weeks, I have heard much rhetoric from Today's NDP but not a lot of substance on issues such as running our schools, balancing the books or charting a direction to ensure the economy continues to thrive. Does Today's NDP have a plan? Does Today's NDP have a vision, and does it have the concrete leadership needed to follow up on its plans?

\* (1550)

It is very easy to spend years in opposition being followers, trying to dovetail off the sound economic policies expounded by the previous Progressive Conservative administration. You are no longer in a position to follow. You must lead and you must lead this province well. We have seen where previous NDP administrations

have taken this province. They have taken it straight down the road to economic purgatory where future administrations are damned to deficit financing and rebuilding the economy from the ground up.

If Today's NDP are indeed committed to leading, let us hope they follow the solid leadership skills provided by the previous Progressive Conservative administration and not follow the misguided lead provided by their NDP brethren in administrations past. If you choose to mimic the policies of past NDP administrations, you are doomed to fail. Manitobans expect better and will demand it of you. I hope you are prepared to listen, to come up with some definitive plans as to how you will manage this province and provide for future development.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you for this opportunity to respond to the throne speech.

**Mr. Cris Aglugub (The Maples):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to begin my speech in this Chamber by adding my voice of congratulations to the election of the Speaker of the Assembly, the Honourable George Hickes. As a new member, I know his guidance, wisdom and assistance will be of great help to me and to the many new members, especially in our caucus. I am sure his tasks will be a challenge, but I am certain he will do very well.

I congratulate you also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as the member for Wellington, for being appointed as the Deputy Speaker of the House, and I look forward to your guidance as well.

I would like to congratulate all newly elected members, my colleagues and members from all parties who were successful in their election or re-election bid. I would like to offer my thanks to the Clerk's office, the constituency allowance office for their informative sessions and the caucus's staff for preparing new members for the new surroundings and to assume our roles and individual tasks.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this being my first speech, it is a very special day for me as an elected NDP member representing The Maples. Thirty years ago, one month and 24 days,

including today, I arrived in Winnipeg full of expectations, apprehensions and excitement. It was windy, raining and cold like today. In the car, I asked my sister who picked me up at the airport: how are we going to sleep in this cold weather? She answered me: homes are heated, warm and comfortable when inside. You see, everything was new to me.

A couple of weeks later I woke up one morning. I knew it was still dark, but looking out the windows, somehow it was unusually bright. So I got up quick, opened the curtain and saw everything was white. I immediately went to wake up my sister and told her that the sky is falling in bits and pieces. She did not even bother to look. She only told me: oh, that is snow; go back to bed; go back to sleep. Do you not listen to the weather forecast? The forecast was for a heavy snowfall.

You see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had never actually seen snow before. I saw it in pictures and movies. My kind of weather I left behind is 30 degrees above and it is warm. That morning I did not go back to bed, but I went out to feel what snow is all about and what a day it was.

During my first few months, I began to look for a job. In my job hunting I started to meet a few people who until today have remained my loyal friends. Six months later I still had not found a job and began facing toward the Philippines. I was ready to pack my bags and head back. One morning I said to myself, God, if I cannot find a job for another month, definitely I will go back to Manila. I told my sister about my plans, and she again said to me: keep warm and comfortable, be patient. There are lots of jobs out there.

A couple of weeks later and a couple of prayers, I found my first job, not the best job, but I got a job, and I have never been unemployed since. I went on to work for a couple of more companies. Each time it got better until I got a job with the Department of Agriculture, where I worked the longest. Last summer I was recognized for my 25 years of service with the Department of Agriculture. I was presented with a plaque of loyalty and dedication signed by the then Premier of the day, the Honourable Gary Filmon.

When I was young, my dad and I were having a refreshing drink of coconut juice. We were talking about things around the farm. He was bragging about one of his horses galloping nicely whenever he was going horse riding. He continued to brag about a few more things and all of a sudden he asked me, son, what would you like to be? I replied, well, what would you like me to be? There is not much to do around here, cultivate the field, plant the corn, harvest the corn, feed the animals and start all over again. What would you want me to be? Then he said, son, remember this: start making dreams. Dream big dreams and follow those dreams.

Personally I said, oh, okay, and so I started making dreams, huge dreams. I dreamt about going to college, finish a degree, get a job, go abroad, travel and perhaps become a politician one day. You see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, my dad was also a politician. He was a vice-mayor in our home town, and we are just like friends.

A couple of weeks later, my dad and I went to Manila and little did I know he was going to enroll me in an agricultural school. And so, I concentrated on my studies. After completing my degree in Agriculture, I immediately went to work in a big coconut plantation about 600 miles south of Manila. I worked in the plantation for a couple of years, and while I was there I put in an application to emigrate to Canada. Fortunately my application was approved, and I was ready to go abroad. I was beginning to see my dreams coming to reality. My dream to travel and see the world is still a little bit short, but I have plenty of time to make up for it.

My dream as a politician, I thought, was forever to remain only a dream, but on September 21 my dream of becoming a politician became a reality. My home town in the Philippines, where I maintain contact and plenty of relatives, was full of joy and pride when they learned of my success. The night of the election I phoned my mother who is over 80 years old. She was so excited she ended up in a hospital that same evening.

**An Honourable Member:** Is she okay?

**Mr. Aglugub:** Yes, she is okay. If my Dad was still alive today, I am sure he would be the

proudest dad in my home town. My brothers and my sisters, who also encouraged me throughout, and my children, were equally full of joy. My friends and volunteers were beaming with pride for the win.

\* (1600)

My dreams were just like a movie. The next setting this time was The Maples. I was the lead actor and my friends and campaign volunteers were all extras, my extras. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to one person who put the script together and played a background role in my dream, and that is Les Crisostomo, who is also up there listening to me. He is the one person who, when enthusiasm and determination is low, would be the one to motivate me and encourage me. He had the answer to every question I asked. He and Mrs. Amie Crisostomo played a key role in making the decision to go for it up to the last hour. The cast of over a hundred friends from several parts of the city, they all played their role very well, and indeed they all deserve individual praise, for which I will always be grateful. In fact, some of them are listening to me today. As I speak they are in the gallery, and I would like to recognize them. They are Pat Tobias, Joseph Rodriguez, Pablo Dizor and Vincent Ballesteros.

Winnipeg, Manitoba, has always been good to me. It has been my home for the last 30 years. People in Winnipeg are warm and friendly. I feel at home all the time as I feel at ease in this Chamber, but as you can see I am a little nervous. The slogan on our car registration plates is absolutely correct. Friendly Manitoba. It is an attribute to cherish, and we should at all cost protect that image because it is true.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a very special moment for me in history. I get to deliver this inaugural speech and I have good attention from the House. I am really proud of myself today. I am fully aware of the expectations of me. I intend to be a good member of the Legislative Assembly representing The Maples, just like my immediate predecessor, the former Honourable Gary Kowalski, who represented the constituency with honour and distinction but decided not to run again after serving a couple of terms. The people in The Maples have nothing

but praise and good words for the work he has done in the constituency. He has indeed looked after the constituents well. For the record, I would like to commend him for all the initiatives that he instituted to alleviate some of the concerns of The Maples. I can only hope to carry from where he left off, and would like to do a bit more.

I would also like to thank the people of The Maples for electing me to hold this public office. It is an honour to be given this opportunity. I feel privileged, given the confidence of my party and the community of The Maples, as a participant in the democratic process. I assure all those who have placed their trust in me, I will work to the best that I am able to carry on with vigorous determination.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, The Maples is a diversified constituency made up of a number of linguistic groups consisting of younger families, working families, hardworking people of various income levels and retired families. It is a mosaic of newcomers to Canada and to Manitoba along with the more established ones. It is a young community under the newly adjusted electoral boundaries. There is a strong sense of community and belonging.

The constituency starts from Inkster in the south, is bounded by McPhillips Street on the east towards the Perimeter Highway, and the western side is Mandalay Drive to Jefferson through Dunham and connects to Ritchie towards the Perimeter Highway.

There is low-income housing in the area. There are also sprinklings of retired homeowners who are enjoying the investments of their many years of work.

The Wellness Institute is located in the constituency beside the Seven Oaks General Hospital. There are nursing homes, guest homes, the St. Joseph's nursing home and retirement housing with all the amenities located at Leila Avenue. There is an independent living housing located at Watson Street for the handicapped.

The western side of McPhillips is lined with some retail businesses, grocery stores, restaurants, a hotel and car dealership.

The Maples has several elementary schools: Arthur E. Wright, Elwick, Ecole James Nisbet Community School and the O.V. Jewitt School. There are two junior highs: Ecole Leila North and Ken Seaford High. Maples Collegiate is the only high school that serves the area.

