

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

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Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
First Session—Thirty-Eighth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
VACANT	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.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean, Hon.	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold	Minnedosa	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
LOEWEN, John	Fort Whyte	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
MURRAY, Stuart	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PENNER, Jim	Steinbach	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack	Southdale	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Carman	P.C.
RONDEAU, Jim	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
SALE, Tim, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Wellington	N.D.P.
SCHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
SMITH, Joy	Fort Garry	P.C.
SMITH, Scott, Hon.	Brandon West	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, April 28, 2003

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

Mr. Speaker: I would like to advise the House that Friday's Hansard has not yet been received from the printer. As soon as it arrives, it will be distributed to all the members.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PETITIONS

Provincial Road 304

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): I wish to present the following petition. The background of this petition is as follows:

Provincial Road 304 is the main connector road between Provincial Trunk Highway No. 11 and Provincial Trunk Highway No. 59 for residents in Pine Falls, Powerview, St. George, Great Falls, Manigotagan and Bissett who wish to travel in a southwesterly direction to Selkirk and to Winnipeg.

Provincial Road 304 from Provincial Trunk Highway No. 11 is in a southwesterly direction, is travelled by approximately 1000 vehicles daily and shortens the travel time to Winnipeg by at least 30 minutes.

The 14 kilometres of Provincial Road 304 to the south of Provincial Trunk Highway No. 11 is in very poor condition, has no shoulders and winds among granite outcroppings and through swamps, creating very dangerous and very treacherous conditions for the travelling public.

At least six people have died needlessly in the last eight years on the 14 kilometre stretch of Provincial Road 304 south of Powerview.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Transportation and Government Services (Mr. Smith)

consider rebuilding and reconstructing the 14 kilometres of Provincial Road 304 to the south of Provincial Trunk Highway No. 11 at the earliest opportunity. I request this on behalf of Dan Gelin, Yves Normandin, Adrian Farmer and others.

Mr. Speaker: In accordance with our Rule 132(6), when a petition is read it is deemed to be received by the House.

* (13:35)

Supported Living Program

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): I wish to present the following petition and these are the reasons for this petition:

The provincial government's Supported Living Program provides a range of supports to assist adults with a mental disability to live in the community in their residential option of choice, including a family home.

The provincial government's Community Living Division helps support adults living with a mental disability to live safely in the community in the residential setting of their choice.

Families with special-needs dependants make lifelong commitments to their care and well-being and many families choose to care for these individuals in their homes as long as circumstances allow.

The cost to support families who care for their special-needs dependants at home is far less than the cost of alternate care arrangements such as institutions or group and foster home situations.

The value of the quality of life experienced by special-needs dependants raised at home in a loving family environment is immeasurable.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Caldwell) consider changes to the departmental policy that pays family members a reduced amount of money for room and board when they care for their special-needs dependants at home versus the amount paid to a non-parental care provider outside the family home.

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Housing consider examining on a case-by-case basis the merits of paying family members to care for special-needs dependants at home versus paying to institutionalize them.

This is presented on behalf of Jared Weir, Shelley Mott, Darrel Kent and Linda McLean.

Mr. Speaker: In accordance with our Rule 132(6), when a petition is read it is deemed to be received by the House.

Highway 276

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition. The background of this petition is as follows:

Grain farmers require a safe, dependable and efficient means by which to transport their grain to market. Grain elevators have been closed at McCreary, Ste. Rose and Makinak. Due to grain elevator closures, farmers north of Ste. Rose are required to use long-haul trucks to transport their grain to market. Load limits are in place on Highway 276 north of Ste. Rose, preventing grain farmers from using long-haul trucks to transport their grain on this highway, causing considerable additional cost. Farmers north of Ste. Rose have no alternative route to hauling their grain on portions of Highway 276.

So we petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Transportation and Government Services (Mr. Smith) to consider the reduction or elimination of load limits on Highway 276 north of Ste. Rose to permit

grain farmers to haul their grain to market using long-haul trucks.

To request the Minister of Transport and Government Services to consider upgrading Highway 276 to enable farmers to drive long-haul trucks and remain competitive.

I present it on behalf of Greg Zamrykut, Pam Honish, Neil Preston and others.

Mr. Speaker: In accordance with our Rule 132(6), when a petition is read it is deemed to be received by the House.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Day of Mourning

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour and Immigration): I have a statement for the House, Mr. Speaker.

Today, April 28, is the annual Day of Mourning for workers killed and injured on the job. We pause in remembrance of individuals who have died or been injured on the job over the past year. The toll on working Manitobans and their families is all the more tragic because it is preventable.

Today is also an opportunity to rededicate ourselves to preventing occupational injury and illness and to building a strong safety and health culture in Manitoba.

The Manitoba government is committed to improving safety and health in our workplaces, along with the Workers Compensation Board, as well as employers, workers, educators and prevention organizations across the province.

Last year we updated The Workplace Safety and Health Act following the most extensive consultation on workplace safety and health in more than 25 years.

This morning I announced the first of a number of education and public awareness initiatives under the SAFE Manitoba banner. New safety and health education resource materials have been developed for use by teachers and students. Because youth are among the most susceptible to workplace injury, they are a key target audience for prevention measures. By

working together we can put an end to these preventable tragedies at the workplace.

I would like to ask all members to stand for a moment of silence in the Chamber today and honour people injured or killed at the workplace this past year. Thank you.

* (13:40)

Mr. Speaker: May I suggest to the honourable members, because we have a response to the minister's statement that we do the silence after we have the response, if that is okay with the House. *[Agreed]*

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I want to speak on behalf of our caucus, recognizing the day April 28 and just referring to the act itself. It states and I quote: That it is desirable that Canadians should designate a day of mourning to remember workers killed, disabled or injured in the workplace and workers afflicted with industrial disease.

We on this side fully support the goal of making Manitoba's workplace and workplaces as safe as possible. Our caucus fully supports the consensus recommendations made to the Minister of Labour by the Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Review Committee. These recommendations were agreed to by both Manitoba's employers and labour representatives and it represents the steps needed to achieve the goal of reducing workplace injuries by 25 percent.

We on this side had some concerns in regard to the bill that was presented to the House in the premise that it did not reflect the entire consensus recommendations. The bill included a number of issues that were not recommended by the review committee at all. How the workplace safety and health is improved should be the major question. We stand with our colleagues today to mourn this day.

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

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been granted.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I join with the other MLAs assembled here today to acknowledge the importance of workplace safety, to mourn for those who have died and to just say that I think there has been some progress in the last several years in recognizing not only the immediate injury but the longer term injury from things like smoking and other toxins in the workplace. The all-party committee is a step in taking the recommendations of the Workers Compensation Board further so that we can get smoke-free workplaces and decrease the extent of injury and death that may occur from this cause as well as other causes. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Would members please rise for a moment of silence in honour of the people injured or killed at the workplace this past year?

A moment of silence was observed.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 14—The Improved Enforcement of Support Payments (Various Acts Amended) Act

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Ms. McGifford), that Bill 14, The Improved Enforcement of Support Payments (Various Acts Amended) Act; Loi visant à faciliter la perception des paiements alimentaires (modification de diverses dispositions législatives), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

* (13:45)

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, this introduces several new enforcement measures for the collection of child support, including automatic and continuous paycheque deduction from payors when there is a pattern of default and interest-like penalty, family compensation as a result of missed or late payments and cost recovery of collection action among other matters.

Motion agreed to.**Introduction of Guests**

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us from St. Maurice School 30 Grade 11 students under the direction of Mr. Shaun McCaffrey. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Smith).

Also in the public gallery we have from Shore Elementary School 20 Grade 5 students under the direction of Mrs. Pat LeClair. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**Taxation****Impact on Employment Creation**

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): A headline in last week's *Winnipeg Free Press* should be a wake-up call to the current Government but unfortunately it will probably fall on deaf ears. The headline read: Higher income taxes threat to future: economist.

In the article, an economics professor at the Asper School of Business says that for a province typically saddled with below-average economic growth and where only 100 net new jobs were created in the last year, the higher tax environment poses a real problem for the province's economic future. Why does the Premier fail to realize and understand that his high tax environment poses problems for Manitoba's economic future?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Certainly, today Stats Canada has come out with numbers indicating that in 2002 Manitoba was the best in the west in terms of economic growth. Mr. McCallum has worked before for former Finance Minister Wilson of course and was involved in consumption taxes, the GST, Mr. Speaker.

We have rejected the idea of the consumption tax increases. One would note that the so-called fair tax commission or the tax commission that was bequeathed to us by members opposite talked about increasing the sales tax to reduce the income tax. We have actually reduced the income tax by over 11 percent or 12 percent. *[interjection]* Our tax reductions were \$220 million in four years; theirs were \$120 million in 11 years. The tax gap was created by members opposite and they only realized it in August of '99 when it was too late to act.

Mr. Murray: The First Minister references Statistics Canada. It is interesting that he would reference Stats Canada because that same report from Stats Canada indicated that the net job growth in Manitoba for last year was only 100, dead last in the country. That results in zero job growth really in terms of statistics.

Why, when an economics professor at the Asper School of Business says that slow job growth in the province is in relation to the unfavourable competitive tax economics that we have in Manitoba, does the Premier disagree with the University of Manitoba economics professor who says the fact that you only had 100 net jobs created because the symptom is Manitoba has a high tax environment?

Mr. Doer: Mr Speaker, we have reduced taxes both on the property tax side, on the income tax side and on the corporate tax side. I was talking about Stats Canada growth numbers that were released just today. Thirdly, our job growth numbers have averaged over 8000 a year since we have been in office. When you look, not month over month, but look at the whole result since we came into office, the average in the 1990s was 3000. The average is quite a bit greater than that now, more than double that right now.

*(13:50)

We admit we are not perfect. That is why this Budget builds bridges to young people to stay in the province with new co-operative community college courses. It builds bridges with longer periods of interest rate relief. It builds bridges with the middle-income tax cut of another 6 percent, Mr. Speaker, building up on the previous tax cut of about 10 percent for the same income bracket. That is why the en-

dangered species of the building crane is returning to Manitoba.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, the Statistics Canada numbers that we refer to, those Statistics Canada numbers showed from March 2002 to March 2003, not month by month, 12 months, one year, the growth under the Doer government, the net jobs was only 100. That is what Statistics Canada said. I do not understand why members on that side of the House do not see the relation.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Murray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not understand why this Premier refuses to see the relation between a high tax environment like he has created for Manitoba, low job growth. Why does he not listen to professionals, experts like the University of Manitoba economics professor, who gives advice and says that high tax environment is no way to create jobs?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, again we reject the economic vision that resulted in advice to the previous Mulroney government to introduce the GST. We reject that GST mentality. Members opposite created a tax commission; they created a tax commission and the tax commission recommended that we increase the sales tax from 7 percent to 8 percent to reduce the income taxes. We have actually reduced the income taxes without raising the sales tax.

I would remind the member opposite that he often takes out of context the various reports. Last week he was quoting from a nurses' report, Mr. Speaker. I want to quote the full context of the report: The trend of casualizing the nursing profession in Manitoba began in the nineties when layoffs and cutbacks were occurring under the Conservative government. Over a thousand nurses were laid off. If you are going to quote the report, quote the whole report.

Manitoba Hydro Rate Increase

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, this Premier (Mr. Doer) has put Manitoba Hydro in a position where they are going to spend half a billion dollars to live up to his expenditures. We know the rates will be increasing by 20 percent. *[interjection]* Oh, they say not true. The

Premier wants to quote reports. We have financial predictions from Hydro that say that rates will increase by 20 percent. What internally financed projects will Hydro have to defer?

Hon. Tim Sale (Minister responsible for The Manitoba Hydro Act): Mr. Speaker, when the previous government bought Centra Gas for \$450 million, they did not bother to put that on the debt of Manitoba Hydro and report it clearly. That is where most of the increase comes from. Hydro currently, as it has during the previous government's time and during the current Government's time, used prudent and cautious projections for its future rates.

In the last four years, they have projected rate increases, and in each of the last four years, these rate increases have not been needed. That is why for four years there have been no rate increases. In fact, as the member would know, when there are no rate increases, then inflation makes power cheaper and cheaper and cheaper every year. That has been the record of this Government, Hydro becoming more affordable, Hydro bringing companies to Manitoba to compete here, Hydro bringing new employment to Manitoba. Hydro is the engine of our growth which was the best in the West last year, Mr. Speaker.

Public Utilities Board Review

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, if Hydro was the economic engine of this province and in many ways it is, they are putting sand in the oil of the crankcase of production, and Manitoba Hydro is going to be impeded by their financial policies. The debt of the utility will grow by \$2 billion.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

*(13:55)

Point of Order

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

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): I am reluctant to get up, but would you please remind the honourable member of our *Beauchesne* rules that a supplementary question

requires no preamble. That is Citation 409. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Government House Leader, I would like to take this opportunity to remind all honourable members that *Beauchesne* Citation 409(2) advises that a supplementary question should not require a preamble. I ask the honourable member to please put your question.

* * *

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, will this Minister of Hydro live up to his commitment previously to take Manitoba Hydro to the Public Utilities Board, as he said 15 months ago, or did something change?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Conservation): Mr. Speaker, this may be somewhat strange for members opposite who allowed the Clean Environment Commission to fall into disuse, but we have not only commissioned a review that involves the Clean Environment Commission to give thorough scrutiny in terms of the environmental issues, we have provided a scope that will look not just at Hydro construction but other areas including, particularly alternate energy and energy conservation. Indeed, we have included in this review the requirement that we look at the needs assessment as well. That is consistent with the principles of sustainable economic development, that is consistent with proper scrutiny. We make no apologies for making sure there is full scope and full scrutiny of our activities in terms of Hydro.

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, this is shameful disrespect to the Public Utilities Board.

Public Poll

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, there is polling presently occurring in Manitoba asking about Hydro's image around environment, around sales, around construction of dams. Is this Government now living to manage Hydro by polls?