In terms of recreational facilities, The Maples has a City of Winnipeg swimming pool, a community centre and a multiplex used extensively during the Pan Am Games.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I look forward to working with the community and community groups. I have opened a constituency office on Kingsbury Avenue to provide the important function of providing my constituents with easy access to me. I dedicate myself to using my skills and abilities to achieve what is best for my constituents and for the good of all Manitobans.

I hope to serve the community as I learn my new role as a politician making laws, about the process and how this affects my function. I hope to bring to this Assembly a unique perspective coming from a visible minority. I bring with me my voluntary and community experiences having served as president of the Philippine Association of Manitoba and several other organizations. I established the first Philippine Centre, the first in Manitoba, the first across Canada, and a daycare facility that is still operating today. I also served in different capacities, including the membership of the Mayor's Race Relations Committee in 1986, a past delegate and interpreter for the Language Bank of the Citizenship Council of Manitoba, a delegate to the Asia-Pacific conference, commonly called APEC, to a preplanning conference held in Manila in 1996, to name a few. I facilitated the twinning arrangement between the city of Winnipeg and the twinning in Manila, the twinning arrangement between the University of Manitoba and the university of the city of Manila and, yes, I also volunteered for the successful Pan Am Games last summer.

In The Maples, there is quite a handful of concerns in the community. Foremost are the state of our health care system, high or rising taxes, public safety, and many others. In my canvass during the campaign, a couple of households have expressed to me how the health

care system has failed them. One was crying to me at the door, and she said to me if only her husband was properly cared for, he would have been still alive today. This is a heavy statement, and I have not forgotten it since. Apparently, there was not enough staff to properly care for the many patients lining the hallway. The husband was lying in the corridor for 48 hours until staff got around to check up on him, but it seems it was too late. The staff cuts and bed closures have all but impacted on the ability of the hospitals to care for people who are in need. I wonder how many more have had the unfortunate experience of the indignity of receiving care in a hospital corridor similar to what this lady described to me.

\* (1610)

On taxes, be it property tax, a school tax, income tax, GST, PST, has anyone ever stopped to think how heavily we are taxed? Just look at income tax. When you receive your pay cheque, the federal income tax is already deducted. At the bottom of your cheque stub you see your net pay. It is the money that goes into your bank account or the money that goes into your pocket. Once you go out and spend the money, you are going to be hit with another tax, the GST, the PST. The sad part of GST-PST is that the tax is not only based on the costs to manufacture the goods, but it will also tax the profit made from it as well. I realize that this is not the time and place to argue about it, but I just have to say to make you aware of it.

The neighbourhood in The Maples has concerns about rising property tax. In some instances, the school tax is even higher than property tax. Some day, just walking on the sidewalk, you will be hit with a tax for walking on it. What else is left to tax? I just hope that day will never come.

I am very pleased with the throne speech. It is sending a positive signal that some relief is underway. There is something for everyone, be it health care, be it taxes, public safety, education, working people, youth, young and old. It is a decent start for a government that cares a lot about people, working people, children, our youth, farmers, our aboriginals, retirees and all segments of our society. For

instance, our government has made a commitment to fix our health care system, a priority, to address its shortcomings. Our Minister of Health and of Sport (Mr. Chomiak) has already taken steps and initiatives to meet these commitments so that some day when any one of us will use it, we will not suffer the same indignity. On taxes, a commitment of 1.5 percent reduction on personal income tax will now take effect on January 1, 2000. Not only that, a commitment to property tax relief and reduction in small business will also be underway in the next budget.

Over a month ago, I had the pleasure of participating in a meeting of the Maples Youth Activity Centre. It is called MYAC for short. While there are structural issues that need to be addressed, MYAC provides programming and supervised youth social recreational activities for after-school hours and weekends. MYAC is ably chaired by Cathy Horbas, the principal of Ecole James Nisbet Community School. Its membership is composed of other principals of other schools in the area, with participation of parents and personnel of the City of Winnipeg Parks and Recreation.

The Seven Oaks School Division provides the facility by opening the school after school hours to students and youth in the area. It is these kinds of initiatives and programming that I would like to pursue and support because it does provide alternative options for youth in the area to pursue their individual needs.

In The Maples, there is a large proportion of recent immigrants coming from different countries. I am concerned about their integration and full participation into the socioeconomic opportunities that are waiting for them. Recent immigrants run into several difficulties, and it ranges from cultural shock to insufficient communication skills. I too had experienced the same difficulties, but I managed to successfully integrate and participate in all aspects of our society with the help of people who came before me like my sisters and friends. I sometimes wonder, how about the ones that do not have the same circumstances?

As the elected representative, I would like to revisit these concerns. I would like to see what

immigrant services and programs government and nongovernmental agencies can offer so that the process of integration can be accelerated and that they can provide the ability to participate fully in the economic and job opportunities in our society.

Entering a new century, I would like to be a part of establishing a new approach to government, a government that is responsive to the needs of people. We must take practical steps in securing a quality health care system, giving our young people the education options they need and giving our citizens a greater sense of security in their homes and communities. To that, I will work closely with my colleagues to achieve these goals to the benefit of our people, our province, in the coming century. Thank you.

**Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, it certainly is a pleasure and an honour again for me to rise in the Legislature and respond to the Speech from the Throne. First of all, I would like to congratulate the Speaker on his historic election as Speaker of this House. I am sure that he will bring fairness and distinction to his office. I would also like to congratulate the Deputy Speaker, who, I am sure, will bring honour to that position.

I also want to congratulate all new members who were elected for the first time on September 21. It is nice to be greeted back by many of the familiar faces on both sides of the House. I know that all of us will do our best to serve our constituents with pride and honour.

I would also like to extend a warm welcome to our pages, especially the three: Rebecca Turner, who is from the Evergreen School Division; Orion Penner, who is from the Lord Selkirk School Division; and Brooke Coggan, who is from the Interlake School Division, all of whom come from a part of my constituency, some of my older constituency and some of the newer part of my constituency. I am sure that they will enjoy their time here as pages, and this will be a wonderful experience for them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on this side of the House, we listened to this new NDP government's Speech from the Throne hoping that this government would put forth its plans for

Manitoba's future. Unfortunately, we, like many Manitobans, were disappointed in the lack of substance, lack of any clear plan for Manitoba in the throne speech. This speech was just full of rhetoric but void of any real substance. It failed to provide Manitobans with any details of how this government will build upon what they refer to as a strong base left by the previous Conservative government.

When we talk about the strong base that the previous government left, you will notice in our recent employment statistics that Manitoba again has the lowest unemployment rate in Canada at 5.6 percent and more than 593,600 people on the seasonally adjusted labour force. This is the most employed Manitobans ever in the history of Manitoba. So Manitoba certainly was on the right track and headed in the right direction under the former government.

\* (1620)

As a rural member of this Legislature, I am disappointed that this government does not find rural Manitoba important enough to receive more than four sentences in the whole throne speech. The brevity speaks volumes to Manitobans outside the Perimeter Highway, especially given the crisis facing our farming and our rural communities. Not once are the terms "rural diversification" or "rural economy" present in the throne speech. In fact, the word "rural" is present only twice in the complete throne speech, and that is a speech that is supposed to represent the vision of this government, that this government has for Manitobans. For a government that is so proud to claim that it has representation from all parts of Manitoba, this speech reveals just how important the government feels about rural Manitoba. They really do not feel at all important about rural Manitoba.

The NDP government provided virtually no vision for Manitobans' economic future. Manitoba's economy must continue to grow in order to ensure that the resources needed to fund priority items such as health and education are in place, but due to the economic policies of the previous government, Manitoba's economy prospered. Over the previous 10 years, government revenue increased by over \$1 billion

despite the massive cutbacks in the federal transfer payments. This new government, new NDP government, has provided little in the way of a clear economic plan for Manitoba's future.

The new government stated in its throne speech that it would live within its means. During the election, the new Premier promised to keep what Premier Filmon got right and to keep balanced legislation. Yet, upon forming the government, with less than six months left in the fiscal year, the NDP have just thrown up their hands and said it was inconceivable to balance the budget for this year.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this new government should not give up on Manitoba's financial situation so easy. Governing Manitoba is not easy. It means that tough decisions have to be made, but it is up to them now to make these tough decisions. They have to start governing and stop passing the buck.

So I just want to take a few minutes also to talk about the new constituency of Gimli, actually. There was a real major change, some major changes in the boundaries that the Boundaries Commission had recommended prior to this last election. I lost some 14,000 people to the constituency of Lakeside, and this was a part of the—[interjection] Well, that is where I lost about 14,000 and then I picked up about 10,000 from the Selkirk constituency. I lost all the R.M. of Rockwood, towns such as Teulon, Stonewall, Stony Mountain, communities such as Komarno, Gunton, Balmoral and Argyle. I had the pleasure of serving these communities in the Legislature for the past 10 or 11 years, and I certainly enjoyed serving those communities.

I gained some excellent areas under the new boundaries, the Rural Municipality of St. Andrews and also the Rural Municipality of West St. Paul. These were a part of the Selkirk constituency, and I am very pleased to be able to represent these areas, including my old part of the Gimli constituency in the Legislature under this term.

The new part of the constituency, basically the R.M.s of St. Andrews and West St. Paul, has some agriculture but mainly rural residential and light manufacturing. A lot of people who live in

St. Andrews, West St. Paul, in those communities, in the areas, Lockport, St. Andrews, actually work either in Selkirk or in Winnipeg. There are some really excellent rural residential areas in St. Andrews though, but they do have some problems. One particular problem is because Selkirk is a fairly industrialized city with such large companies such as Manitoba Rolling Mills, Mandak. There are some environmental problems that are created in the Rural Municipality of St. Andrews from these large companies. These are some of the problems that I will be able to address, and hopefully be able to resolve for some of my constituents there, because they have certainly put up with a great deal of inconvenience and problems just on the south side of Selkirk.

Another problem area that we have in the St. Andrews-Selkirk area is transportation problems, mainly along Highway 9, McPhillips road, which people travel to and from Selkirk and the area that is heavily populated between Winnipeg, Lockport and Selkirk. Number 9 highway, as an example, is a very busy road and a very important highway, but it does have some very serious safety problems. Because of the way it is situated with the four lanes without a divided median or anything like that, with the four lanes that they are together, it makes a very unsafe highway. There have been many accidents along that road, actually some very serious accidents just recently along that stretch of highway between Winnipeg and Selkirk.

Hopefully, with the help of the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) and the new Minister of Highways (Mr. Ashton), maybe we can address some of those concerns that Highway 9 has there, and maybe we can work on some solutions to try to find a way to widen that road to make it more safer. I think there is enough room to put a lane on each side and maybe have a turning lane in the centre that would make that road much safer. Because the speed limit is 70 or 80 kilometres on the highway, and it was mainly designed years and years ago for local traffic and a lot less traffic than we have today, it has outgrown its usefulness. At least it should be widened so that the local people can use it.

Also McPhillips road which is kind of a thoroughfare between the new bridge that

crosses the Red River just north of Selkirk and McPhillips and No. 8 Highway is also a very busy road and certainly needs to be improved. How we are going to do that we do not know, but I think it would be a question for the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) and myself and the Minister of Highways (Mr. Ashton) to sit down to devise a strategy to be able to service that area for many years to come.

I am not sure if a corridor—I do not know what they call it, the Selkirk corridor—is the answer there. I am not really sure. I think that is something the engineers and the highways people would have to look at very closely and decide which is the best route to take, but certainly that is a very important area. Hopefully we can look at that to try to devise a system that makes that area a lot safer and a lot easier for people to travel back and forth to work there.

Also the access to the new bridge that goes across over to 59 Highway is a very important link there, and that all comes down to McPhillips road so that—

**An Honourable Member:** Who put that in?

**Mr. Helwer:** Well, actually, we did prior to—we did. Our government built that. We completed the bridge. Actually, it was started by Sam Uskiw. The former government actually built the bridge or started the bridge but did not have any access roads. So when we came to power in '88, we built the access roads. [interjection] It is actually not a bridge to nowhere, I can assure you. That bridge is very important. It is needed. It is my constituency, and it is a very important and very needed bridge. We built the roads so people could get to and from that bridge. It goes across to Highway 59. It is a very important link to the beaches and to the area north. [interjection] Yes, that is right, but those are just some of the things that are important to the Gimli constituency.

Besides that, those are some of the things that are going on and some of the things I have been able to accomplish in the Gimli constituency.

The new school is being completed in Winnipeg Beach. It is very close to completion,

and hopefully by some time in the new year the students will be able to move into that, and that is a much-needed facility to help the community of Winnipeg Beach and the surrounding areas there. There have not been many improvements made to the school for years, and they certainly need the extra space and the improvements there.

Also, while we are talking about school renovations and improvements, the Evergreen School Division is working on some addition to the Gimli Early/Middle Years School. We have a severe problem with overcrowding at the present time in that school, so we certainly look forward to a new building there. This was already approved by the Public School Finance Board to go ahead, so that is one project I would certainly hope to see go ahead as soon as possible.

\* (1630)

Also the new hospital there, the Gimli hospital, the health centre is looking at expansion and some new facilities there. That is very important to the health requirements of Gimli and the Interlake area because Gimli is growing, the town of Gimli and the rural municipality there, are growing at a very fast pace. As a matter of fact, it is probably one of the fastest growing communities in Manitoba. [interjection] I would think it is very close to Winkler, yes. As a matter of fact, I have Stonewall in my old constituency, which was the fastest growing town in Manitoba, but now I have Gimli. I have always had Gimli. Gimli and the R.M. of Gimli are growing very fast also, so maybe not quite as fast as Winkler, but they are growing.

The other thing I want to talk about in Gimli is the Betel Home, a personal care home there at Gimli, and they are now expanding with an addition plus a residence. Betel Home does an excellent job of operating their personal care homes. They have some excellent people there, and they do a great job. So I am really pleased to see them go ahead with their expansion.

Also, last week when we had a special debate on the agricultural resolution, unfortunately I was away. I was not able to **take part** in the agricultural resolution, but I just want to

say a few words on how important that is to the Interlake and to my constituency of Gimli also.

Actually there are two areas of concern that really affect the agricultural community. Of course, one is the southwest area of Manitoba, the flooding there, whereby the heavy rains this spring, farmers were unable to seed their crops, and this created some real hardship there in that area of Manitoba.

The other thing is the depressed prices of grains and oilseeds. This is because of the world situation. Canada does not subsidize the grains and oilseeds to the extent that they are subsidized in the U.S. and also the European market in Europe. Our farmers have to really fend for themselves. They have actually done very well in Manitoba and in western Canada, but it is very difficult for our farmers to compete with other farmers in the world such as in the U.S. or in the European market.

One of the things the Keystone Ag Producers talked about is a set-aside program. I am not sure if a set-aside program is the answer really, because they do have a program like that in the U.S. It does not work there. I would have to doubt if it is going to work very well here because of the fact farmers are going to be asked to set aside a certain percentage of their land. Naturally they set aside the poorest part of their farm, thereby producing more or as much as they did prior on their good part, and basically there is very little less production anyway. So I do not think a set-aside program is the answer. We need some sort of program whereby we would help farmers to grow something that is going to give them a return on their investment, a return on their property, on their land, so that they can continue to farm and prosper.

Also, the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) talks about acreage payments as not a very good idea. Well, maybe they are not the answer to everything, but at least acreage payments are fair, and they treat everybody alike and try to make a level playing field.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

I just want to talk about the agriculture diversification that has taken place in the

Interlake and also in the Gimli constituency. Farmers are very innovative and always find ways to come up with new ideas, new products to grow. When we look at some of the things that have changed in what farmers do grow now, beans have certainly increased in the number of acres that are seeded to beans. Sunflowers are grown now in the Interlake area, the Gimli constituency. We have an excellent feather business such as turkeys, chickens, broilers that have expanded in the Interlake area.

We have many turkey producers who are doing very well. The price of turkeys is quite good, have turkey meat that is quite good, plus the lower feed costs have made a lot of these things such as turkeys, broiler chickens and a lot of the livestock production very cost effective. Most of the farmers have done very well with their turkeys and chickens, and hopefully there is an area that can grow. We have a turkey hatchery that has done very well in the Interlake area, provided the turkey pullets, not only for the Interlake farmers but for farmers right across Canada and the U.S. and into Minnesota and North Dakota and South Dakota. These turkey hatcheries there, they have got an area, and does very, very well to help the livestock production in the Interlake area. Also, the other day when we talked about the agriculture resolution and talked about hogs and cattle, well, today we had lunch with the Manitoba Cattle Producers. They are all very upbeat and the prices of cattle are very good. Feeders, cows and bred cows and even finished beef have a very good price and most of the cow-calf operators and the feedlot operators in Manitoba are doing very well, or in all of western Canada actually are doing very well. We hope that that cattle business can expand.

When we look at the Interlake area especially and there are probably more cows now than ever. A lot of the farmers who were growing grain have now put their land down to hay or pasture and are producing livestock which they have done very well on. Feed prices have been, no doubt, depressed. Barley and corn, because we are dependent on corn, prices from the U.S., our prices in Canada are very low. Barley is priced according to corn prices, so our barley is very competitive and makes feedstocks very attractive. Also potatoes, there are a number

of potato growers in the area, the St. Andrews, Selkirk area. Although there is very little irrigation, most of these farmers that do grow potatoes for the fresh market are on land that is not irrigated, and although they do have sometimes difficulty competing some of the process growers in the Portage or the Carberry area, but they grow a very good product for the fresh market that is sold by Peak of the Market, and they do an excellent job of marketing potatoes in Manitoba. Hopefully, we will see some expansion in that business in future years.