Hon. Tim Sale (Minister responsible for The Manitoba Hydro Act): Mr. Speaker, this is a government that believes in the future of Manitoba, that is not afraid of the future, that

does not mothball projects that will benefit our future and keep our rates down, that is proud to work with First Nations people in partnership for the development of Wuskwatim if we are able to conclude an agreement with Ontario, with Conawapa. This is a government that understands new opportunities in wind, which I would presume as a rural opposition that the party opposite might welcome but instead they are afraid of the future. They are the party that criticized Limestone. They are the party that mothballs. We are the party that builds.

Mr. Speaker: Order

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Opposition House Leader, on a point of order.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, *Beauchesne* 417: Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and not provoke debate. The question was very clear: Who paid for the polling? Who was paying for the polling?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable Minister of Energy, Science and Technology, on the same point of order?

Mr. Sale: Mr. Speaker, that was not the question.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable official opposition, I would like to take this opportunity to remind all honourable ministers *Beauchesne* Citation 417 answers to questions should be as brief as possible and should deal with the matter that is raised.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Energy, Science and Technology, have you concluded your comments? *[interjection]* Anybody have a question on this side?

Justice System Government Initiatives

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, on April 1, Bob Morrison, president of the Manitoba Association of Crown Attorneys called the Justice Minister soft on crime and Manitobans agree because we have seen the headlines in the *Winnipeg Free Press*: On April 8, judge releases rape suspect on bail; on April 1, \$10,000 pornography fine reduced to \$3500; and in *The Winnipeg Sun* on April 2, violent rampage, 10 punks beat senior, assault cop. What is this justice system coming to? Why is this minister not doing anything about his soft on crime policies?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear the interest from the member opposite in this area. I am pleased to announce and I hope for support from members of the Opposition for our Budget, for Budget 2003. When it comes to prosecutions, for example, since 1999, we have increased the investments in Prosecutions Division in the Department of Justice by 58 percent.

* (14:00)

I am also pleased to say, and I hope members opposite will support us, but since 1999 we have also increased support for provincial policing by 24 percent.

Mr. Hawranik: Mr. Speaker, this minister has had nearly four years to establish his own record on justice and he has failed. Why does this minister not back up his words with action? When we see headlines such as what was stated and what we have seen in March in *The Winnipeg Sun* such as: Charges for kiddie porn, on March 26; Man near death after beating by four youths, on March 15, what is this Justice Minister proposing to do? When will he finally take a tough stance against crime?

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the members opposite will support the Budget, if not for our investment in prosecutions and policing, but also for our continued investment in the new Public Safety Branch Investigation Unit, which under The Safer Communities Act, has now shut down 20 drug, prostitution and sniff houses in the city of Winnipeg. Those are the kinds of innovations that we are dedicated to.

Mr. Hawranik: Mr. Speaker, this minister is soft on crime. Why does this minister not take a tougher stance on crime? When we see headlines in the *Free Press* in March such as: Killer gets sentenced three years in prison for slaying a 19-year-old man, is this what the minister calls justice? Is this justice for the 19-year-old man who was slain or is this justice for his family?

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, the current administration has been bringing in many new and innovative initiatives to better protect the safety of Manitobans. At the same time, it has gone back and recognized that over the last decade there has been a blind eye turned to the needs in areas like policing, like in prosecutions, and we have made very significant investments in that area.

But, Mr. Speaker, Manitobans do not need to be reminded of the record of the last decade, for example, of a gang hotline that was not answered for up to five months at a time, of the highest violent crime rate ever recorded in a Canadian jurisdiction. That was in the years before we came into office.

What we are doing is putting in place strategies to make sure that the safety of Manitobans is going to be protected as much as we can. At the same time, I am very pleased to announce that last week the RCMP and Winnipeg Police have joined together now in an integrated unit to tackle the challenge of criminal organizations in this province. It is a welcome addition to our strategy to make a hostile environment for organized crime.

Child Pornography Sentence Lengths

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, we recently saw another example of this Government's lenient attitude towards a most heinous crime, child molestation and child pornography, as in the case of Jon Amadatsu, a pedophile, where the minister's own officials recommended a sentence of only 18 to 24 months and the offender received 18 months.

Mr. Speaker, why does this Minister of Justice feel that 18 months is enough for someone possessing 700 computer images, including

one clip showing a child raping another child and one child can be heard crying out, stop, it hurts?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, it is the challenge of ensuring that the laws of this country better protect the safety of Canadian children. That is the reason that Manitoba led a national campaign, a successful one, to introduce a new law to criminalize Internet luring. It is why this administration has been working in partnership with such organizations as Child Find Manitoba, a wonderful organization that is making a difference, to establish CyberTip.ca to report instances of child pornography and online predators. That is why this administration has put in place a Criminal Organization and High Risk Offender Unit. Just in the last two weeks, we put in place a Web site for better notification of those predators who would threaten the well-being of our children.

We are moving on some very important initiatives in providing national leadership.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, why is this Minister of Justice failing to protect children from these predators by not seeking real jail time, especially for someone like Jon Amadatsu who stalked an 11-year-old student, who sent her pictures of child pornography and asked her to send him pictures of her naked?

Where is the real jail time and where is the tough on crime that he supposedly talked about?

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear the members opposite are developing some interest in this area, because all Canadians have to take a stronger stand against crimes against children.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, we have to ensure that the Criminal Code provisions to protect children are made stronger. We are wanting to know where does the Opposition stand when it comes to strengthening the Criminal Code provisions with regard to child pornography, other crimes against children.

I would like to hear the views of the member opposite when it comes to the need to raise the age of consent to sexual activity to better protect our children. I would like to hear from the mem-

bers opposite, will they join us in the demand for a national sex offender registry that is indeed robust.

Mr. Speaker, these changes are necessary. We are doing what we can to encourage the federal government and demand the federal government take real important steps forward.

Mrs. Driedger: Why did the Justice Minister not stand up and denounce these crimes and deter others from committing them by ensuring real jail time? Why is someone who enjoys watching toddlers being raped given a slap on the wrist?

Mr. Mackintosh: The members opposite know full well how positions are presented in the court system of Manitoba and the role of the judiciary and the role of the Criminal Code. Members opposite also know and I recall circumstances, and the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Ms. McGifford) will remember this, one time there was a john of a 14-year-old, I believe, that, as I recall, was given a \$400 fine.

Mr. Speaker, we have to ensure that there is a strong message to the federal government that the provisions in the code to protect children are enhanced, that there is a new message that those crimes have to be treated most seriously.

In terms of what we can do as a province, I am very pleased that we introduced the first child-friendly courtroom facility and waiting room in Winnipeg to ensure that children were not traumatized further by the justice system and indeed their evidence made stronger because they were not having to face the face of the perpetrator.

Immunization Programs Funding

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, in January of this year, the Minister of Health indicated that he wanted to cover vaccinations for chicken pox, pneumococcus and meningitis for Manitoba children, if he received additional funding from the federal government.

I wonder why, since this Minister of Health has received over \$200 million in new money from the federal government, he did not make a

priority in this year's Budget funding for all children, regardless of economic circumstances, for these vaccines.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): The member should do some calculations with respect to the question of the funding from the federal government. We have now gone from the level of 14% federal government funding up to 16 percent. While we welcome that funding, there is much due.

As I indicated at the time to the member who wrote me a letter on that, Mr. Speaker, and as I indicated to delegates at the MMA convention, we have a strategy in terms of ensuring that we can provide coverage to the people of Manitoba. It will be rolled out over a period of time in order to meet the needs of all Manitobans.

I want to add, Mr. Speaker, we have the most extensive vaccination program through our flu vaccination, and through our pneumococcal, which was never covered before in the history of the province of Manitoba.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, the minister did not have the courtesy to respond to my letter. I would like to ask the Minister of Health, with the \$3-billion health care budget and over \$200 million of new money from the federal government this year, why is this minister denying children and families access to these vaccines because they cannot afford to pay.

* (14:10)

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, as members know, we have a very extensive vaccination program and child health program. In fact, we have the most extensive accessible health care program of any single province in the country. *[interjection]* If the member wants to hear the answer, I am happy to provide it.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, in my final supplementary for the Minister of Health: Why should lower-income families not have the same option to protect their children against these conditions as families who can afford to pay? Why the two-tiered system?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I note last week when we announced our West Nile program, the

member opposite opposed it, one of the most preventative programs in the history of the country. I know when we introduced our nursing program, that member stood in front of the Legislature and opposed our nursing program. Any initiative that we have taken to include and to expand, including the expanded drugs this year, those members opposite opposed. We have a plan which we are rolling out to provide assistance to those families to do that, but where were members opposite when they wanted to privatize large portions of our health care system in which people would have had to pay for everything? What will happen if members opposite ever get their hands on the levers of power again?

Health Care Budget Overspending

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by complimenting the Minister of Health for his presentation to the Manitoba Medical Association on Saturday, his honesty when he said that ministers' comments are often banal and boring in laying out the Government's direction, when he said it was to continue the same processes we put in place the last three and a half years.

I ask the Minister of Health, who has received generous increments in budgeted funding every year he has been in office, why it is that he overspent his budget by more than \$50 million in 2000-2001, by more than \$50 million in 2001-2002 and in the third quarter estimates that he will overspend his budget again by more than \$50 million in 2002-2003. Can the minister explain to Manitobans why he thinks it acceptable to continue to do more of the same in overspending by tens of millions of dollars each year? Do we need to have balanced budget legislation which requires balanced budgets department by department to improve the minister's fiscal management?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): I am glad the member referenced my addressing the Manitoba Medical Association, and, for the edification of members of the House, I was quite overwhelmed by the fact that the incoming president of the Canadian Medical Association had words of praise for this provincial govern-

ment and the course of action that this provincial government has undertaken. I personally think that is unprecedented in a long, long time.

I just want to make two points to the member's comments. First, we steadily brought down the funding issues so that the overspending in the Department of Health is less than 2 percent of the overall budget of the Department of Health. Secondly, I might suggest, on almost every second occasion that the Member for River Heights stands up in this House, he generally asks us to spend more money on more programs.

Mr. Speaker, those programs are important, and it is important for this Government and as this Government to provide the services to Manitobans and improve health care, which most Manitobans I think agree with, and to balance the Budget at the same time. We are going to continue to do that.

Health Care System Tuberculosis Control

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Will the Minister of Health provide further explanation for his comments to the Manitoba Medical Association on Saturday that there have been outbreaks of tuberculosis occurring in northern Manitoba recently and why it is that citizens actively infected with tuberculosis have sometimes quite recently had to wait weeks living in crowded conditions with up to 20 people in a home before being put in isolation? Why is the Minister of Health not adequately dealing with a critical infectious disease like tuberculosis here in Manitoba?

Ukrainian spoken. Why is the minister not being more accountable?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): When I addressed the MMA, Mr. Speaker, as the member indicated, I talked about issues that were problems and I talked about successes. When I made mention of the banal, I said that ministers often in the past would come and give banal statements that said nothing. I frankly outlined some things that were failures and some things that were a success.

Dealing with tuberculosis is a partnership, a partnership arrangement with the federal government, First Nations and the Province of Manitoba. We work collaboratively. It was a partnership when the member was a member of Parliament. It is a partnership with the federal members, and we are working with the Sanatorium Board and with tuberculosis. When individual cases have a problem, we have put in additional resources and measures. At the same time, as I indicated last year in this House, we have put into place a review of the operations in order to improve it, and that process is in place.

Mr. Gerrard: Of course in tuberculosis the Province has the lead role. I would ask the minister to admit that there have indeed been some problems in the handling of tuberculosis and that this is a critical infectious disease that should be much better under control.

We are living in a time when people are much more aware of infectious diseases because of problems like SARS and West Nile virus. So it really is critical that we get on top of tuberculosis, which has been around for a long time. We need to make sure that it is being looked after properly, that people are being put in isolation promptly and that there is no problem with it being communicated to other people.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, two comments on that rather lengthy partial question: firstly, the major precursor and difficulty with respect to tuberculosis is housing conditions, which have been in a poor state for decades. We have made significant steps to improve that in partnership with a government in Ottawa that for many, many years totally gave up its responsibility in this area. Point 2 is that I do not think whether you talk about West Nile virus or SARS or any infectious disease that you will find another provincial government that has been as active and as out front on all of these fronts than the Province of Manitoba. We have and we will continue to be.

Child Care System Funding

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, during the lean, mean Tory years of the 1990s,

the Filmon government cut child care funding by \$10 million. By contrast, our Government has increased child care funding in every budget.

Can the Minister of Family Services tell the House how our newest investment in child care will improve the access to affordable, quality child care for Manitoba families?

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Family Services and Housing): Mr. Speaker, after a little more than a week in the House, I am happy to have a question addressed to myself on the issue of child care, because it is something that the Doer government believes very strongly in supporting.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

* (14:20)

Mr. Caldwell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) say: do not be concerned about this sort of child care, but I can tell you that since 1999 there has been a 41% increase in child care support in this province. This means more child care spaces and decreased waiting lists, more funding for children with disabilities, and improved wages for child care workers. Our commitment to ongoing stable funding demonstrates the Doer government's commitment to the important role that child care plays in our community and the important role that early childhood educators play in our communities. Our record stands against members opposite who cut \$10 million out of child care in the nineties.

Cardiac Surgery Program Review

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, after admitting that nine people died while waiting for heart surgery, this Minister of Health made one of the most cold-hearted statements one could imagine. I quote from the *Winnipeg Free Press* of March 8 when he indicated: "I'm not going to fool around with this anymore." On top of that, this minister on the weekend has coldly told families and loved ones of SARS victims that their deaths were, again I quote: "A blessing in disguise because we are now better

prepared to deal with a SARS outbreak." I would ask this minister to explain to the loved ones of cardiac care and SARS victims and to all Manitobans why people have to die before he is willing to act.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I can think of several Latin phrases I would like to apply, but suffice to say, firstly, thank heaven that to this point there have been no SARS cases in Manitoba.

Secondly, in my address that I did to the Manitoba Medical Association to medical doctors, and I noticed the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), and I thank him, was in attendance at that conference to discuss these issues, I indicated, and the point was that we have been planning as a nation to deal with a pandemic.