When we talked about the hogs a little bit, I am glad to see Schneider's announce that they are looking at an expansion of their plant. Maple Leaf in Brandon is doing very well. They are up to I guess over 50 percent of their production and hope to be up and running in the near future. These things, companies such as Schneider's, Maple Leaf have provided a market for our hogs here in Manitoba, and I hope that we can see an expansion of more hog barns and more expansion of hogs because the prices have gone up lately and—

**An Honourable Member:** More barns.

\* (1640)

**Mr. Helwer:** More barns, that is right. There is room for more barns in Manitoba, but they have to be built under the proper conditions, and we have our Department of Environment and the Department of Agriculture have really worked together to come up with standards and recommendations that can make our barns very safe. We can have lagoons for hog barns and one thing and another that are safe and do not provide any pollution to our water and one thing and another. So it can be done in a manner, but it has to be done in a proper manner, so that these barns are built and we adhere to all the environmental issues that have to be addressed.

The other, of course, concern for our agricultural producers is the freight costs for our producers such as grain oilseeds, whether they are going to Thunder Bay or Montreal or Vancouver. Our costs in Manitoba for the freight is very high, and it makes growing some of these crops just about impossible. So farmers cannot compete with wheat and barley and things of

that nature where it has to be exported. We will have to look at other ways of doing things rather than growing those crops to have to export it.

The other thing that has done very well up in the Interlake area, we now have two companies that compact timothy hay into small, tight bales that ship to Japan and Korea. That has expanded. There are a lot of timothy acres that have gone into—a lot of acres have gone into forage production, both timothy for seed through companies such as Johnson Seeds up in Arborg and also for the processing of timothy for the export market.

The problem that we have run into this last month or so has been the shipping problems that we have had. The shipping problems that the longshoremen have created in Vancouver have caused a problem for this type of industry that want to ship containers through the Port of Vancouver, that have to go to either Korea or Japan. In some cases these have been sitting on the docks there for four or five weeks, which is tying up capital for farmers and for shippers. It also makes the purchaser aware that there is a problem with our shipping in Canada. That is going to affect our buyers. [interjection]

The Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) asks what. I want to explain to her, and I am sure she is aware of it already, the problem that the longshoremen are creating in Vancouver out on the docks. I talked about the benefits of some of our diversification such as timothy, the compressed bales that are being shipped by container to Vancouver that are being tied up on the docks there for weeks on end. This is creating a real problem. Those are just some of the things that are causing our farmers a lot of problems.

Just while we are on the area of diversification, the R.M. of Gimli has an industrial park there. That is the old air force base that has been taken over by the Gimli industrial development committee. They have hired a fellow by the name of Joel Dandenault [phonetic] that is doing an excellent job there marketing that industrial park. He has done a great job by bringing new business into that park. They have done very well in the last number of years by bringing in new companies.

One of the companies that really had an opportunity there to grow and expand is Faroex. They started out actually making hog equipment. They have done very well at that. They have been able to build up an export business that they can ship this hog equipment, whether they are penning or flooring for hog barns throughout the world. They have done very well, but because of the downturn in the hog industry and the number of barns being built, their business has somewhat slowed down, so they are looking at other options. Now they are building, they are providing with their pultrusion method, they are providing the rods for snowmobile tracks for Bombardier and all the companies that make snowmobile tracks. That is just one of the things that they have expanded into.

The other thing that they are working on is some expansion into making panels for the buses that are made here in Winnipeg for Flyer Industries or Motor Coach Industries. Those are just some of the things that they can make out there in Gimli at the industrial park there at Faroex. They are a company that has certainly grown in the last number of years and done very well. So I just want to congratulate all the new companies, as a matter of fact, who have located in the Interlake.

Just recently another business opened up in the Teulon area, as a matter of fact just opened last Tuesday, had their opening. This is one of Canada's largest producers of natural beef casings. They make the casings in Teulon in the new plant there that they have taken over. At the present time, they employ about 10 people and hope to be able to go up to about 30 or 40 people within the next while. So that is a great addition to the agricultural sector. It creates jobs in the Teulon area, and I am glad to see that kind of business is set up in the Interlake.

Something that affects the quality of life in the Interlake, one of the things that is very important in the Gimli constituency, of course, is tourism, the number of people who travel throughout the area with Gimli, Winnipeg Beach and the area along the lake, being very attractive places to build cottages. It is also a very attractive place for seniors to move out to. Gimli, as an example, has seen an expansion of many buildings. The Rotary Towers there have

built a seniors home, and there are more and more seniors moving out into the area. Gimli New Horizons, which is a 55-plus centre, certainly provides an opportunity for seniors, a place where they can gather and also have many functions and one thing and another.

I also want to, while we are talking about seniors, congratulate the Teulon seniors club who celebrated their 30th Anniversary just recently. Some of the people who have been there all the time, Frances Moore is an example, Wanda Tiel, they have worked very hard to make the seniors group there very effective. They have done very well providing entertainment and one thing and another for seniors throughout the area around Teulon and the Interlake area.

While we are talking about seniors, we are very pleased that the Gimli area could host the Manitoba Seniors Games here a couple of years ago, and they did an excellent job. I understand that they will be bidding for those games again in the near future, and I want to wish them well. Hopefully, they can again provide a venue for the Manitoba Seniors Games.

When I was talking about agriculture just a little while ago, I talked about the cycles which we go through in agriculture. In the '40s and '50s we went through some high prices of crops, and then I can remember in the late '60s we went through a very low period of crops and also a low period of hog prices. So agricultural products are like a roller coaster; they go up and down from one year to the next.

\* (1650)

Farm input, such as fuel, of course, is a major expense for farmers, and if we look back in the '60s diesel fuel was around 20 cents a gallon. Today, we are looking at about 41 cents a litre for that same fuel. So it has not gone up proportionately; it has gone up very fast or faster than the price of our commodities such as we sell grain or livestock or whatever we produce in the agriculture sector, whatever they produce has not gone up as fast as the expenses, has not gone up as fast as the cost of equipment. In the '50s you were able to buy a tractor for about \$5,000, where today that tractor is probably \$150,000.

Yet, the price of wheat today is probably lower than it was back in 1949, as an example. I think in 1949 wheat was about \$5 a bushel and today it is less than that. Yet, the price of equipment and fuel and all these things have cost a lot more for the farmer to operate, Mr. Speaker.

So we have seen many changes in the last number of years in agriculture and in a lot of things in production, the way things are produced, and in manufacturing. So we certainly have seen some major improvements, but, as you can see, times have changed. Unfortunately for Manitobans, some things stay the same. As we heard in the throne speech, Today's NDP is certainly still yesterday's NDP, an NDP with just no definitive plan. [interjection]

That is right. The throne speech had no plan, no initiative, no direction for Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for your time and the opportunity to speak on this throne speech today. Thank you.

**Ms. Linda Asper (Riel):** Monsieur le président, comme mes collègues, je voudrais vous féliciter d'avoir été élu président de la Chambre. C'est un poste à la fois ancien et honorable qui comporte la grave responsabilité de sauvegarder l'indépendance du corps législatif. Votre sens de justice sera apprécié par nous tous.

Enfin, mes compliments aussi au député de Wellington (M. Santos) qui a été nommé au poste de président adjoint.

### *Translation*

Mr. Speaker, like my colleagues, I would like to congratulate you for having been elected Speaker of the House. It is a position that is both ancient and honourable, which involves the weighty responsibility of safeguarding the independence of the legislative body. Your sense of justice will be appreciated by all of us.

Finally, my compliments, as well, to the member for Wellington (Mr. Santos), who has been appointed to the position of Deputy Speaker.

### *English*

Congratulations to the Premier (Mr. Doer), a Leader who, with his vast knowledge of the issues and unrelenting drive to meet the challenges facing this province, will lead our government in our goal to fulfill the five commitments made to the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the mover and the seconder of the Speech from the Throne for the inspiration provided to all members of the House. Their insightful remarks and sentiments displayed a style and breadth of vision flowing from the Speech from the Throne which we could all emulate.

As a newly elected member, I have appreciated the advice and assistance the Clerk and his staff have given me in the initial training session and subsequently on an individual basis. I cannot help thinking of the Scarlet Pimpernel, a well-known character in the book, films and the recent Broadway musical, when I encounter Binx in every corner of this historic building. I wish him well in his retirement.

I would also like to wish the legislative pages well in their work. It is a pleasure to see young people participating in the Legislature.

Je veux remercier les résidents de Riel. C'est un honneur pour moi de représenter la circonscription de Riel, nommée ainsi en mémoire de Louis Riel, un grand patriote manitobain, un défenseur des droits linguistiques des minorités et reconnu aujourd'hui comme le père du Manitoba. Certains membres de la famille Riel, ainsi que plusieurs familles francophones demeurent dans cette circonscription.

Je veux aussi remercier ma famille, mon mari, Aubrey, qui est avec moi aujourd'hui, et mon fils, Lee, qui, comme toutes nos familles, font les sacrifices et les changements nécessaires pour nous appuyer dans la vie publique.

### *Translation*

I want to thank the residents of Riel. It is an honour for me to represent the constituency of Riel, which was named in memory of Louis

Riel, a great Manitoba patriot, a defender of minority linguistic rights and recognized today as the Father of Manitoba. Certain members of the Riel family, as well as many Francophone families, live in this constituency.

I also want to thank my family, my husband, Aubrey, who is with me today, and my son, Lee, who, like all our families, are making the sacrifices and changes necessary to support us in public life.

### *English*

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleagues, both on this side of the House and across the floor, who have been chosen by the people of Manitoba as their representatives. May I express my appreciation to those members who have offered me their warm words of congratulations and welcome.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud, as a former school trustee, past-president of the Manitoba Teachers' Society, teacher and parent, to represent an area that has elected several dedicated MLAs in the past. The late Donald Craik served this House from 1966 to 1981; followed by Doreen Dodick, elected in 1981, whom I am proud to say was active in my campaign and provided me with invaluable support. Gerald Ducharme was the next MLA; succeeded by David Newman, my predecessor, whom I thank for his years of service on behalf of Riel constituents.

With such a history in Riel, running for election as the NDP candidate was a real challenge. You can imagine my delight and satisfaction in succeeding. Thanks to hard work and persistence of a dedicated campaign team.

Mr. Speaker, may I take a few moments then to familiarize the honourable members with Riel, the constituency I represent? Located in south-east Winnipeg between the Seine and Red rivers, Riel is the middle of the original city of St. Vital. In 1890, the rural municipality of St. Boniface was formed. However, the name caused confusion with the town of St. Boniface, and in 1903 the name was changed to St. Vital, originating from Bishop Vital Grandin.

Riel is the homestead of the Louis Riel House, la maison Riel, and the home of St. Amant Centre, Centre Youville, Teen Stop

Jeunesse, Foyer Valade, Meadowood Manor, several churches and a mosque and a number of child care centres. Residents use the community centres of Greendell Park, Norberry, Glenlee and Dakota.

Riel has always had a number of small businesses throughout the area. With the rise of the St. Vital Shopping Centre and several other small business shopping malls, small business has become a more and more important part of the constituency.

When my husband and I attended the annual general meeting of the St. Vital Historical Society in November, we had a delightful conversation with some members about his father's Vogue Theatre located in St. Vital in 1943, an example of a small business involving cinemas in Manitoba that today, in the third generation of the family, figures on the national and international media scene. A few years later, I understand that my colleague across the floor from Seine River was an usherette in our family's Boyne Theatre in Carman while my husband was responsible for discipline at the children's matinees and taking gum off the seats following a performance. That undoubtedly prepared him for his 42 years in public education.

Mr. Speaker, schools that serve Riel students are Hastings, whose Grade 9 young people were at the Legislature last week, Minnetonka, whose Grade 9 students visited here in September, Victor H.L. Wyatt, Dr. D.W. Penner, Dakota Collegiate, all offering a sound educational program, and Collège Jeanne-Sauvé, a well-respected French immersion centre from which my son graduated four years ago.

As you will find, Mr. Speaker, in almost any Canadian community like Riel, its population is characterized by diversity. Manual workers and professionals, homemakers and students, renters, condo owners and homeowners, preschoolers and pensioners, new Canadians and five-generation Canadians, all are found in Riel, and all play an integral part in defining its distinct character.

Despite this diversity, there is a commonality linking the residents of Riel, and that is their hope for the future. In the recent election campaign, voters shared their hopes

with me and voiced their opinions about the state of affairs and their experiences with the former government. If there was one theme in the election in Riel, it was: time for a change.

I originally decided to run because of the past government's destructive impact on the public school system in Manitoba. As an educator with 35 years experience at all levels of the system, I was appalled at the callous attitude the former government had. It had created such havoc and distrust throughout the educational system. At the doors, I soon learned that the former government's failed right-wing policies had not only created turmoil in the public school system but also in the health care world. Voter after voter pleaded for change in health services and attitudes—patients, seniors, workers, nurses, in particular, who were desperate for a caring, responsive and supportive government. It became very clear that the people had lost confidence in the government.

\* (1700)

The high priority given to education in the Speech from the Throne is a welcome signal to Manitobans who have experienced a decade of government hostility to both the client population and the service providers. Both economists and educators support the argument that, and I quote from the Speech from the Throne: the best economic policy is a strong education policy. While this is axiomatic, it is important that the objectives of educational policy not be too narrowly focused.

Manitoba has experienced the misfortune in recent years of a government which embraced the major elements of the Thatcher/Reagan approach. It was characterized by over-emphasizing competition at the expense of co-operation. It provided diminished resources, that is, the do-more-with-less thrust. Its emphasis on accountability confused student testing with sound teacher assessment and evaluation.

The casualties of this approach were the young people of this province. In their efforts to protect children in their classrooms, teachers themselves became casualties, as witnessed by the increased number of long-term disability claims.

While the goals of education go beyond a narrow focus on economic benefits, the linking of a strong education policy to economic development need not disregard the needs of the child. After all, our young people must graduate from our education system, confident that they have been given a knowledge base that qualifies them for quality employment. The creation of this pool of talent benefits both the student and prospective employers. It is also beneficial to those who choose to be self-employed.

Let me add a word of caution, Mr. Speaker. We must de-emphasize the view that our students are economic units or products whose values to society depend solely on economic measures. My own experience as an educator has taught me that we serve the child and, simultaneously, the parents or guardians when we offer opportunities and supports in a wide variety of fields that have no direct link to an economic or industry imperative.

The system must recognize the individual differences that require service, for example, special needs and cultural differences that demand different learning styles. Music, art and physical education are important in the curriculum, not frills to be dependent on bake sales and chocolate bar drives. I am pleased that the Speech from the Throne includes the election campaign commitment to "stable and predictable investments in our public schools."

In the last decade, the education system has been consistently bruised by underfunding year after year. Caring school trustees have had no option but to resort to the property tax, that is, the special levy, to shore up the erosion of provincial resources. This they had to do even after following the government's advice to use their reserve funds. School boards have become constrained by limits on the load the property tax will bear. The Speech from the Throne has addressed this issue by introducing the dual commitments of property tax reduction and investment in our public schools.

In sum, Mr. Speaker, I urge that education refocus on the child and serve the child and his or her needs. With that starting point, it is not difficult, by extension, to create a populace of young people who will not only be attractive to

employers or creative entrepreneurs, but also as confident, informed citizens.

Monsieur le président, en plus des intérêts particuliers en éducation que j'ai mentionnés, je juge important le développement de l'éducation française au Manitoba. Je suis diplômée de l'École de Saint-Norbert et, grâce à mes enseignantes, je peux aujourd'hui m'exprimer dans la langue de Molière. Grâce à l'éducation française en immersion, mon fils, Lee, est aussi bilingue.

C'est dans la Division scolaire de la Rivière Seine que j'ai passé mes premières années comme enseignante. Plus tard, j'ai siégé comme commissaire d'école dans cette même division. Mes années comme directrice des écoles à Saint-Boniface, comme membre du conseil d'administration du Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface, aussi comme professeur à temps partiel dans ce même collège, m'ont apporté des expériences enrichissantes. Tout cela, Monsieur le président, me porte à croire que je comprends les défis auxquels fait face la communauté francophone de cette province. De plus, je veux les assurer que je partage leurs aspirations. Le Discours du trône promet, et je cite: de continuer à mettre en oeuvre les recommandations du Rapport Chartier. Ce rapport traite en longueur du développement des services en français au Manitoba. Ses recommandations sont non seulement louables mais également nécessaires si on veut répondre aux besoins d'un Manitoba et d'un Canada modernes.

Le Rapport Chartier mentionne clairement la nécessité d'établir des centres communautaires pour les Francophones. De façon particulière, le projet du centre communautaire pour Francophones de Saint-Vital qui est à l'étude depuis plusieurs années et qui comprend un école élémentaire et secondaire, reçoit une attention spéciale dans le Rapport Chartier.

Monsieur le Président, beaucoup de mes électrices et de mes électeurs du quartier de Riel m'ont déjà indiqué l'importance qu'ils attachaient à avoir un centre scolaire au sud de St. Vital, un centre qui comprendrait trois volets: l'école élémentaire, l'école secondaire et un centre communautaire. Ce dossier m'intéresse d'une

façon particulière parce que cela répond en partie aux besoins des Francophones non seulement de Riel mais de toute la communauté de Saint-Vital. Je suis confiante qu'il sera possible d'établir un partenariat avec le ministère du Patrimoine canadien du gouvernement fédéral en vue de la construction de ces deux autres volets. Tout cela s'engendre bien avec les recommandations du Rapport Chartier.