In terms of SARS, Mr. Speaker, it is a tragedy and it is an emergency. There are hundreds of people infected in this country, but if we were in a pandemic, we would be talking about thousands of people infected, thousands. It behooves us, as a nation, to take this experience and apply it to our planning for a pandemic that is in the works in order to ensure that we do not put ourselves in danger or in a situation where we are overwhelming the system. I stand by that statement. I have made it at federal-provincial meetings and it has been agreed to by most federal predictors in the country.

Immunization Programs Funding

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, on a new question.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Member for Fort Whyte, on a new question.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is unfortunate that this Minister of Health is so flippant in his comments both to the victims of his cardiac-care crisis and to the loved ones of the families of SARS.

I would hope that this minister would take the issue of the Canadian Pediatric Society's recommendation on the vaccines for children a little more seriously. I would ask this minister: Is

he also going to wait until there is a report of a baby's death because their parents could not afford to provide a vaccine? Is he going to wait for one of those reports before he acts on the recommendations, before he uses the over \$200 million he has from the federal government? Is he going to use some of that money before a baby's death to provide these vaccines?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, every time there is a death in the health care system, whether it is someone in mental health—[interjection]

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Chomiak:—whether it is a mental health patient who commits suicide, whether it is a patient who could not get a transplant, whether it is a patient who is on a waiting list and could not get the service, it is a tragedy to the entire system. The entire system, all of us, collectively take responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite said, as I was speaking, ship 'em to the States. I am glad the member mentioned that. When we came into office and the waiting lists for cancer patients were beyond the rate, one of the first things we did is we did put people to the States, and you know what happened? We saved lives. We have cut the waiting list for cancer care in half, 50 percent as a result of our actions. We work every single day, when an issue raises, when there is a problem, we try to improve it, and that has been shown by reducing the cancer waiting list by 50 percent. I am glad the member raised that issue.

Mr. Loewen: On a new question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Fort Whyte, on a new question.

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, I am simply asking this minister to start taking responsibility for his own inaction. As we have seen with the cardiac-care crisis, he should not have been fooling around with the system. He should have been fixing it. I would ask this minister to take a very serious look at the vaccines that have been recommended by the Canadian Pediatric Society. I would ask him to provide those vaccines to those families in this province that cannot afford

to provide that for their babies without his assistance, and I would ask him to implement that policy today. Will you do it today?

Mr. Chomiak: As I indicated, we are in the process of doing that.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I would like to indicate, when it came to our attention that there were problems with respect to the cardiac program, let me outline what we did. We brought in an outside reviewer, a world-respected individual. We expanded the number of surgeries. We offered, even though we had offered it two years earlier, to send people out of province. We brought in surgeons from out of province.

Mr. Speaker, it is ironic that the wait list that we have right now, and even at that time, was shorter for heart surgery than when members opposite operated during the 11 dark ages of Tory government.

Our *modus operandi* is when there is a problem we work on it, and we work on it with care providers.

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the minister again if the solutions were that straightforward, if they were that easy to implement, why did this minister wait for nine people to die before he acted?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my comments in the House last week, we learned. That is the job and role of a Health Department, learn from mistakes. When 12 babies died at the Health Sciences Centre and nothing happened for one baby death, two baby deaths, three baby deaths, four baby deaths, five, and twelve deaths, the largest inquest in the history of Canada took place and that was the Sinclair inquiry. We are following the recommendations of the Sinclair inquiry.

What frustrates me is the recommendations, such as a health handbook that was made by the Thomas commission has been rejected by members opposite. Information on that list about a central waiting list that we were to put in place that had been recommended, we put in place. I suppose members opposite reject that too.

When there are mistakes in the system and you advise them and you try to improve the

situation, we put that in place; they reject it. When they talked about training more nurses, we are doing it; they rejected it. We are following Sinclair and Thomas. We are working to improve the system. None of their rhetoric and their inaction changes that.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Rosemary Brown

Ms. Nancy Allan (St. Vital): I am honoured to rise today to recognize the life of Rosemary Brown, an important woman in Canadian politics who passed away this weekend of a heart attack.

Ms. Brown was the first black woman to be elected to political office in Canada. She served as an NDP MLA in the British Columbia Legislature in the 1970s and 1980s. Ms. Brown was devoted to social justice and dedicated much of her time in office and in other positions to promoting this cause. As an MLA, she created a committee to eliminate sexism in textbooks and educational curricula. Also, she worked to introduce legislation to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex or marital status. These initiatives helped lead to more woman representation on boards, directorates and commissions.

Rosemary Brown ran for the leadership of the federal New Democratic Party in 1975, but lost on the fourth ballot to Ed Broadbent. In addition to running for the leadership, she was the mother of three children. Ms. Brown was born in Jamaica and originally came to Canada to study at McGill University where she obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1955. She went on to the University of British Columbia where she obtained a Bachelor of Social Work degree in 1962 and then a master's degree in 1965.

Mr. Speaker, when Ms. Brown left office in 1986 she became a professor of women's studies at Simon Fraser University. She also held the position of chief commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission. Ms. Brown's tireless work in Canada was recognized in 1996 when she received the Order of Canada. Rosemary Brown was an exceptional woman who

accomplished much during her lifetime and who will not be forgotten. This country will not be the same without her.

Farm Family of the Year

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): I rise today to congratulate Ron and Wanda Jefferies and family of Glenboro who were recently named the 2003 Farm Family of the Year by the Red River Exhibition Association.

* (14:30)

Mr. Speaker, the award is designed to promote the importance of agriculture and agribusiness by highlighting farm families in the province who are at the industry's foundation. The Jefferies family will receive the award on June 22 at the Red River Exhibition.

The Jefferies live on a century farm west of Glenboro, running a diversified commercial beef and grain oilseed operation. They also run Jefferies Seeds, a year round operation in its own right. Sons Cale and Riley share the family's interest in farming, as they are both involved in the 4-H Beef Club.

In addition to their dedication to their farm operation, the Jefferies family are devoted very much to their community. Ron has served nine years on the Westoba Credit Union board and also as treasurer of the Glenboro Minor Sports Association, while Wanda is currently its president. Ron is also serving his second year on the Manitoba Seed Growers board. He represented Manitoba at the national seed growers convention in British Columbia last year.

The Jefferies were nominated for this prestigious award by Glenboro's agricultural committee, a subcommittee of the Glenboro Community Development Corporation.

I would like to congratulate the Jefferies family for their considerable dedication to our agricultural sector. They are most deserving recipients of this award.

Rural Community Improvement

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin-Roblin): Mr. Speaker, I think it is important here in the Legislature every now and then to talk about the good

work being done at the local level by people who work very hard to improve the quality of life in their local communities.

A very good example is the town of Roblin, the municipalities of Hillsburg and Shell River, who have come together, I think, to create a beautiful spot in their community having to do with three different projects: East Goose Lake, which is one of the top 10 fly-fishing destinations in all of North America; West Goose Lake, which our Government was very proud to help and sponsor through the Sustainable Development Innovations Fund to provide an aeration unit that helps trout winter throughout the course of our long seasons and allows many fly-fishermen to come and partake in an excellent fishery.

Most recently, we in this Government helped this group through the Community Places fund in helping them build the Crocus Trail, which is part of the national cross-Canada trail. The Crocus Trail runs in the south end of Roblin and circles West Goose Lake and then proceeds up towards San Clara and on into Saskatchewan.

The local people worked very hard on this. Congratulations need to be extended to the municipal leaders in the town of Roblin, the R.M. of Shell River and the R.M. of Hillsburg and the recreation commission in the area, along with the dozens of volunteers who have worked on these projects tirelessly for a number of years. I would like to join with all members here in congratulating these people for the work that they have done in their local community.

Loreena McKennitt

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): On April 26, I had the pleasure of joining hundreds of people at the Morden Recreation Centre for a gala evening in celebration of the career and success of Loreena McKennitt.

I also had the opportunity to address the crowd and Loreena at this event. I shared my memories of the introduction of the band program in Morden. I was the band teacher at that time. I can clearly remember one particular student in red pigtailed diligently learning to play the flute. Would you not know, last October

there was that same student on the Legislative Building grounds performing for the Queen, only now she had broadened the range of musical instruments she had mastered to include the harp and the piano, this in addition to being a gifted vocalist and world-renowned composer.

Thanks in large part to our dedicated home-grown talent and loyal supporters of the local music industry, Manitoba is currently bidding to host the 2005 Juno awards. I know that to have the chance to see and hear the country's top musical artists would be a great opportunity for Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, Loreena's previous two Juno award wins and eight nominations have generated much positive publicity for Loreena and for her community. Finding herself recognized as being amongst Canada's highest calibre of musicians was no doubt a shot in the arm for Loreena's already successful career.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure I speak for everyone from the Morden area when I say that we are proud of Loreena McKennitt. Not only are we proud of the awards she has won, the charity work she does and the number of albums she has sold, we are proud of the way she represents her community in Manitoba throughout Canada and internationally.

I offer my heartfelt congratulations for all she has accomplished and I wish her continued success.

Silver Heights School Concerts

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski (St. James): I am honoured to rise today to speak of an evening of music I enjoyed last week at Silver Heights School. The Collège Silver Heights family of schools in St. James held two family concerts, last Wednesday and Thursday, celebrating their students' musical talents. These performances featured a wide variety of musical styles from different schools in the area.

Mr. Speaker, Wednesday evening, students from the French Immersion schools of Assiniboine, Bannatyne, Robert Browning, Golden Gate and Collège Silver Heights performed many French songs and tunes. This concert was a full house of parents and friends.

I had the pleasure of attending the event the next evening when students from Athlone, Heritage, Golden Gate, Bruce, Sturgeon Creek Collegiate and Collège Silver Heights presented a wide range of musical selections. I enjoyed everything from a flute quartet playing "La Bamba" to the Bruce concert choir singing a Korean folk song.

Mr. Speaker, such events as this one help to foster a greater sense of community by bringing together students, parents and teachers from different schools so they can meet and experience new music together. I believe that music is an integral part of life and especially of a young person's education. I know that my own daughter's education was tremendously enhanced by a great music program in St. James. This is why I am so pleased to see that schools in St. James-Assiniboia go to such great lengths to promote music as part of a child's education. I am personally always happy to support any of the musical programs in the schools because of the valuable contribution they make to the development of the child.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize all of the people who contributed to the family concerts. I congratulate the principal of Silver Heights, Len Harris, for hosting the two musical evenings, as well as vice-principals of Golden Gate and Silver Heights, Elizabeth Matyi and Ron Pelletier respectively, and music teachers and directors: Marcelline Moody, Rachelle LaFlèche, Alice Russell, Annette Marcoux, Heather MacLachlan, Lionel DeRuyver, Avonlea Armstrong, Ms. Daryl Crisp, Judy Gislason, Barry Melville and Vic Hooper.

Of course, I would like to congratulate the talented pool of students, accompanists and all those who participated. Without all of these important people these two musical events would not have been possible.

Mr. Speaker, I will close by saying that the Silver Heights family schools put on two wonderful performances and they should be commended for doing such a great job.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ADJOURNED DEBATE

(Fifth Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: Resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) that this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the Government, and the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Murray) in amendment thereto, and the debate remains open.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I am very pleased to speak today on a Budget that is actually an extremely good budget, I am sure a very popular budget, certainly a budget that even the members opposite have been unable to find a lot wrong with.

Before I begin, Mr. Speaker, I did want to extend my best wishes to the members of the House who have announced that they are not running in the next election, who will not be in the House next time around, on our side of the House, Becky and Jean, Marianne and Linda. The members that I just mentioned are being let off for good behaviour and I really wish them very, very well in their retirement. I am sure that they will be coming back in another forum in the future. They are all young. They have a great future ahead of them. To the members on the opposite side, to Frank, Jim, Harold and Harry, I want to say that we are letting them off with time served. I know they too will enjoy their retirement and I am sure we will be seeing them in the future. I sure hope they have had a good time while they have been here.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

* (14:40)

I know Harry has been here for, the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), has been here for yes, almost a lifetime. As a matter of fact, with his passing from the Chamber here, I believe the dean of the House will now be the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). So there is a huge gap there between 1966 and 1981. That is a huge spread.

I wanted to say at the outset that we have listened with interest to the various concession

speeches from the members opposite, and I think that is the best way I can describe them. The Member for Lakeside, once again, summed it up very well in his speech on Friday. I think he did have the correct analysis as to why things appear to be the way they are. Maybe it is just his experience and longevity in the House and in this world that have caused him to understand that better than some of his colleagues. I think he is largely correct in the analysis, but he says that we stole their policies and that is why we are successful.

I wanted to remind him that we did not steal their policies. Well, maybe we did. But they stole them from Roy Romanow in Saskatchewan. *[interjection]* That is right. Before that the Member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg) said Tommy Douglas in Saskatchewan ran balanced budgets. So you know it is not their idea for us to steal. The fact of the matter is that it was a very good decision of the Romanow government finally after many many years to balance the budget.

One would think if you listen to Conservatives that somehow this idea would have come from some other Tory fiefdom like Alberta. But in fact no, it came from Saskatchewan. In fact, when you look at it, it is just a common-sense position. The public are not prepared to accept governments that live beyond their means anymore. We got away with it through the 1970s, through the Trudeau seventies and then through the Mulroney eighties, and the Tories were no better at it than the Liberals before them. They talked a good line. They sang a good tune. But at the end of the day, the results were just as bad under the Tories as they were under the Liberals.

The NDP never had the chance federally, so we do not know what they would have done. Given the times, it is probably fair to say that they would have simply done the same thing that the Tories and Liberals did. So I say that it is just common sense that you should be balancing your books. You do it at home. If you do not do it at home, you will not be solvent for very long.

I want to say that the Tories are actually in a real conundrum here because they find themselves four years down the road could have been pretty shocked if they lost the election in the first place, trying to get over that idea. As one was

overheard Monday saying that a lot of the Tory ministers were having a very difficult time because they came here, the day they got here some of them became ministers. They never made their own phone calls. They had real trouble figuring out how to even use phones, make their own phone calls after they were out of office. Matter of fact, this person told me that in fact they actually still think they are ministers, just they do not have the offices. They did not have the offices or the cars, but in their own minds they were still ministers. But just when they gave orders, nobody was listening to them.