#### *Translation*

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the particular interests in education which I have mentioned, I consider the development of French education in Manitoba to be important. I am a graduate of St. Norbert School and, thanks to my teachers, I can express myself today in the language of Molière. Thanks to French immersion education, my son, Lee, is also bilingual.

It was in the Seine River School Division that I spent my first years as a teacher. Later I sat as a school trustee in that same division. My years as a principal at schools in St. Boniface, as a member of the Board of Governors of the Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface, and also as a part-time professor in that same college brought me enriching experiences. All of that, Mr. Speaker, leads me to believe that I understand the challenges facing the Francophone community of this province. I also want to assure them that I share their aspirations.

The Speech from the Throne promises, and I quote: to continue implementing the recommendations of the Chartier report. This report discusses at length the development of French language services in Manitoba. These recommendations are not only commendable but are also necessary if we want to meet the needs of a modern Manitoba and Canada.

The Chartier report clearly mentions the necessity of establishing community centres for Francophones. Specifically, the project of a community centre for St. Vital Francophones, which has been under review for some years and which includes an elementary and secondary school, receives special attention in the Chartier report.

Mr. Speaker, many members of my electorate in Riel constituency have indicated to

me the importance that they attach to having an educational centre in South St. Vital, a centre that would include three aspects: a primary school, a secondary school and a community centre. This matter is of particular interest to me because it responds in part to the needs of Francophones not only of Riel but of the entire St. Vital community. I am confident that it would be possible to establish a partnership with the department of Canadian Heritage with a view to the construction of those two other aspects. All of that harmonizes well with the recommendations of the Chartier report.

### *English*

As I mentioned earlier, Riel residents shared their concerns with me during the election about health care issues. One poignant experience for me occurred when I was canvassing during the last week. A nurse had left her written message in a plastic bag hanging from her mailbox that read: Mr. Filmon, when I go to the polls to vote next week, this is what I will remember when I cast my ballot.

And she proceeded to list on her piece of paper the injustices and indignities that her patients and she and her colleagues had experienced in the hospital in which she worked. This nurse's declaration symbolized and captured the kind of sentiment I encountered throughout the constituency when voters discussed health care needs. The commitments in the Speech from the Throne represent a rational approach to addressing the immediate needs in our health care system.

A third concern that Riel constituents raised in the campaign was their need for a sense of security in their community, in their homes, and in their schools. In 1995 I had the opportunity as a researcher at Education International in Brussels to do a study of violence in schools in 32 countries. In discussing my findings with voters, it became evident that there has been a lack of leadership by government in addressing violence in schools, in implementing such initiatives as antibullying programs like those in Scotland.

\* (1710)

In 1996, as a visiting scholar at Harvard University, I also had the opportunity to continue the study of violence and crime in communities which I also discussed with voters in context of the current Manitoba situation. One of the government's five commitments in the Speech from the Throne is the improvement of public safety. As indicated, "The safety of Manitoba children is a particular concern for our citizens." The government is committed to providing more opportunities for children who otherwise are at risk of getting involved with crime and, at the same time, ensuring a stronger justice system response to gang crime and auto theft.

Mr. Speaker, I have addressed some of the major issues of concern to the people of Riel in the election campaign. What I heard in the Speech from the Throne is a government beginning to fulfill its five commitments to Manitobans, a government that is genuinely concerned for the welfare of its people that it elected to office, a government of compassion for all citizens, particularly those in need.

Je suis très fière d'être membre de ce gouvernement. Je suis très fière d'être une femme parmi neuf, dont cinq sont des membres du cabinet, un moment historique au Manitoba. Quand je pense à l'année 1968, l'année de ma présentation au nom du Manitoba Teachers' Society à la Commission royale sur le statut de la femme, je vois le progrès. Grâce aux efforts des femmes comme Muriel Smith, Mary Beth Dolin et Myrna Phillips, il y a 20 ans, nous avons réussi à continuer à changer l'image du gouvernement.

### *Translation*

I am very proud to be a member of this government. I am very proud to be one of nine women, five of whom are members of cabinet, an historic moment in Manitoba. When I think of the year 1968, the year of my presentation on behalf of the Manitoba Teachers' Society to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, I see progress. Thanks to the efforts of women such as Muriel Smith, Mary Beth Dolin and Myrna Phillips 20 years ago, we have succeeded in continuing to change the image of government.

**English**

An image, Mr. Speaker, that truly represents the people of Manitoba. I look forward to serving all constituents in Riel and working on their behalf. Merci. Thank you.

**Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale):** Mr. Speaker, it is really a pleasure and an honour to stand and talk on the throne speech of the Thirty-seventh, I believe, session of the Manitoba Legislature.

I would like to begin by welcoming the Speaker himself, the member for Point Douglas, to his position as the first elected Speaker here in the Manitoba Legislature. It is something, I feel, that I know the member from previous experiences, when I was Minister of Housing and Minister of Urban Affairs, had the opportunity to work with the member for Point Douglas on a number of initiatives in his community where he showed his genuine concern for the constituency he represents, the amount of problems that he had and been able to come to me from time to time to look for solutions. I know that his co-operative effort in looking at solutions, not only for his constituents, but what he felt was good for the city, was something that I feel has carried over into his role here as Speaker. I look forward to working with him over the one-term government that has been elected.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to spend some time talking about the throne speech.

I would also like to welcome the member for Wellington (Mr. Santos) as Deputy Speaker. Truly an individual that everybody has known and grown to admire in this Legislature for his not only very, very interesting speeches, but his willingness to spend some time with some of the opposition members and give us wisely advice that he so aptly has accumulated over the years in the Chamber here. I welcome him to the Chamber as the Deputy Speaker.

We have new pages this year also. We have pages from the various areas here in the City of Winnipeg and I believe from some of the rural areas. I welcome you to this Chamber. I would caution the pages not to believe everything they hear in this Chamber because sometimes there is

the exaggeration and the hyperbole that goes on sometimes that we do not want to taint them and have them feel that they get out of here at a different perspective as to what we mean by when we say all honourable members. So I welcome the pages. You will find your experience here very enjoyable. It truly is a remarkable time in your schooling, if you want to call it, because you see government in action and it truly is a process that sometimes is very complicated, convoluted and sometimes goes off in various different tangents, but I think at the same time, it is a fulfilment that each one of us as elected members here in the Manitoba Chamber take as a great honour and a great privilege that we were able to be elected in our constituencies to represent our constituents and the people of Manitoba. I think all members in this Chamber have that type of commitment to their constituents.

I would like to welcome the new members who have come into this Chamber. You come into the Chamber with the election of yourselves in the various constituencies, and I can only say that it is a learning process. It is a challenge. I can recommend that a lot of times it means a lot of listening to get the understanding and the direction that you feel the government is going and the opposition is going, but it slowly starts to make sense after awhile. I can only suggest that as government backbenchers and government new ministers who are involved, not to be too enthralled by the grandiose of the occasion and the situation, and remember that you are elected to represent not only your people but the people of Manitoba as government now. As government now, there is a responsibility not only to your constituents but to the constituents of Manitoba as the governing party of this province.

So the ability to think within your party is one way of looking at the solutions, but you also have to look at the governance of the whole province when you look at your decisions and the direction that you want to not only participate within your caucus but within the cabinet and especially with some of the new cabinet ministers. So, I caution you that way, because at times the political rhetoric and the political posturing and positioning can some-

times take over from the realm of what is good for Manitoba.

As the members know, there is a responsibility for all of Manitoba as now you are elected as the representative. But that will come with the test of time, and I think that that is something that we in the opposition here will have a certain amount of tolerance with is to see how the new government evolves. There will be a certain amount of time where there is the latitude of experience to set in so that there is a recognition that the new government does have the ability to make decisions in regard to how they are going to be governed.

I would say that they should be very, very careful as to exactly how their political strength is—I do not like to use the word "manipulated"—but is brought to their attention as to the so-called paybacks or the IOUs or the other areas that they feel that there is an obligation to fulfill. That is something that I am saying that the government should be aware of, that there is always that type of lining up at the door type of thing to test the new government to see whether there is the willingness for the government to bend back into their ways of thinking for the allocation of funds or favours or decision making. I do not say that this new government is doing that, but I say that those are the things that are faced by new ministers as they get into their portfolios. It is something that they have to be aware of. The easiest thing to do is to say yes as a new minister. The hardest thing to do is to say no and stay with that decision. Those are some of the things that when you make the big-boy decisions, you wear the big-boy shoes, too, and that is exactly what has to happen in that new government.

Also, I think that what has to be advised is when they look at the way the government is going, they have to look at who they—I was quite surprised when they talked about the transition team of the new government, and Today's NDP—let us put it that way—was bringing in to help them into the transition. They brought back the two old Finance ministers, Vic Schroeder and Eugene Kostyra. I do not think a lot of the new members realize and will know or maybe it has not even been brought to their attention, but the Provincial Auditor only refused to sign one

provincial audit in the history of Manitoba and that was when the NDP were in power, and that is the budget of Vic Schroeder.

\* (1720)

Now, this, I would caution the new members to remember that. You see, this is the person that they brought in to redirect Today's NDP in their thinking. It was Bill Ziprick, the Auditor at the time. There was a fair amount of controversy at the time. There was a fair amount of words that were used by Mr. Ziprick as to why he would not comply with the government's request.

I am only quoting, and it is just by memory, because it goes back a little while, but I believe the Auditor at that time was talking about creative accounting the NDP were doing at that time. I think those were the things that have to be aware that how, the Provincial Auditor, now they are saying that they are looking forward to this so-called review, this review that Deloitte and Touche is doing. They keep throwing out this word, an audit and everything else. I have got to remind them that it was the Auditor himself that refused to sign the books for the NDP when they were last in power.

So I would remind the new backbenchers that everything is not exactly what a lot of times you hear, you know, in regard to what was all so rosy in the Schreyer and in the Pawley governments. In fact, the member for Concordia, the Premier of the province, is the fellow that was also a minister during that time. So he would have first-hand knowledge of what was going on at that time.

But these are just memories, going back down memory lane. So I am just bringing these forward so that there is an awareness why the new members—[interjection] You see, see the backbenchers, some of the fellows that have been around before, they get a bit antsy and touchy when you start hitting a few nerves and they throw out these other names. I only tell this to the new members so they remember. See these other members, they get a little antsy, they throw out these other names. What about this? What about that? But these are things that happened, these things happened. I mean, you

should know about these things, about this former NDP government that is now advising Today's NDP as they charge forth, Today's NDP that ran under the banner and voted for our budget, voted for our spending. Then they turn around and they say that it is different now. Oh, we took over and it is different.

They were not into the mandate less than a month, and then the Minister of Finance throws up his hands and says, oh, we are going to have a deficit, we do not know what to do, and the Minister of Health says the buck never stops. I mean, no responsibility. They would throw up their hands. They have still got over four or five months to make a balanced budget legislation.

An article in I believe it was one of the papers I was just reading today in fact, they were talking about that, regardless, that deficit can still be avoided if the NDP rein in spending over the next four months.

It seems rather preposterous that after four years of running back-to-back surpluses, former Finance Minister Eric Stefanson would suddenly leave the province in the lurch with an unavoidable deficit. I mean, you have been re-elected to manage. With less than a month, the hands go up, oh, we cannot do anything about it. I mean, there is a big deficit there, and not only that, the deficit is based not on spending, the deficit was based on estimates of spending. When we were in government, we told our departments: you are not going to have as much money; you are going to have a cut in spending.

So now all of a sudden when the NDP come into power, they go to the departments and say, well, where would you like to spend the money, where is your wish list? So the departments, naturally they are going to say, well, we should be spending here, we should be spending there. The reviewers from Deloitte and Touche are running around with their pencils filling in all these lines. Naturally the departments are going to say, well, this is where we would like to spend money, but that is not the reason you were elected. You were elected to manage this government, and management means decision making. It does not mean spending; it means making decisions.

There is no reason why this government, this new government should be running a deficit, none at all. The only reason they are talking about a deficit right now is because they have the opportunity, because of the balanced budget legislation, to run a deficit in their first year of office. So they said, hey, if we are going to run a deficit, turn on the steam. We are going full bore; we are going to put everything up against that government, the Conservative government, and say this was their fault; they are the ones that made all these commitments; they are the ones that already spent it, so that we can go into a deficit position. No responsibility, no vision of leadership on their part, a Finance minister who feels the best thing to do is throw up his hands, a Health minister who says I do not know where the buck stops. All of a sudden he realizes that there is no money there, and he is going to say, well, we do not know where we are going to get the money.

So, I mean, these are the types of things that when the outside sources start to talk about who is in charge here in Manitoba now, there does not seem to be any type of leadership over there other than the fact that they will just run and say, well, we cannot avoid it; the only thing is we have to accept what all these fundings are, instead of looking at actual ways to cut, actual ways to make balanced budget legislation. They have to comply with the balanced budget legislation other than in the first year, so, by gosh, they are going to make a big hole in those deficit projections. [interjection]

Moody's, now all of a sudden you hear Moody's. Moody's. I think a lot of the members on that side thought Moody's was a chocolate bar made out of milk chocolate. They never heard of Moody's before. Now, all of a sudden, they are quoting Moody's. That is incredible. You know, it is amazing how all of a sudden they start to use Moody's. Actually, the reason why Moody's has given a good rating for Manitoba is because of the history of what we have done with Manitoba and the history that we have left with Manitoba and the history that we have made for Manitoba with regard to balanced budget legislation.

When we brought in balanced budget legislation, it was the first in North America. It

is the toughest in North America. Ontario is now bringing in balanced budget legislation, but they are taking away that one loophole that the NDP now is sliding in under, and that is that first-year deficit projection. They are saying that there is no deficit. The NDP love that; they can fill it up. Come on down; you bet you. [interjection] That is right. Give them the opportunity, they will take it. Do not worry, they will make sure that that money is spent. They will go around to all the departments with this big wish list.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to find out that the document that the Finance minister had sent around to all the departments—and I have a copy of it here. This is what was sent around to all the departments. [interjection] Oh, I am sorry, not to use props, that is right. I am sorry. I forgot about that. [interjection] That is right. I should have known. [interjection] That was the Christmas list, I am sorry. I am sorry that Hansard did not—you know, I apologize that—

### Point of Order

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I think the member has been in this House for some time, and the member does know that it is not in order to bring in exhibits.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is sort of highly inappropriate. That was not even the size range. That was a rather large Christmas stocking. Certainly, actually, we could debate that. We have argued on this side that the Tories filled that stocking in August with pre-election wish list promises, but, apart from the politics of it, it is highly inappropriate. I would ask you to have the member called to order on that. He should know better than that. It is not standard procedure in this House.

\*(1730)

**Mr. Speaker:** I would like to respond to the point of order raised by the honourable Government Deputy House Leader, that he has a point of order. I would like to remind all honourable members that it is improper to

produce exhibits of any sort in the Chamber, and I ask the honourable member to please put it away.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Reimer:** I agree with your ruling. I forgot that bringing in a big Christmas stocking showing that as the wish list that the Finance minister sent around was inappropriate, and I apologize for bringing in the big Christmas stocking wish list.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk a little bit about the throne speech. My gosh, it is called a throne speech because that is what it is called, a throne speech. Really, there is not much in this throne speech of merit or substance other than a rehash of what we heard during the election. Usually when you have a throne speech, you give a bit of a vision as to what the government sees for the future for Manitoba and where they want to take it, and to give out a broad guideline as to what areas they would like to highlight, or where they would like to spend some time.

There was absolutely very, very little mentioned about the economy, the strong economy here in Manitoba, the fact that Manitoba now has the lowest unemployment rate in Canada. In fact the latest stats show Manitoba at 5.6 percent. The Canadian average is 7.7. So it goes from a high of 17 percent in Nova Scotia to a low of 5.6 in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, that gives a very, very strong indication of the policies and the procedures that were put in place by this government and this previous government, or the Conservative government, in regards to getting people back to work, getting this economy here in Manitoba to be one of the strongest in Canada, the opportunity for growth, the opportunity for young people to work. The opportunity for investment is still here in Manitoba, and I would expect the new government to take advantage of that.

There is an opportunity and an obligation for the new government to recognize that that is what the people of Manitoba are looking for. They are looking for a strong, stable economy.

They are looking for an opportunity to work. They are looking for an opportunity to make money. They are looking for an opportunity to be optimistic in this province, which we have laid the foundation for.

This new government has the opportunity to capitalize on that, take advantage of it, to grow upon it. One of the things that will help this government recognize some of those goals is to look at the taxation problem and look at some sort of tax relief for the taxpayers here in Manitoba.

I know the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) is going to say, well, because they have this deficit they cannot do anything with taxes. Mr. Speaker, we have to. This government has to make that type of commitment for tax relief. It is paramount because here in Canada right now the ability for companies and people to move is more at a vulnerable state now than it has ever been. The people can now move with jobs whether they are located here in Winnipeg or they are located in St. Louis or Toronto.