So the fact of the matter is that they are shocked that they lost the election in the first place. But, to make matters worse, they thought that somehow the current Government would act like previous governments, running big deficits and getting into lots of trouble with the electorate. So it must be an absolute shock to the Tories over there to find that after four years the NDP government has done none of the things they thought they would do in terms of overspending and running deficits and getting into trouble with the voters. Now they see themselves facing not even just an improvement in their position, because if you look at the record of elections for the last 30, 40 years, you see that after a government forms the government, first gets elected, the second election there is always a contraction. There is always a reduction in the number of seats and in the popularity they have.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is very amazing because this time could be different. This could be an absolute first where a government wins an election and four years later continues to pulverize the Opposition and drive them right out of the building.

So the fact of the matter is it is no surprise to us that the members are a little down. They are looking a little tired. They are looking a little haggard. They are in a big mess, and I do not think they have a whole lot of time left, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to sort out these problems. I do not know whether the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) would like his name added on to the list of people retiring here, but, you know, it is not too late. It is not too late. I have time; I have room here to add him in and wish him well. He

tells me he has been nominated again, though, so he is kind of obligated to stay on there and fight the good fight.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to talk about another very important fiscal initiative that the Government took that even the Conservatives would admit is a very, very important decision to make, and that was dealing with the liabilities of the civil service. You know, through successive Conservative and NDP governments over the years, this unfunded liability has been permitted to grow and grow and grow. Sooner or later, we were going to have to deal with this issue. If it was not us, it would be them in the future.

So it is to our credit, to the Government's credit, the Finance Minister's (Mr. Selinger) credit that we have come to grips with that, rather than just doing what is easy, shovelling it off and let the next guy worry about it. We have been dealing with it now for the last couple of years, taking into account the increasing liability to the extent that now, when new civil servants are hired, the department that hires them must make provisions for them in their hiring. So it is just part of the Budget.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this was a very important—you know, it is not a sexy topic, not vote-grabbing, vote-getting. It is not like building a new hospital or a new school. I guess we are doing a lot of those these days. It is not like doing something like that. It is taking care of fiscal responsibilities, and it shows that the Government is on the right track on that side.

As far as health care spending is concerned, the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) alluded to that, the fact that the Government has spent half a billion dollars more in health care. Of course, it is no surprise that while the previous Tory government was talking about balancing the books and was, in fact, doing that, they, in fact, had huge health care spending increases. A lot of them, by the way, were not even in the Budget. They did not even have them in the budgetary process, but they were spending like crazy in their last few years. But that is what they did. They just spent before the election. Get over the hump; get over the next election and then boom. Remember the big plans they had to build all these buildings? They were going to build all

these hospitals and they won the election, when was it?—1995. Boom, they shelved them all, shelved all the buildings until later on.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am sorry, but I forgot the Member for Gimli, my good friend, Mr. Helwer, Ed, is also retiring, and I would certainly be remiss if I did not mention all the great times that he and I have had. Some of them I do not want to talk about because they involve being in Australia in February and the member insisting that he would like to send a picture of him and me at a banquet back to the local Gimli *Spectator*. I thought better of it after a while.

* (14:50)

Mind you, I cannot drink any wine anymore, so I was very clear in my thoughts and I thought it might be a wise idea to send that picture, e-mail it off to the Tory caucus and let them see what a great time that we were having at this conference in Australia. So I know it did not make it to the *Spectator*, and I do not know whether it made it to the caucus either, but you might show them that.

Anyway, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wanted to point out that the public actually likes vision in a government. They like to know. They do not want to follow the Government's every step every day. They just want to be confident that the Government is being run properly, that the leadership knows where they are going, what they are doing. They may not always agree with where they are going, and maybe the leadership does not know where they are going some of the time, but it is the confidence question. The public has to believe that they do know where they are going. I think that is what the public believes about this Government. They have a confidence that they can go to sleep at night and wake up and know that the Government is not going to be in the ditch somewhere, that it is going to be running along at a good pace and doing the right things.

With that in mind, the current Government has a number of building programs, and people like building programs, so we are building a hydro dam. Through the 11, 12 years, 11 years of Tory government, there was no construction really of any kind in this province, but the NDP now are going to build a hydro dam. When you

look at it historically, it has been the NDP that has built pretty well all of the dams. You know, when Sterling Lyon was in power, the architects and engineers told me—and I was one of the fundraisers for the NDP in opposition, and we used to get this over and over again. I mean, they would say, well, we are not NDP supporters. We do not really like you guys that much, but we are scared of those Conservatives. We elect them and the place just shuts down. That is what happened under Sterling Lyon. They elected, they supported, they donated to Howard Pawley to get him elected, so that he would, in fact, start constructing dams and other activities. So the NDP historically, since Schreyer's day, have been a building type of government.

Now, let us deal with arenas. You know, here you have a former Tory government that just before election time tries to cobble together a big deal to save the Jets and build a new arena. The current Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen) was spearheading a big arena challenge at the time. I mean, he is the most irritated of the bunch over there when it comes to that arena because that just reminds him of his own failures, right? He was expecting that there would be statues and busts of him at the front of his arena. Instead, they are going to be Chipman, and that really rankles him. I do not see him at the moment because I am not looking over there, but I know that that is a very sore point with him, that the NDP would be able to put together an arena proposal, get the job done, when these great Tory thinkers and builders and business types could not get the shovel in the ground, and we are doing that.

In addition, what sort of economic activity did you ever see in downtown Winnipeg during the Tory years? As the years went by, the downtown was just more run-down, and nothing was going on there for 11 years. I mean, you can say, well, maybe the economy is better. Well, no, the economy was pretty good under their years too. You can say, well, maybe one project or something, maybe that is beginner's luck, but we are talking here 42 projects. That is a lot of construction. That is a lot of building cranes. In fact, you could probably find whooping cranes downtown a lot more easier in those last 11 years than you would a building crane. I do not remember seeing any in town here.

An Honourable Member: I do not remember any.

Mr. Maloway: That is right.

Now, the big clincher in our building project is going to be the floodway. This has got to depress him more than anything else because this is going to be, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a \$660-million project with \$80 million flowing this year alone, and it is going to give us that 700-year flood protection ratings.

This is a huge project. *[interjection]* The Member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) says: Huge amount of jobs. We are talking about a huge amount of money, a huge amount of jobs here and an asset that is going to save this city, this province, enormous amounts of money over the long haul because, eventually, there is going to be a flood. There is going to be a flood maybe even bigger than the 700-year too at some point, but I do not think any of us will be around to worry about that one.

Where was the initiative on the part of the Tory government to do stuff like this? They have nobody to blame than themselves. We could have presented a credible alternative in an election situation next time by doing probably nothing more than just balancing the Budget and building a couple of buildings. We are delivering the mother lode here. We are talking about an arena, we are talking about the floodway—*[interjection]* 42 projects.

The Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurshou) says it is government money. Just what does he expect? What are you going to have, private guys build the floodway and then they will charge people to use it when there is a flood? That would be his type of economic activity, that you would go and get somebody to build a floodway on spec, and then they would hold everybody to ransom and threaten to flood them if they did not pay up when the flood came. I think that these members have a very bleak future at this point, and I know that there is light at the end of the tunnel, so I will get to that in a few minutes. There has got to be some light here somewhere, but we just have to kind of flesh out the whole argument here first.

The natural governing party, that Tory party that pulled in such Liberals as the Member for—
An Honourable Member: Riel.

Mr. Maloway: No, no. The Member for Fort Whyte. There was a feeling in 1999 that after the Pan Am Games they would keep on for another term, but here they are stuck in the— *[interjection]* Ran out of gas actually on the political highway, just sitting there. As a matter of fact, the tires are disappearing. One of their stars is gone, down to Ottawa, actually just waiting to see what happens out of this, and he will be making his way back here to save these guys. That party has got no money. I mean, what is wrong with this party? They are out of money. They are complaining that their ideas have been stolen. Let us see now: no money, no ideas, no candidates. Their good candidates are leaving, and so they have a caretaker leader. I think they know it. Of course, they have that Member for Fort Whyte there, waiting in the wings, wanting to take over as well. He has tried almost every critic portfolio there is and he is not showing a lot of success in those. There are not too many left that he can try out.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, *[interjection]* to the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurichou), a news flash here: it is not over; you guys still can pull this off. There is still hope out there. That is why we are going to have an election. *[interjection]* We do not know when the election will be. I am a bit of a hawk, so I have been wanting to have it now for quite some time. I am sure it will not be too many more sleeps before you will have your wish. I know there are a few members opposite have said, call an election a few months ago. I do not hear them. They are pretty quiet right now, matter of fact I had heard a couple of comments in a company's concession speeches here last week, saying, well, you know, maybe you should wait for four and a half years.

* (15:00)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would say that you can talk about some of your new policies. I know you have some, private health care, that was one of the new ones, right? I invite you into Elmwood and we can discuss private health care. You are welcome to come in there. Well, I

remember the Tories in their old incarnations, Clayton Manness, actually, I just saw him last week—telling me back in 1988, actually '86, he said they were going to beat me, but 1988 he had a good candidate, he had my old campaign manager, Frank Sims. They recruited Frank.

Then the next time they did a redistribution, they had Vic Toews running. Then they figured they were going to get me that time, right? So after that, things have just gone from bad to worse for these guys, because now I have to go out and find my own candidate. They will not even get me a candidate.

You know, you have these policies that you are going to have a lot of trouble with. Anyway, your job now is to stop the bleed where it is and try to rebuild for the future. I am sure you have one. The only thing that could derail you is the member, the honourable Liberal leader, right? He shows some fits and starts every once in a while. He might get going one of these days, but if I were a betting person, I know that I am not supposed to be betting on these things, I guess, but I would have to say that probably the Tory Party is well positioned to be back some day.

Now I want to talk about taxes and get back into the Budget here and deal with some of those statements the members have been making about competitiveness. That is the big buzzword that the leader was referring to last week. What the leader has to recognize is that we have to be competitive. All provinces have to be competitive if they are going to stay in the marketplace. So, when a business is going to locate, they do not just look at what is the corporate tax rate, they look at a whole bunch of other things. They look at will they have a labour force there. If you are looking at potash, you are not going to set up a potash mine in northern Ontario where there is not any potash. To start with, you have to have the product that the company wants to mine or buy or manufacturer to begin with.

What you have is the Conservatives picking on one little item, income taxes, for example. They knock that one around, but the reality is that the companies look at the whole package. They hire a consultant, the consultant looks at Manitoba and says, all right, these are the advantages and disadvantages. They look at the

whole package. They do not look at one isolated example.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to get to the Manitoba Advantage, because this is really interesting. All the years that the Filmon Tories ruled the roost here, they would talk about the Manitoba Advantage. They would say taxes are only one component. You have to look at the income tax, you have to look at the retail sales tax, you have to look at gasoline taxes, health care premiums, mortgage costs, child care, auto insurance, telephone service—whoops, that may be a bad one there—electricity, heating and property taxes. You have to look at the whole balance.

When you go to Alberta you have to pay medicare premiums. You do not do that here in Manitoba. So you have to look at the whole picture. If you were in Toronto and you decided to move to Winnipeg, you could sell that Toronto house—and I can give you the average prices here if you want, but I think we are almost out of time—you can buy a better house in Winnipeg. You can have a cottage thrown in at the Whiteshell. Right? You can have cleaner air, a shorter drive to work, a better quality of life, cheaper hydro, cheaper insurance, cheaper cost of living. What these guys are saying is, on top of that, we should give them the lowest taxes as well. It is not necessary, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to be the lowest on everything. It is not.

The way these members talk, they would see Manitoba, basically, not being competitive anymore, because, if you reduced your taxes to the lowest common denominator, sales tax to Alberta, and the income tax to the lowest-taxed province, if you did that all the way around, where would you have the money to provide the services that these companies need to move here in the first place? You would not have services. You would not have the water and sewer services. You would not have the roads, the health care services, you would not have all of these things that the taxes are used to pay for in the first place.

So, I mean, these Tories have to argue about something. I recognize that. They have kind of been pushed into the margins. They do not have a lot, other than privatized health care, to deal with in the first place. So I recognize it is very

painful sitting over there in those opposition benches and watching your numbers shrink and shrink and shrink. The whole tax reduction issue that they are using—and I would not be surprised if they do not run a big part of their campaign on that issue, that people are overtaxed.

I guess they could get some people to believe that. I do not think there is anybody that believes that their taxes are low enough. I think if you talk to everyone, sooner or later, you will find them thinking that their taxes are too high. So it is probably a good issue for them to use. But certainly we will be there to talk about the Manitoba advantage, and I wanted to say that in the Budget books that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) gave, well, this is basically a bedtime story for Tories. I think each of these members read this during the Filmon years, so there is no reason why they should not be reading the same book in our years.

This book talks about all the different advantages that Manitoba has over other provinces and why we are in a position where our unemployment is among the lowest, if not the lowest in the country, why we have got the strongest private capital investment in the country, and why all of these factors point to Manitoba being a very, very good place to invest, a good place to live, a good place to work, and a type of economy that is going to lead this Government on for another four successful years.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I am pleased to have an opportunity to rise today to put a few words on the record about the NDP's fourth Budget and certainly, following the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), it is going to be a little doubly interesting because he certainly put a lot of information on the record that one has to wonder a little bit about. One certainly does have to wonder about the information that he put on the record and the enthusiasm with which he did it, considering it was a Budget that certainly missed a lot of opportunities. And yet, the member from Elmwood, and others that have spoken about this, really believed in what he was saying.

I think that part of the problem in attracting people to come to this province is because the NDP really have believed some of what they have said today. I think the member from Elmwood has really epitomized that, those comments, which makes me think they really do not get it. They really do not get it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, prior to getting into my comments, I would like to wish all of those that are retiring from both sides of the House all of the best in their retirements or in other careers that they may be taking on. It has certainly been a pleasure for me to get to know everybody here and learn a lot from everybody that has been part of this Chamber, who have all given a lot of themselves to public life. I think that is a credit to all of them, no matter which side of the House we are on. I do want to wish all of them well and to say that I will miss them and wish them all the best.