So the tax advantage is something that has to be looked at. It has to be dealt with. There has to be a realization that here in Manitoba we have to be taxed competitively, and I would hope this new government looks at that in a very, very realistic and a very positive manner in trying to initiate tax relief for taxpayers and the homeowners here in Manitoba for a reasonable return on the dollars and the efforts that they put forth.

There is an opportunity, and a tremendous opportunity, for this new government to make inroads with the people of Manitoba. If they take the bull by the horns and say: we will not have a deficit this year, we will make the sacrifice, we will make sure that Manitoba stays on that track, they will have the confidence of the people in Manitoba. Not the type of rhetoric that comes out of some of the ministers over there already saying that we have to spend, we are forced with this deficit, so we have to roll over and play dead. The best thing for that government over there is to be turtles, and they are starting to be turtles.

I welcome the comment made, one of the first comments made by the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell), where he boldly said, well, we won the election. We on this side here in opposition love to hear that type of statement, where the arrogance of the new ministers and some of the members feel that they are in control now and they are the ones that are going to make the decisions. They are going to be there to make decisions, but the decisions are there for the people of Manitoba, not for their party and not for their caucus. So that is the caution that I say that to the people of Manitoba.

So I think that the people of Manitoba are looking for that. They are looking for those type of decisions, not for the decisions that are made solely on the purpose of the handouts and the gimme groups and the hallway handouts that are lining up and down this place here with the new government. So they have a responsibility, Mr. Speaker, and it is a big responsibility.

But they can take the bull by the horns and make those decisions. Balance the budget this year, just like they said they would do. Balance the budget over the next four years of their term. They will keep this Manitoba economy going and this Manitoba a place to live, to work and raise a family. They have a responsibility to do that, Mr. Speaker, and it rests in their hands.

In regard to the Speech from the Throne, as I mentioned, I could relate back to my previous responsibilities in the previous government as Minister of Urban Affairs, Minister of Housing and Minister responsible for Seniors and try to highlight some of the things that in regard to that that I know were happening. I recognize that there is an opportunity there too.

Some of the dialogue that has come out between the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Friesen) and the City of Winnipeg in regard to the mayor sounds positive. There seems to be a willingness to work together. I know that we worked very co-operatively with the mayor and council and the City of Winnipeg in trying to resolve some of the conflicts between the two governments. There will always be conflicts, because we are dealing with elected officials on two levels that have their own political agenda. But I think that the people of

Winnipeg expect a co-operative and a more precise area of direction between the two governments. I think I would hopefully see that the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and the City of Winnipeg would be on that course. Hopefully this happens. It is too early to tell, but the opportunity is there.

There is one mention in the throne speech in regard to housing. The only line, and it is a very short line, is in regard to its commitments, the government, the Manitoba government and its commitments, and the line actually reads "aid for neighbourhood efforts to improve housing." Now, that is kind of up in the air as to what that means.

I am not too sure whether the government is looking at reintroducing a housing program where there is the actual physical building of houses here, back in Manitoba, like was going on in the '60s and '70s and '80s. At that time there was a partnership, and it was a good partnership. It was a partnership between the federal government, the provincial government and, to some extent, some of the municipalities, the municipal government, for the development of housing.

As the Minister of Housing (Mr. Sale) knows, the federal government has pulled out of their housing commitments. In fact, they have downloaded it onto Manitoba. They have downloaded their responsibilities totally in public housing so that it is now totally up to the responsibility of the provincial government to fulfill. This is something that represents a real challenge and opportunity. With the negotiations between the federal government and the province of Manitoba, there was an opportunity to make some significant advantages for the province of Manitoba, which did happen through the negotiations. I would hope that the Minister of Housing does have the ability to take advantage of those pluses and financial arrangements that were made so that they can make these type of things that are good for the Manitoba housing.

\* (1740)

So I would think that the opportunity is there for some new and improved directions and

policies and programs in housing. I look forward to hearing what the Minister of Housing (Mr. Sale) and this government have in regard to public housing here in Manitoba. I would hope that some of these efforts would produce some positive results for public housing.

I know some of the efforts that were taking part, and I am optimistic that they will still continue, and that is in regard to tenant-managed public housing. There was some very strong emphasis in the member for Point Douglas's (Mr. Hickes) area, where we worked with the Lord Selkirk Park Tenants Association, very positive results, a very strong commitment for safety and improvement in that area. I believe I am correct in saying that the complex and that whole area has turned around to a degree where there is an element of safety and security there. It was because of working with the community and working with the tenants association. I would hope that that effort of co-operation is extended by this new government to work with tenants associations and public housing because that is where changes come about. That is how changes happen, but it is the delegation of authority of decision making to the people.

Now, I know that sometimes for the NDP that is a hard thing to fathom, letting the people make decisions, because they feel that many times they need to be the hands-on creators of decision making, and that is a very hard habit to break. I would think that that is something they may have to work very hard at. The heavy hand of government is synonymous with a socialist government, and I would think that that is something they will have to change. Those are some of the efforts that I think that they would have to look at in regard to some very significant changes. So in Housing I feel that there is room for some changes that I believe would come about, hopefully will come about.

In fact, even with some of the changes that were just mentioned in regard to Bill 2 that was introduced into the Legislature just now, The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act, these things that were brought forth by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Friesen), I read with interest that these were exactly the same things that we were proposing to work with the City of Winnipeg to bring in. We were in the

process of directing the department to comply with these requests, and I am glad that they are able to come to fruition under the new Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

So some of these, I believe, are a way of helping the city, working with the city and accomplishing a lot of the directives that the city wants to fulfill in setting up a co-operative effort between the city and the province and the fact that a lot of these things should be there for the city to make the decisions. So in working with the city, these are some of the ways that I would expect the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs to look at very seriously.

It is interesting, the funding to the City of Winnipeg, and I would hope that the government of Today's NDP would look favourably upon the city and the continuing of its funding through various allocations, various programs, the MWCRP program, the Urban Capital Projects Allocation program. These are all very, very good programs that the province and the city have initiated.

During our reign of government, the funding to the City of Winnipeg increased on an average of 4 percent per year under our administration. I would think that Today's NDP have a legacy to look at, in a very serious manner, as to its support for the City of Winnipeg. I would hope, because the City of Winnipeg is now looking at a very large surplus that they have in their pension fund, that Today's NDP do not wriggle out of their commitments to the City of Winnipeg, that because of their abilities to fund money to something else, they will look at ways to get out of their commitments.

It was interesting at the Chamber of Commerce meeting where the Premier (Mr. Doer) gave a speech in which he said that his commitment to CentreVenture would be continual, but there was no mention of money other than he said we will work co-operatively with the City of Winnipeg under the CentreVenture program, but there was no mention of whether there would be a financial commitment. I believe the City of Winnipeg is asking for a \$5-million commitment from the province, but the government and the Premier

(Mr. Doer) and the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Friesen) has not said whether there will be anything flowing on that matter.

So we wait with anticipation for all these great statements of Kumbaya by the government over there, that they are willing to work with everybody, the one big circle, yes, yes. I am waiting with great anticipation that this government of all inclusion—we will work with these people, we will consult, we will have meetings, we will discuss and we will do all these things and bring in the interested stakeholders. These things are all very, very welcome on their part, you know, until we see where the money is going.

But, like I say, Mr. Speaker, I wait with anticipation as we go into the new year where we see the NDP, Today's NDP, throwing up their hands, running around like Chicken Little—the sky is falling, we cannot control the deficit, we cannot cut the spending, we cannot get balanced budget legislation because we have a loophole and we are going to slip in there. We are going to build it up so that we come out and everybody will come out there with their big gimmie wishes and their wish lists and the hallway handouts.

In front of every minister's office, they will have these little meat market things where you take a number, and they will be lined up waiting to get in there. I think the parking attendants out here now have never been busier with all the parking to get all these groups coming in here to see the ministers, to see what they can come up with. It is amazing. I think we even have to hire more commissionaires. I am not too sure, Mr. Speaker, whether that is true or not, but I think we will have to hire more commissionaires because of the traffic problems around this building here where all these new people are coming in here.

You see them walking down the halls now. They are inside these ministers' offices. You hear them talking in the halls, how excited they are to be back seeing some of their old NDP friends. It is really an exciting time to be here in Manitoba because they are all lining up, and they are all going to be there.

They have the ability to say no, and that is what they are elected for, to say no and to be responsible and to balance the books. Balanced books legislation is there for them to embrace, for them to be part of and to show Canada and show the rest of the world that they can be in tune.

If they step backwards and fall back in this old cliché of deficits, because they have the opportunity to have a deficit because of the balanced budget legislation and they have the opportunity to flow it right up—[interjection] Here is the member here saying it is our budget. You betcha, it is our budget, and you voted for

it. You remember that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**An Honourable Member:** Six o'clock.

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

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff) will have 40 minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until tomorrow (Tuesday) at 10 a.m. Thank you.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

December 6, 1999

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