Spending has increased by \$358 million in this Budget alone. Since 1999, budget spending has increased by \$1.27 billion in Manitoba. In this particular Budget there is \$11 of new spending for every \$1 of new tax relief. If the member of Elmwood wants to find out why people are not coming to Manitoba, why businesses are not coming here, that may very well be one of the major reasons right there.

*(15:10)

It is a Budget of missed opportunities, missed opportunities to make Manitoba stronger and healthier, but one thing I found interesting is they did not miss any opportunities to keep blaming previous governments in Manitoba. They did not miss an opportunity to blame the federal government. They do not miss opportunities whenever they can to blame the media or somebody else for all of their lacklustre policies and direction in which they are taking us.

It has been so interesting watching all of them. Instead of defending and speaking to their own Budget, they have spent a considerable amount of time attacking us or looking at the past. I find that really strange, because although I was not in government for a long time, we spent a lot of time looking to the future, looking at how to strengthen Manitoba for the people of this province.

Three and a half years into their mandate, their fourth Budget, and they are still acting like they are in opposition. That is too bad, because it is certainly not to the advantage of people in Manitoba to have a government that is wasting so much time with that lack of vision. They cannot defend their own Budget so they are so busy trying to trash everybody else.

They missed opportunities to keep our young people in Manitoba, real opportunities. They missed opportunities to attract more investment here. They missed opportunities to create a more competitive province and stronger economy. They missed opportunities to strengthen our health care system, our education system, our justice system, our family service system, our infrastructure in this problem. Instead, they just threw money at everything. I think they hoped it would land where it would make them popular whether it was meaningful to the province or not. Unfortunately, this poor ability to manage the provincial finances puts Manitoba on a course for disaster.

Just as happened in the second term of the Pawley government and as happened in the second term of the Schreyer government, those particular governments brought Manitoba to its knees. The Doer government has the potential of doing that here in Manitoba, because they are demonstrating an ineptness in understanding a few basic facts, that is, in order to have money to put into valuable social programs, you first have to have a strong, healthy, vibrant economy to raise the money to then invest in your province. That is not happening in Manitoba, but the NDP adhere to a philosophy that in good times they should spend, it is okay to run deficits, and it will correct itself later on down the road.

In fact, the Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Sale), I believe, has even been commenting on that in the past. I believe there is even a name for that particular understanding, philosophy. In fact I am sure the member from Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) probably has the name of that particular philosophy on the tip of his tongue, because it actually exists and members of this Government adhere to it totally: Spend money, run deficits when you have money coming in. But why is that money coming in? Not because of anything that they have done. They are

reaping benefits of a previous government. They are reaping benefits from transfer payments, and they are reaping benefits of taxes coming in. That is not going to be sustainable, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and they are soon going to find that out.

The problem with what they do is when you spend and spend, you run a deficit. You have to borrow. You have to spend more to pay off that debt, and pretty soon you have a problem that is big trouble. That is exactly what the Doer government has done. They have run a deficit after getting a billion dollars of new money in four years. How can any government run a deficit after a billion dollars of new money? Maybe the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) could address that the next time he does his speech. How does the Government get a billion dollars, spend it all and run a deficit, raid Hydro, force Hydro to borrow, force Hydro's debt to become even greater than the provincial debt in this province? Where are they going to take this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

They held Hydro hostage for a big chunk of cash, money that Hydro did not have, by the way. They had to go and borrow it, and they have put Hydro and this province in jeopardy for the future. They have risked our province's future, and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Hydro is now looking for an increase of at least 20 percent in rates because of what this Government has done.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was interesting that when the NDP, the Doer Government first—well, actually, it was even before that, before they even got into government. They were laughing at us because of this billion-dollar promise. Our projections had shown that we would find a billion dollars. We would put half into tax relief; we would put half into education and health care. They laughed. They absolutely laughed. They ridiculed us; they made fun, and then they turned around because our projections were so good, they found the money. They found it in four years. They found it; they spent it; they ran a deficit, and now they have Hydro's debt larger, larger than the provincial debt. *[interjection]*

The Member for Elmwood said we were visionary. I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, visionary, yes, but also an ability to manage finances, an ability to look at the books and be able to

predict what was happening far better than what this Government has been able to do. In fact, trusting the NDP to be good stewards of our money, especially other people's money, is like trusting the chimps to run the banana plantation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Government has failed to be a prudent government. They have failed to address the priority issues of the people of Manitoba. Instead they have put money where they hope it will best serve their political interests, like the money that went to quietly maintain calm in the Sunrise School Division strike, to name just one, which certainly was political interference at its best. But this is a government that does that well. They seem to be able to quieten things down with political interference, with throwing money at things, and for now they do seem to get away with it. But I do not think that is going to last, because people are eventually going to see that they have put their faith in the wrong hands, hands that have a total lack of respect for hardworking taxpayers in this province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the things that I have been wondering about lately is why this particular Government does seem to get away with a little bit more than what other governments have in the past. I finally figured it out. It was because there were such low expectations of them that even a tiny, tiny amount of tax relief for the Manitoba public was more than what people expected.

People did not expect any kind of tax relief from this Government. They did not have high expectations of an NDP government. That is why I think they can ride on their success a little longer than normal; but that will change, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because people are starting to become aware that the expectations of this Government are low, and they are never going to be at the level where they need to be to create a successful province where people want to stay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one has to wonder about the legacy the NDP have left to Manitobans. The legacy they have left us is of being the highest taxed middle-income earners west of New Brunswick. Last year, it was west of Québec. Now it is west of New Brunswick. That is nothing to be proud of. Nurses here are

struggling to find full-time work. We have a thousand nurses, according to the Nurses' Union, a thousand nurses working between two and four jobs just to get full-time work, just so they can pay their taxes here in this province.

We have teachers here who are working hard and having all their tax money taken by this Government. We cannot even compete with Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who have aggressively addressed tax burdens in their province. We cannot even attract new business to Manitoba. There are dozens and dozens of vacant commercial buildings in this city because investors and businesses do not want to come here. Why? We have high corporate taxes; we have high personal taxes; we have high property taxes. There is no enthusiasm here. There is no vitality or vibrancy. There is no sense of optimism in Manitoba, whereas you go to a province right now like Alberta, it feels alive; it feels vibrant; it feels optimistic. That is not happening in Manitoba.

* (15:20)

In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the only businesses coming here right now are those from North Dakota. I am not sure why the Minister of Industry and Trade (Ms. Mihychuk) has not spent some time telling us about all of these new businesses that are coming here from North Dakota trying to attract our middle-sized businesses, aggressively attract them to go to down to North Dakota to work.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I sat with two businessmen on Saturday who have been approached by businesses from North Dakota to go down. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I cannot hear the speaker. Thank you.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I sat with two businessmen on Saturday who said that they are being aggressively pursued to come to North Dakota to set up their business there because the Manitoba environment is not conducive with our labour legislation, with our high taxes. They are looking to reap the benefits of that. Do not think for a minute that businesses here are not seriously thinking about what offers are being

made to them by people from North Dakota, and I am sure that is not the only place that is coming here to recruit in Manitoba.

Now, why would people not think of leaving? We have only created a hundred new net jobs last year. What a dismal statistic. What an abysmal statistic to be left dead last in Canada with Saskatchewan creating over 11 000 jobs, Ontario creating 220 000, and Manitoba creates 100 net jobs, dead last. It makes one think that the last person to leave Manitoba, please turn out the lights.

The unemployment rate in Manitoba is low, but why, Mr. Deputy Speaker? It is because people are leaving Manitoba. They do not feel there is enough to keep them here. Yes, we have a low unemployment rate, but we have businesses crying out for skilled labour. We have in Manitoba 12 people leaving a day, 12 people leaving a day. That is shameful. That will not strengthen this province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am speaking for hundreds and hundreds of women, many of them who are mothers whom I have heard from lately, who are telling me that they are worried. They are very worried that there is not enough happening in this province to keep our children here, to keep their children here. Our young people do not see or feel a sense of hope here. We are seeing 12 people leave this province every day.

The Doer government has not been able to attract investment here, to woo business here. There is some development in Winnipeg, but sadly it is all funded by public dollars. There is no private investment happening. Private investors have no faith in coming to this province and setting up businesses here. They worry about our draconian labour legislation. They are certainly not appreciative of the kind of environment created in this province under an NDP government.

This province is going to shrivel and dry up and turn to dust if the NDP continues down the road they are going, with too much government spending, management by crisis, politics of punishment and keeping us highly taxed, uncompetitive and settling for mediocrity.

In 1999, in the Tory government under Gary Filmon, Manitoba was starting to feel good about itself. There was an optimism that was almost palpable. There was a can-do attitude. That was no small feat, considering the mess that Gary Filmon and his government had to clean up after Howard Pawley took Manitoba to its knees with his high level of spending. It took the Filmon government years and years to begin to turn that around. Negligence and NDP spending crushed this province under Howard Pawley.

The Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) reminded us the other day about the night that the Pawley government went down. The then-member from Dauphin said, and I quote: Do not worry, you will come into government and you will fix the finances and the problem in this province and then we will come back and spend it.

That is exactly what the Doer government is doing. After getting a billion dollars of new money, they have spent every red cent, run a deficit and will run more deficits. Then they robbed Hydro blind and are slowly draining the rainy day fund. This is absolutely obscene. If Manitoba has one disaster like SARS coming into the province or if we see forest fires this summer because it is so dry, that rainy day fund will be depleted. What will happen to the taxpayers of Manitoba, because that is where this Government is going to have to turn? They have run out of places to rob.

Hydro has put forward three new projections this year. Every time they have come forward they have asked for more money. They are now asking for a 20% increase in Hydro rates, at least 20 percent over the next nine years. Those are rate increases that they determined after the Doer government robbed them. Rate increases are going to hurt this province. We are not going to have much spending money left in Manitoba when it comes to the people living in this province.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

The NDP talk about future Hydro revenue from exporting power. I am really worried that they are going to spend more expecting this money to come our way down the road, but they

do not have a sound business plan for Hydro. They do not have a confirmed deal with Ontario. They do not have increased demands or contracts from elsewhere to buy hydro. Right now it is all pie in the sky, but they are spending like all of this is going to happen and come their way. If the Doer government continues to be imprudent, as they frequently are when it comes to spending, we are going to be in for some very tough times in this province. It is going to be Howard Pawley No. 2.

In looking at health care, this Budget sorely lacked in any vision or strategic plan for strengthening our health care system. It just added more money to prop up a system, a health care system struggling to survive. The Government continues to solidly support the status quo while people continue to wait and wait and wait and wait for timely access to health care. In cardiac care the system crashed and nine people have died. In this particular Budget, all the health care announcements were old and re-hashed. No surprise, though, coming from a government that forces nurses to lie about the number of patients cared for in hallways. No surprise from a government that fudges numbers in health care to make their record look better than it really is. No surprise from a government that manipulates information and embellishes the facts because they cannot defend their own poor record in health care. Patients are dying under their watch and when they have an opportunity to make things better, they fail for lack of vision and they fail for lack of planning.

Almost three-quarters of a billion dollars has been dumped into health care and little has changed in the health care system in this province. A renewed vision for health care should have been in this Budget but this Government failed Manitoba in this. They failed to deliver on that new vision, and we are stuck with the status quo that will continue to drain every cent that they choose to put in it.

* (15:30)

As they failed in health care, they failed in education, when school divisions were forced to amalgamate and supposedly save \$10 million. It is interesting that in the latest newsletter of MAST and I will quote from that particular

document and it says, I quote: "School division amalgamation was legislated without a plan and without adequate consideration of the financial consequence of the mergers, the Government is providing \$50 per student over three years but in most instances, the money will only partially offset costs such as systems integration, facility rationalization. It will not begin to cover labour relation costs such as an upward harmonization of wages or benefits."

This reality is, then, a stark contrast to the Government's claim that amalgamations would result in savings of \$10 million. Money that would be redirected to the classroom. In fact in my school division alone, because of forced amalgamation we are seeing costs increase over \$2 million and we are hearing that happening all across the province. I do not think the NDP are going to be any, there is not going to be \$10 million of savings from forced amalgamations at all. In fact, I would like to read one more paragraph from this particular newsletter and it says: "MAST believes that the strike of support workers that began on April 8 in the Sunrise School Division is a foreseeable consequence of the forced amalgamation of school divisions enacted by the Province last year and one which may be repeated in other jurisdictions as more unions and school boards work toward contract harmonization." They say in this particular article that property taxpayers already shoulder an unfair proportion of education cost and this Government is not making anything better by having forced amalgamations on our school divisions. There will be no savings. There is no improved education. What we are going to see are just higher taxes and what a failed policy by an inept government and an inept Minister of Education who put that in and are maintaining that.

In Family Services, this Government has horribly failed children. We certainly heard it today, when it came to a citizen by the name of Jon Amadatsu who got a slap on the wrist for sitting back and enjoying child pornography of children raping children. We have a government that had an opportunity in this Budget to make things better for children in this province. Actually, not only in justice issues, in family service and in the area of health care and vaccinations. Why is it that the NDP government, the Doer

government waits until it is too late before enacting some of these things that could make things better for children? Their policy has failed children when they forced counselling to be terminated abruptly on children desperately in need of counselling. Their policy led to older children being put into shelters with younger children and a four year old paid dearly for that. A four-year-old who was sexually molested. Their policy has Winnipeg Child and Family Services saying that the system is in crisis and children are falling through the cracks. Those front-line social workers will know that.

Now the Doer government has refused to adequately fund the Children's Advocate to monitor devolution of services. I suppose that is one way they are going to avoid any accountability and pretend there may not be any problems with this, and I think the children deserve better than that.

This Budget failed to offer Manitobans any vision for an innovative, successful, and sustainable future. It failed to provide a sustainable provincial spending plan or an economic development plan. They are spending more than they can afford. They are spending more than they are taking in, and this is not sustainable. When they finish robbing Hydro, they are going to have to pick the pockets of the hardworking taxpayers of Manitoba, because there are few other places that they can go.

What is happening today in Manitoba is similar to the story about a frog in boiling water. If you throw a frog in boiling water and it is really, really hot, within two seconds that frog is going to know he is in trouble and he is going to jump out, because he knows if he stays in that boiling water, he is going to cook. But what we have is an NDP government that figured that out, so what they have done is they have thrown the frog into tepid water, so the frog does not know it is in trouble yet. And then what they do is they crank up the heat a little bit on that water so the frog gets used to it.

So you have a government that increases taxes a little bit. They increase taxes, people get used to it, does not know it is in trouble yet, the taxpayers adjust. So they crank up the water a

little bit more so now it is getting a little bit more than tepid, but the frog is getting used to it, just like our taxpayers are sort of getting used to it. But by the time that water is boiling hot, that frog is going to realize it is in trouble and it is going to be too late because it is cooked.

In fact, the member from Elmwood just said it. He said it is too late. The time has happened. And he is right. The taxpayers of Manitoba are going to be cooked, with this Government having increased the temperature of the water. I think the members of the Government who have just heard this story and they are all in agreement that we have reached the boiling point of the water, they have said, yes, the taxpayers are now at that point. They have realized it. And now we are going to have a frog that is cooked, and taxpayers in this province are cooked.

I think certainly this Government has failed Manitoba taxpayers, and I think people are starting to realize that in this province. I think Manitobans deserve more money in their jeans than what this Province has done. But I think Manitobans, as I heard this weekend, are starting to become aware of what has been inflicted on them, and I think the NDP are going to have a little bit more trouble in this next election than they think they are. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Jim Rondeau (Assiniboia): It gives me great pleasure to speak on behalf of this Budget and talk about the positive news that the Government is moving forward on. I want to start, first, by congratulating the people who have served this Chamber and the people of Manitoba well for a number of years. I have had the pleasure of getting to know a number of them: the Member for Inkster (Ms. Barrett), the Member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), the Member for Riel (Ms. Asper), the Member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) and, of course, the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns). These are people who—

An Honourable Member: Morris.

Mr. Rondeau: And the Member for Morris? Oh, no, no.

An Honourable Member: There are a whole bunch of them.

Mr. Rondeau: And the Member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer), the Member for Morris (Mr. Pitura) and Minnedosa. These are people who have served the government of Manitoba and the people of Manitoba well.

When I got elected in this job, I realized how hard it was, as far as working every day to not only look after the constituency, but also look after government business. I think that these people have served people well. Sometimes philosophies differ, but often your basic fundamental is to do a good job every year and make a difference.

Thank you very much to those people who served the province, did an excellent job and worked hard every day to try to make it a better place. So my best wishes to all of you in well-deserved retirement.

In the second part, I would like to talk a little bit about our Budget and what is happening. I have to admit I am an optimist. Not only am I a member of the optimist party, but I am optimistic generally. I think that we have a very, very positive future in Manitoba. I look at some of the things that have happened in the last while. Manitoba's economy grew 3.1 percent in real terms in 2002. That is in spite of September 11; that is in spite of many difficulties economically as far as trade with the issues, with terrorism, et cetera. We grew. In fact, we were second in growth in the province, and that is really an exceptional accomplishment.

Manitoba's employment rose by 9100 in 2002, a 1.6% increase to 567 000 people. If you look at the last downturn, we will take that back to 1989. What you have is you have a drop of about 8100 positions in the last downturn versus a growth. I think that really is an important statistic to remember.

Let us talk about the growth areas: Finance and insurance, growth by 7.3 percent; retail, growth of 6 percent; transportation, 3.9 percent; manufacturing. We have a wonderful diversified manufacturing economy. Solid and steady growth is a theme of Manitoba shrugging off a delayed recovery in the U.S. Manitoba posted a healthy 3.1% real GDP advanced last year. That

was said by an economic study, not by the NDP government.

* (15:40)

The other thing is you look at the growth and where we are creating growth. We are not trying to create low-end growth. They are trying to create high-end growth. If you look at some of the things that are being built, we have the new MediPlan Internet pharmacy in Niverville, which is being built now and is creating 300 new jobs. We have job postings placed for the new Simplot potato plant in Portage, 230 new jobs. We saw the announcement last week of a new \$10-million pharmaceutical plant to open in St. Boniface, 100 new jobs and new investment. Twenty-one million dollar expansion last week by Winpak, which is in the great constituency of Assiniboia, which will create 13 new jobs. Corner Group Industries have completed a \$12-million dollar expansion, 78 new jobs. Biovail, a real star, announced last month they will need a hundred new employees in Steinbach, and that is just the start. That is 821 new jobs.

In fact, Manitoba is doing an excellent job of attracting new capital. Statistics Canada has indicated that the increase in capital investment in Manitoba will be 13.2 percent, much stronger than B.C., Ontario and almost double Alberta's 5.3 percent. We have created 9100 jobs in the 12 months of 2002 which set a provincial record. We are moving forward. It is important to note what type of jobs we are doing. We are not doing low-end jobs. What we are trying to do is high-end jobs that have high value added, that have good positive growth for the whole economy.

It is interesting to note that in the year 2000, we created 11 700 jobs; 2001, 3500; 2002, 9100, which means that we are producing two to three times the jobs. I think that is wonderful because we are working in co-operation with business, in co-operation with labour, in co-operation with educational institutions. We are working together to move the province forward. We are not creating an adversarial relationship, we are creating a positive relationship. I think that is important.

Let us talk about taxes a little bit. When we start talking about taxes, you have to look at

what happens as far as trends. I know that in the nineties, you take school taxes, the proper taxes on school, school taxes in St. James-Assiniboia basically went up 60 percent to 70 percent. What has happened in the last three or four years, they have basically remained stable or dropped somewhat in the last few years. That makes a big difference because property taxes really, really hurt people on fixed income, people who are retired, people who have a hard time making ends meet. So that is just the school taxes.

What we did was the first year we were elected we increased the property tax credit by \$75, the next year by another \$75. Last year we helped decrease the ESL by 10 percent. This year we have made an announcement to decrease the education support levy another 20 percent. So what we have been doing is on a regular basis we have been dropping the burden that taxpayers have to pay on their property to support education. At the same time, what we have been doing is we have been adding money, funding as an increase to the education system. We have targeted certain areas. We have targeted special education, which are helping kids learn in schools, kids with disabilities, kids that need a special assistant. We have had good increases every year on that.

We have also increased the amount of capital spending. I know when I was working for Frontier School Division, we had a hard time trying to get D grants, grants to fix up the facility, to fix up the schools, to put in new roofs. Now we are putting that in so the facilities need repairs and then you do not have to replace them, which costs a lot more money.

I think that we have done a good job as far as keeping the burden of taxes down, especially property taxes, which does affect a lot of the seniors and those on fixed income.

I want to talk about the other taxes that we have changed. A two-earner family of four, \$60,000—often the Opposition will say, oh, you do not have the lowest taxes, you do not have the lowest taxes, but what they fail to mention is health care premiums. Health care premiums are another form of tax. So when you are comparing jurisdictions, you have to compare apples to apples, cost of government.

What they will say is, oh, in Manitoba a two-earner family of four earning \$60,000 pays \$3,395 in tax; in Alberta they pay \$2,011; in B.C. they pay \$1,958. What that says, they will say, oh, you pay less tax, but what they fail to realize is that the B.C. family of four has almost a \$1,300 health care premium; Alberta has about a \$1,150 health care premium. So what happens is that when you add those all up, the taxes are very, very similar.

What they do not talk about is then you talk about we are the only province in western Canada that gives credits for renters and homeowners. So when you add the \$400 property tax credit or renters' credit, then we are by far further ahead for the same family. So when you start talking about being the only province in the west offering rental credits and property tax credits, we are actually ahead. When you talk about the cost of living, mortgages, cost of the rent, electricity, insurance, et cetera, then we become \$5,000 or \$10,000 or \$15,000 ahead, and that becomes important.

The other group that I wanted to just highlight because I am limited for time is a single person for \$30,000. In a single person for \$30,000 we compare very, very favourably when you take both the health care premiums and provincial income tax together. They will sit there and say again that we have a higher tax rate, because in Manitoba we have \$1,826 taxes for a single person earning \$30,000; Alberta \$1,453; and B.C. \$1,195. The Opposition and sometimes the media and some pundits of tax reform, supposed, will say, oh, you need to change because you do not have the lowest tax, but there they forget to add the B.C. \$648 tax on health premium, which means \$1,843 for them; Alberta's \$528 health care premium, which is \$1,981; versus Manitoba, with no health care premium, was \$1,826. We are the lowest taxed in the category. Why? Because you compare apples to apples. You take all the costs, the health care premiums plus the taxes, and you will find that we compare very, very favourably. When you talk about our low cost of living, with insurance, electricity, et cetera, we become very, very competitive. That goes for families of four, \$40 thousand, et cetera. You can go through it

time and time again and realize that we are very tax competitive.

Other areas, if you talk about small business: I laughed today because I was reading an article put out by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. It was talking about how important it was and how positive it was that the federal government had started to decrease small business taxes. I thought it was funny because they are starting to do it, but we did it three years ago. What we did was we increased the threshold at which they pay taxes. We decreased the tax rate. We know that small businesses are a driver of the economy. Small business we have been promoting. We have been supporting it. We have been supporting it through things like ENSIS and Crocus. We have been supporting it by raising the tax deductible level. We have been decreasing the tax rate. So we are a friend of small business. Not only are we a friend, but we are doing something concrete about it. I am pleased to be part of a government that knows where the economic drivers are and actually helps small business proceed.

*(15:50)

Let us talk about electricity for a second. A lot of the bond-rating services, et cetera, started talking about the importance of a good solid future. Our future is in hydro-electricity. Last week I attended a great conference put on by MacKenzie Universal Funds. A lot of fund managers and investment advisors, et cetera, were there. These are not normally what we would call left-wing leaners, but here is what happened. Jeremy Rifkin, who is a world famous economist and writer who was hired by the European Union and many governments to advise on the future and where the economy is going, he spoke there. I have had the opportunity to read some of his books, and I have to admit I am a fan.

He started to talk, and I will quote some of the things. He said experts have been saying that we have another 40 years or so of cheap, available crude oil. Now, however, some leading petroleum geologists are suggesting that global oil production could peak and begin a steep decline as early as the end of this decade sending oil prices through the roof. While the fossil fuels era is entering its sunset years, a new hydro

regime is being born that has the potential to remake civilization along radical lines.

Hydrogen is the most basic and ubiquitous element in the universe. It never runs out and produces no harmful carbon dioxide emissions when burned. The only by-products are heat and pure water. We are at the dawn of a new economy powered by hydrogen that will fundamentally change the nature of our market and political and social institutions just as steam and coal power did at the beginning of the industrial age. We in Manitoba have a great potential to build on this hydro. We can use the hydrogen formed by hydro-electricity to move our area forward to become competitive throughout the world.

It was interesting to see how Jeremy Rifkin has said that it needs to be a partnership between business, populations and government to move into the next century and into a new industrial age. It is nice that our Government has proven time and again that we can work between those groups and move the area forward. I think we have a great future in this. I think we have strong fundamentals, et cetera.

We can move forward with a hydro grid. We can have an east-west hydro grid and move power to Ontario, which was charging up to 33 cents on a kilowatt hour while we were paying about 3.9 cents. We could move electricity to Saskatchewan and Alberta which would be wonderful for them because, again, the price of electricity is huge. Not only is it huge, but most of their electricity is produced by burning coal, which is a high pollutant and creates a lot of CO₂. So, hopefully, we can develop.

Just to let you know where our future is: Wuskwatim is 200 megawatts, which is a small dam; Kiask is 650 megawatts; and Conawapa is 1400 megawatts. These are all dams that can be produced and would create jobs, create good money and profit for our province, and also a good future for our future generations. We need to work on it, we need to develop it. We are a province that has proven it. Our contract for \$1.7 billion for 500 megawatts for 10 years with Xcel Energy shows that we can build a dam, use our energy and build for our economy in the future.

We have a great hope for this and we can do this well. I think we have a great hydrogen future and we can move forward on it and we can use it as a future growth area and rely on our natural resources.

The Opposition has a tendency of saying, oh, you should not use hydro as a generator of jobs or a generator of wealth. That is like turning to Alberta and saying, oh, you should not use oil revenues, or turning to Ontario and saying, oh, you should not use manufacturing taxes. It is a silly, ludicrous idea.

Manitoba Hydro is a resource, a natural resource that is part of our province and we should use it as a resource for the benefit of all.

I think it was incumbent upon our Government to equalize hydro rates so that those people in the North and in the rural areas actually pay the same electricity rates as those people in Winnipeg do, because, as Manitobans, we should share appropriately our resources.

I think when we get a \$500-million bonus because of spiking energy prices in the States and then what we do is take half of that and invest in services and in debt reduction and pension payments, I think that is prudent and appropriate use of a natural resource that we have been blessed with.

In the future let us hope that it is not \$500 million, let us hope that it becomes billions, and then we will have truly, truly a bright future. Maybe we will be the energy producer for all of Canada and replace Alberta in some ways.

I also have had the opportunity to read the preliminary Hydrogen Opportunities Report that was done by the Energy Development Initiative, and it is just wonderful. It is talking about where we can be going. The interesting part is in Europe they have actually moved forward so that they have a ten-year plan on developing this.

I will just hit a few other new changes. We will talk about some of the important things. Health care, we talk about health care. The important thing on health care is that we have been investing more money in appropriate things. The members opposite are talking about spending too much money. Our costs of spending money are

in drugs, where we are having more money spent on drugs. More money spent on doctors, we actually have more doctors so you have to spend more money on doctors. We have money on Healthy Child, which promotes young children's well-being. We promote looking after parents and supporting parents. We are talking about areas such as public health. We have increased vaccinations and areas like in case of public health emergencies, which is very appropriate nowadays. So those are the areas that have the largest growth in health. Those are appropriate expenditures.

We are spending money on capital expenditures such as a million new dollars, over a million dollars in equipment in just the last year. We are just increasing things that will save money over the long period.

The other criticism I hear from over there is spending more money than we are actually taking in. Actually we have been following the balanced Budget. We have paid down the debt by \$396 million in the last few years. We are actually the first government to address the pension liability, which is important for our teachers, our civil servants and our entire province, or we would have gone broke if we had not done it. Moody's of New York said that we were the second-best credit rating in the country. It was upgraded in January 2003 and their comments: a prudent appropriate management, very strong.

Members opposite want to support private health care. What they want to do is they want people to pay as they use, like in the States. I have had the opportunity to try to help two or three constituents who were in the States and did not have appropriate medical coverage. It is \$100,000 for someone who has a heart attack and has an operation there. One couple has been hounded repeatedly by creditors who want them to sell their house, sell everything they have to pay the bill. That is not the type of health care that I would support. I would support something that is appropriate and where there are public-private partnerships and private public service is delivered. I do not want to see for-profit health care. I think it is a waste of money. I want to see us work together.

I want to talk about housing starts. In the year 2002, the Manitoba Real Estate board said the following: We had a banner year, 22.1% increase to 3617 starts, the highest level since 1989. Multiple housing starts: Units rose 19.5 percent to 601 new units; housing permits, \$440.8 million, an increase of 29.4 percent.

* (16:00)

Unemployment rate: Manitoba had 5.2 percent compared to Canada's 7.7, the best in Canada all last year. It also has the best or second best youth unemployment rate. We have strong fundamentals. Strong fundamentals support the stability of Manitoba's economy including one of Canada's most diversified business mixes. That is from the Dominion Bond Rating services. It also talks about prudent development.

So, in closing, we have a great history. We have a great future. Things are working well. I think the only thing that the Tories did better than us, which I have to remark on, is Elections Manitoba's annual report. If you turn to page 17, all it is is enforcement and prosecutions. In this case, it is one, two, three, four, five—five, zero. Five Tories being prosecuted or charged or moved forward on, on convictions on Elections Manitoba versus zero. So I have to admit the Tories have been leading us. They have led us in the prosecutions on the democratic process. Five versus zero. It sort of shows you what type of lead they want to do. We want to do a lead that works together with all groups, with all parts of society to better everyone and move everyone forward versus someone who does not believe in the democratic process, who does not believe in following the rules of a democratic process. So I am proud to be part of our party.

I look forward to the future because I think we have a great future paying down the debt, having an equitable tax structure, having fair treatment of everyone in society, working cooperatively with all groups and moving forward into the next century and—

An Honourable Member: To infinity and beyond.

Mr. Rondeau: To infinity and beyond is great for Buzz Lightyear. So I thank you. I would like to once again congratulate those people who did service to the Legislature and I wish them well in the future. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, I rise to respond to the speech from the Finance Minister (Mr. Selinger) called the Budget Address this afternoon. I just happened to catch the last few remarks of the Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau) who spoke about the belief of the New Democrats about the democratic process. He scolded our party for having some people in front of the Elections Manitoba board, and certainly he is right about that because that is documented. But what he did not say was how trustworthy this New Democratic Party is.

I do not recall any Conservative minister being sued by one of his former employees to the tune of \$2 million as was the case of Mr. Bucklaschuk, that the taxpayer had to bear every penny of it. Mr. Speaker, I do not recall any Premier on this side of the House being sued by people from the Lockport area and waiting until he became Premier to settle the case out of court using \$100,000 of taxpayers' money to buy the silence of people.

Not his own money, not his own money; it was the taxpayer money that he used. This is hush money. I do not recall a Conservative government that was slipping money to a school division in a fraudulent way, and that minister being then scolded by the provincial auditor. That was a New Democrat as well.

So, if the member from Assiniboia wants to put the cards on the table, I am prepared any time to put our record of our party against his any day of the week, because we did not use taxpayer money to buy the silence of people. We were not sued by former employees to the tune of \$2 million where it cost the taxpayer the \$2 million. Let him not stand too proudly in his spot because there is always something there in his closet that can drag him down.

I want to get back to the Budget now. In a time when the income of the province is high, when it has grown by a billion dollars, you

would think that we should be able to afford those very essential services that Manitobans need. The services in health care, the services in education, the services in family services, the services in justice, a billion dollars of growth in three years would tell anyone, with an overall provincial Budget that we left of less than \$6 billion, that a billion dollars of growth should be able to adequately provide all of those services that Manitobans need.

I remember the now-Premier, the Honourable Gary Doer, the Premier of our province, who said just after the last election, that he has looked everywhere and he cannot find the billion dollars that was promised during the election campaign. Remember the election campaign that we said that we would see growth in our economy of a billion dollars over five years, and half of that billion dollars would be spent on services and half of that billion dollars would be given back to taxpayers?

Well, the current Premier found that \$2 billion in less than two years. The economy produced a billion dollars of growth to this province in two years, and we should all be proud of that. I am proud of Manitobans for generating that kind of wealth in our economy. This is not government that does it—government takes the taxes—but it is the economy, the people, the private sector, the hardworking people who go to work every single day of their lives, they are the ones who increase the wealth of this province by a billion dollars.

Now, if you can grow the economy that quickly in a province like ours, do you not think that you should give a part of that back to the citizens? I can tell you that when we left government, we were the second lowest taxed province in Canada. Today we are the highest taxed west of New Brunswick. We are back to the Pawley days, because when we took over government in 1988, my colleagues will well remember that we were the second highest taxed province in Canada. Today we are the highest taxed west of New Brunswick.

Now that is just the nature of the New Democrats. That is just the way that they spend money. There is no control. *[interjection]* Well, the member from Brandon West howls from his seat, but he had better take a look in the mirror

because they are the big spenders, and Manitobans have identified them as big spenders. They do not know anything about management of money. They never have. It was proven in the Pawley years, and now the Doer years are the same.

The Doer government is no different than the Pawley government was in terms of its spending habits. Can you imagine in the Pawley years, in six short years of its administration, we were able to garner and accumulate the largest debt in the history of this province? I am not talking about deficit, debt. Now, under the Doer administration we are going back the same way. Unfortunately, this Government is tied to a balanced budget that we put in place and they cannot do it. With a billion dollars of extra cash they cannot balance the books. What do they have to do? They go and steal from Hydro. They literally steal money from ratepayers. They take the money that ratepayers are paying for services and they say: We need that money to balance our books because we cannot manage. That will come back on them because ratepayers in Manitoba are not going to stand for it. They are not going to stand for their dollars being robbed by the Government because it cannot manage its affairs.

As I go from house to house and as I talk to people on the street, one of the messages they give me is very clear. We will not tolerate the kind of abuse of our ratepayer money that we saw back in the 1980s in the Pawley years with MPIC. Now you remember, some of those members who are here today will remember the rally we had on the steps on the Legislature back in 1987, I think it was, when we had MPI raising its rate by something like 40 percent, I believe it was. Now we are seeing Manitoba Hydro, it is the crown jewel of our corporations, it was the entity that was supposed to continue to provide services for Manitobans and also bring money into this province. This entity, because of this administration's mismanagement, now boasts a higher debt than the province has, a higher debt, \$2 billion higher than the provincial debt is.

*(16:10)

Mr. Speaker, how long can this continue? Not very long because the Public Utilities Board has already been notified by Manitoba Hydro that their rates need to increase by 20 percent at minimum over the next five years. Who is going

to pay that? Manitoba Hydro has only one source of revenue and that source of revenue is the ratepayer, the person who uses the hydro.

We can boast about freezing rates in an election year but that is the way the New Democrats managed their affairs in the Pawley years. Let us draw the parallel between the Pawley years and the Doer years. In the Pawley years we saw MPI rates frozen during the election period; after the election period up went the rates. It was the same with Hydro. Now we see the same thing.

The Premier (Mr. Doer) boasts about having equalized rates for all of rural Manitoba. Well, I can tell you that on my hydro bill it was \$2, big deal. What we are looking at in the future for this province is an increase of 20 percent because this Government stole money from Manitoba Hydro. You cannot put it any other way. This Government stole money from Manitoba Hydro.

A very peculiar thing, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) boasted about the profits of Manitoba Hydro and the projected profits of Manitoba Hydro. What happened to those profits? Where did they go? Well, would the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) like to tell us what happened with Manitoba Hydro's profits in the last year? What about that boasting that the Minister of Finance did? I asked the Minister of Agriculture where she was around that Cabinet table when that Finance Minister boldly stated to his Cabinet that Manitoba Hydro's growth would be something like \$170 million, and it is down by 40 percent. Oh, drought. Well, we never think about those things, do we? We never think about drought.

An Honourable Member: Times change.

Mr. Derkach: I mean, times change, that is what it is. That is the answer. That is the answer of the Finance Minister to Manitobans: times change.

Manitoba Hydro's profits are down. All of a sudden we see the Premier wanting to build a new Hydro building. You talk to people in Manitoba Hydro, do they want to build a Hydro

building? Not very badly do they want to build one, but the Premier does.

The Premier say: look at all the cranes I have in the city. Well, whose money are we spending? The poor ratepayer for Manitoba Hydro, the poor taxpayer. There is no private money being spent on this. It is a total false economy. I mean government can put up lots of cranes, but who is going to pay for it at the end of the day? It is the person who pays the taxes.

That gets me onto the topic of taxes, because in this Budget we looked for some relief for that poor lowly taxpayer, the person who works every day of his or her life and has to share a large portion of his or her income with government because of government's insatiable appetite for spending. We have seen the taxes in this province where they were once a respectable No. 2 in terms of being the lowest in the country to now being the highest west of New Brunswick, and that is not debatable.

Now, members opposite can try to camouflage this in many ways, but the truth is—and you talk to the economists at the University of Manitoba, you talk to the businesspeople in this province, you talk to the Chambers of Commerce in this province, you talk to the average family in this province and they will tell you that taxes are driving them crazy. They cannot afford the taxes anymore.

Mr. Speaker, what can a family do with a thousand dollars extra in their pockets a year? They could probably afford a new pair of skates for their child who is playing hockey. They could probably afford some music lessons for their children. They could probably afford perhaps to take that family out for an evening to enjoy the quality of life that we have been used to enjoying in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the Government has said: We will know how to spend your money better, and so we will take your money, put it in our pockets, and we will know how to spend it better for you. You do not need all these other things. You can live without them. You know, we are fastly going into the bottom of the barrel as compared to other jurisdictions, and do you wonder why our graduates are leaving our prov-

ince? Do you wonder why our youth are leaving our province?

Mr. Speaker, there was a graduation the other day of 300-and-some nurses out of the province of Manitoba. I want to know how many of those nurses have now left the province for other jurisdictions. I can tell you of a good number who are leaving. Why? Because they look around themselves and they look at how much money they are going to earn and how much money they are going to have to pay in provincial taxes and what they will have to pay in other jurisdictions and they say: Even Saskatchewan is better.

Mr. Speaker, these kinds of things drive a province into shame, into an uncompetitive position where we cannot attract workers; we cannot attract business; we cannot attract investment. Pretty soon, we are, I hate to say this, we are like the Newfoundland of Canada. Newfoundland has reasons to become that because Newfoundland has many disadvantages that they have to work against. Manitoba has many advantages. We have many resources. We have an abundance of wealth in terms of our natural resources. We should be able to harness and be able to develop and be able to use for the betterment of our society things that other jurisdictions do not have. Yet we are fast becoming the poor province in this country.

Mr. Speaker, that is a sad commentary because we have strong people in Manitoba. Our slogan used to be: Strong people building a stronger tomorrow, because that is what they were doing, building a stronger tomorrow for their children and their grandchildren. That got wiped out with this administration. That got wiped out with this Government. We still have the strong people, but this Government has taken away their opportunity to build a stronger tomorrow. The stronger tomorrow is not achievable under this administration.

Mr. Speaker, they brag about the investments. Has their been a single Grow Bond issued in rural Manitoba in the last three years? One. One Grow Bond in three years. What was the Grow Bonds Program all about? It was about Manitobans investing in Manitoba. It was about local people investing in projects in their com-

munities. In three years, this Government was able to find one project that Grow Bonds could be used in. What about the REDI program? Where did it go? It has gone out the window. There is not a REDI program. If you look at the Budget lines for REDI, there is no REDI program. I ask the members to read their Budget.

Mr. Speaker, no matter where you look, this Government has failed and failed miserably. The agenda of this Government is not Manitoba's agenda; it is now the Premier's (Mr. Doer) agenda. There is no consultation with Manitobans. It is all about political optics, period.

It did not take the Premier very long to slip another million dollars into the arena, but when hardworking Manitobans came before the Legislature here, to ask for some assistance, they were turned away. I look at the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk). The minister is a fine person, but she is working in a very awkward environment over there because she is probably the only one who has any rural and agriculture experience, and it is obvious by the programs that have not been coming forward from that department, that she is working in an area where no one listens. Around that Cabinet table, no one listens to her. She signed onto a program in Swan River—and her farmers will remind her of that, because they tell me about it—she signed onto a program very boldly that said: We will participate in the agricultural assistance programs, and farmers cheered. They said, ah, finally the minister is going to come forward with some hard money for programs.

Well, there is a thing called transition money. The federal minister said: Yes, we are going to participate in that; here is our 60% money deposited in NISA. The maximum, I think, was \$10,000 I believe, per account. The federal government would pay \$6,000 of that, I believe, and the provincial government's share was \$4,000. But, to date, the provincial share has still not been deposited in NISA accounts.

*(16:20)

The minister now says that this is the federal government's responsibility. It is not hers. Even though she signed on, gave the impression that she was in for the 40 percent, she now reneges on it. Farmers are not going to

forgive her for that. They are not going to forget about it either as they did not forget about the negative margin money. The negative margin money is farmers' money. It was not her money. It was not the Government's money. This was farm money. Other jurisdictions participated in the negative margin money; this Province did not. The federal government participated in it. This Province did not. In other words, it scooped that money for its own uses. If we take a look—*[interjection]*

Yes, you did, you scooped the money for your own uses. The minister says I am foolish, but if you do not pay it out to the people you owe it to, you scoop it. The money belonged to the farmers. The farmers have not forgotten about that either. There were many families who needed that money. It is not just farmers, let us not just focus on the farmers, because every dollar that goes into the farmer's account is spent in the rural community. It is spent in the community that they live in. So this is money that is taken out of rural Manitoba, out of every community in rural Manitoba and every family and every mother in all of these communities who has to put food on the table for her family, that money was taken by this Government, as was the transition money.

The minister can say, well, you are foolish. I may be foolish, but you can call all of those farmers out there, who you have taken money from, foolish as well. They are not going to accept that, and as a matter of fact, that is a good comment that the minister made because she thinks that all farmers out there do not understand how this money comes about. These are sophisticated people out there. They know where the money comes from. They know what belongs to them. They know what is owed to them. They are not fools.

Mr. Speaker, we look at the crop insurance changes, and the minister boasts about that 50 cents an acre for flood protection money that went in. Now that is a big program. Yes, that program was launched by my colleague the member from Lakeside. I was around the Cabinet table when that program was launched. What happened in the election campaign was that it was not announced so the minister now,

the current minister had the honour of announcing it. That is all she did, she announced it. The program was all put in place. The people in Crop Insurance will tell you that, in fact, that was prior to 1999, that this minister, all she wanted to do was to take credit for this money, and it was this minister who did it.

In 1999, when farmers could not put their crops in—this was the year of the election—we went out to southern Manitoba and we said we are going to support the farmers and we are going to pay \$50 an acre for every acre that could not be seeded. We did not wait for the federal money. We put the money in and then we went after the feds to collect, but the farmers had the money in their pocket to spend in their communities for their families. The next year we had a flood, but a new administration, and the same kind of thing happened, but to date no money has been paid. Every time you mention that to the minister, she just points her finger at Ottawa.

That is not unlike the other ministers in this administration. Today, as I listened in Question Period to the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak), you know, it has been three and a half years since we were in office. The minister is still referring to us as though we were the government. He has not taken responsibility for his own actions. It is unfortunate that the attitude of this Government is to always point fingers at someone else rather than taking full responsibility for the kinds of commitments and the kinds of obligations that this Government has.

This Budget talks about some interesting things. One of them is the projected increases in revenues that this province is going to see over the course of the next year. What is interesting is that this Budget is not balanced at all. This Budget is not balanced in any way at all. I think the provincial auditor spoke about things like that. This Budget is showing increases in revenues. For example, individual income tax is up from \$1.68 billion to \$1.7 billion. That means that Manitobans are going to be paying more income tax, as of course is the case, because there has been no reprieve in the area of income tax.

The most interesting is the corporate income tax side. If you look at the estimates of revenues

for 2002-2003, you see that the corporate taxes are at \$146,500,000. For 2003-2004 that number goes to \$270,200,000. Now, Mr. Speaker, that is a doubling of the corporate income tax that is going to be received by this Province in the next year. Now, either this is a typographical error, or someone is misleading the people of Manitoba, and deliberately, because this is a printed number. Now, if you can tell me that the corporate income tax in this province is going to double in the next year, then you better be able to substantiate where that increase is going to come from, because does that mean that we are going to grow the businesses in our province by twice as many? Does it mean that we are going to tax them even more? Where is this money going to come from?

Now, I can understand modest increases, for example, if you go to the gasoline tax going up by some \$3 million, but when you look at the corporate income tax and the corporate capital tax, those two numbers are in my view extremely inflated to give the impression that we can balance the Budget this year. Well, if that is the way we are going to mislead Manitobans, Manitobans are in for a real surprise and a real shock, because this is not factual. If you talk to some economists, they just blink their eyes and say, well, where are they going to get that money from? Where is that corporate tax going to come from? How can you double it in the course of one year?

Mr. Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Doer) can stand in his place and he can talk about all the good he has done, all the taxes that he has saved for Manitobans. The reality speaks for itself. We are now the highest-taxed province west of New Brunswick, but the more embarrassing thing for this Government is that we were only able to create a net 100 jobs in the last year.

Now, this Government can brag about all of the growth in the world. That is not my numbers, by the way, that is not my numbers. That is StatsCan numbers. Those are StatsCan numbers, StatsCan's numbers for a year. They are StatsCan's numbers for a fiscal year showing that we created a net of 100 jobs. If you look at that—
[interjection]

Well, look at Saskatchewan, the member says look at Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan, on the other hand, created 10 000 jobs; 10 000 jobs in Saskatchewan, 100 for Manitoba. That is embarrassing, and the Government should be ashamed of that, yes. They say, well, we created 9100. Yes, they lost 8900 jobs.

Nine thousand people left this province; 9000 people lost their jobs. That is not my math. If anybody wants to take argument, take argument with StatsCan, not with us because we are simply quoting those numbers. You can fool some of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time, and that is what this Government has been trying to do. It has been trying to fool Manitobans for three years. It is catching up to them, and it is catching up to them quickly.

* (16:30)

Last year, this bunch could not balance the books; they could not balance the books. What do they do? *[interjection]* Well no, they did not sell MTS because that was already sold. So they could not sell MTS.

So what do they do? They said, well, we will go rob Hydro.

An Honourable Member: And the rainy day fund.

Mr. Derkach: And the rainy day fund. We will take a little from both.

Now they find themselves in a quandary because all of a sudden there is a bit of legislation that says once the profits drop to a certain level you can only take, I think it is 75 percent of whatever is earned. If the profits have dropped, all of a sudden they cannot even withdraw the money that they promised that they would in their Budget last year. So, Mr. Speaker, we have a cumulative problem facing this Government. If we can get by this election, they think, then it will not matter because we will be able to straighten it out. We really do not want to tell Manitobans what the real issues are because they are starting to boil a little. Can you imagine a billion dollars of growth in three years, over a billion dollars of growth in three years? Yet we

are facing the kinds of problems and the kinds of issues that we are today.

I look at education. People in Manitoba have said we have had enough of property taxation for education. We need to have some common sense prevail and look at a different way of funding education.

I recognize my time is very short but I want to address this to the Minister of Education (Mr. Lemieux) because it is so important. He has not been able to extract his share of money out of that billion-dollar growth in this province. Mr. Speaker, \$23 million in this last year was afforded to school operating budgets and half of that was targeted. But then his colleague the former Minister of Education said there would be a \$10-million savings if we amalgamated school divisions. We have not realized a penny of that. We have now seen the problem. Amalgamation is going to cost in the neighbourhood of \$15 million to \$20 million to all the school divisions. Those are not my numbers either. Maybe the minister knows those numbers. They are out there: between \$15 million and \$20 million for amalgamation.

This minister ran into a problem with negotiations between unions and school boards. Usually, you stay out of that. As a minister, keep your hands off the negotiation process between two third parties. They are not your concern, but no, no, no, not this Government. It decided to intervene, and the minister decided to slip some money, some hush money, to the school divisions to keep peace between the employer and the employee because the election was coming. If he is going to do that, I will not argue with him. If he wants to intervene in the settlements between employees and employers, that is fine, but once you have set that precedent, you have an obligation to make sure that everybody is treated equally.

His colleague the former Minister of Education made a grave error by slipping to Agassiz School Division \$450,000, saying that it would be used for adult learning, when he knew the day he made that money transfer that that money was not going to be used for adult education. This minister I have more trust and more faith in, and I am hoping that he realizes the errors of his ways and I regret that I am out of time.

Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): I want to begin by congratulating those members on both sides of the House who have made known their intentions not to seek re-election.

I particularly want to extend my concern to Jim Penner and his family in regard to the health issues that he is facing.

I want to say a brief word of appreciation to my legislative assistant, Marianne Cerilli, who made such an eloquent speech the other day and rivaled our friendly Deputy Speaker (Mr. Santos). She did not sing, but she did read some very fine poetry, which, I thought, extolled Mother Nature in all her energy. I appreciated that.

My friend Becky Barrett who has indicated that, after a wonderful, wonderful career of service to the people of Manitoba and to my party, the New Democratic Party. I count Becky as one of my closest friends and a woman that I could always trust to speak to and to know that she would give me both her wisdom and her compassion, as a great person and advocate.

To Jean Friesen, who, I think, exemplifies the finest in parliamentary tradition, the wisdom and perspective of a historian and the graciousness as well as the combativeness that comes to the fore when she is tested on something she believes deeply in. I thank her for her years of tremendous commitment to this Legislature, both in opposition and in government, and her gracious presence in all of the many, many meetings in which I have been privileged to take part while she has been a member.

I would also extend my thanks to other members of the Conservative Party who have chosen not to run again for their service to the people of Manitoba and to wish them well in their retirement.

I rather hope that after the next election, whether it is next year or this year or next fall or this fall or whenever it is, that there will be other members of the Conservative Party who will be retired and that that will increase the capacity of the House to seek the good for all Manitobans.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

I want to take my friend the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) who was never, in my experience with him, a strong mathematician, to task. He mentioned something about a billion dollars in three years in his speech. Perhaps he is referring to the last couple of years of the Conservatives when they indeed did, from, oh, say approximately '94-95 to '99-00, they did have an extra billion dollars. It was about \$1.1 billion. Of course they sold a Crown corporation and the interest rates, or rather the telephone rates have been on an upward ascent ever since. In that period of time they did indeed have \$1.1 billion in new revenue from '94-95 to '99-00. One might ask what they did. They laid off a thousand nurses. That is what they did. They managed to raise the tax rates for Manitobans through their school tax offload by a horrendous amount of money, 60-something percent in most school divisions. Yet they had \$1.1 billion in new revenue.

What did they do with it? I guess they promised to build the Brandon Hospital. Six times I think they promised to do that, but the \$1.1 billion could not have gone to Brandon because they did not build the hospital, so it could not have been that.

I wonder if perhaps it might have been rebuilding the University of Manitoba, but when I look at the University of Manitoba and their spending during the Conservatives' reign, I do not think it was that. The University of Manitoba seemed to still have a leaky roof in its Engineering Building and extra steps in the basement of the Education Building to get down to the floor that had fallen away from the walls, and ironically, in the Architecture Building, designed by architects, the worst structural problems on the whole campus. Then of course you could go in the steam tunnels and see the leaking pipes, so I guess that \$1.1 billion could not have gone to the University of Manitoba.

Frankly, there was a billion dollars and it came from 1994-1999. During that time we lost a thousand nurses, we closed down programs for technologists, we lost doctors. We lost a whole hospital in Swan River to toxic mould because the previous government did not have the wisdom to fix the roof. We did not build any

houses. We did not fix up homes in the inner city. We cut welfare rates to families. We cut daycare funding. But they had 1.1 billion new dollars.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is a puzzle. They had all of this money and what did they do? They raided the rainy day fund. In three of these years, they took \$100 million out in '97-98; they took \$186 million out in '98-99; they took \$185 million out in the election year. When they had the most buoyant revenues in a decade, they still took \$185 million out of the rainy day fund. It is a puzzling record.

* (16:40)

So you have got 1.1 billion new dollars. You have got leaky roofs, laid-off nurses and mouldy hospitals, and you are taking money out of the rainy day fund. I think we should have, perhaps, a forensic audit of where that \$1.1 billion went.

Now, let us look at the three-year period that my honourable friend from Russell is alluding to, from '99-00, their last year, to the current year, '02-03. Well, the increase was not quite a billion dollars. In fact, it was about \$600 million, \$630 million or so, a \$630-million increase in that period of time and what happened? Well, it is quite a different story.

We built the Brandon hospital. It will be open very shortly. So some of that money must have gone to Brandon. We increased the wages of daycare workers and invested in children in Manitoba. We increased daycare funding by 41 percent. We increased the funding to our public school system three years in a row by the rate of growth in the economy, as opposed to cuts of minus two, minus two, minus two, zero, minus two, one plus in there in an election year, I think.

We invested in unprecedented levels of health spending for capital to repair the infrastructure devastation of the previous decade, the largest single capital project in Health's history, the rebuilding of the emergency and operating room suites at the Health Sciences Centre, the building of the Brandon hospital for over \$50 million, the first MRIs outside the city of Winnipeg, more CAT scan capacity added in three

years than existed prior to this Government coming into being.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, 1400 homes were either built, converted from other uses or repaired and rescued from falling into disarray. The North finally got some money for highways after years and years of neglect, but, at the same time, we started to repair the work on the floodway that was needed, to twin a bit of 59 and to build the notches to increase the capacity of the Winnipeg floodway.

We doubled the number of students who could go to Red River College's new campus downtown and invested some \$34 million in our students. We put in place bursary programs for the first time in decades that will allow Manitoba students to essentially have a cap on their debt load when they complete their post-secondary education, and what happened? Well, we had an increase of some 22 percent in enrolment in post-secondary education. When students have tuition that does not rise and they have access to bursaries and they have new programs, guess what? They enrol. I am proud of being part of a government that has overseen the enrolment of 20% more students in our post-secondary education system.

Look at downtown Winnipeg, the Millennium library, Waterfront Drive, the True North Centre. The chirping Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen) who could not put the puck in the net in 1995 is now going to have to watch that endangered species, the building crane, rise out of the ashes of a building that, unfortunately, could not be saved, in spite of the history that it had in the city of Winnipeg. The Exchange District, the opportunities in Mountain Equipment Co-op, the rebuilding of Portage Avenue, and, finally, we will see in this year the choice of a sight for the new Manitoba Hydro downtown headquarters, which will bring together staff that are now located in over 40 different locations in our city at the current time. We will make a commitment to the heart of our city to a state-of-the-art building that will be energy-efficient, less expensive to operate than their current quarters, and will bring staff into the downtown.

What happens when you bring 2000 staff downtown, Mr. Deputy Speaker? They buy

things, they stay and go to a hockey game, they go to a concert, they go to the ballet, they go to The Forks, they go to the baseball stadium, they go to restaurants on Portage Avenue, they buy in the stores that are downtown.

The Member for Fort Whyte says that bringing staff downtown is not a good idea. He says that they will not buy things downtown, they will not stay downtown to eat. He should examine what has happened in other cities that have built downtown centres, such as the city of Toronto, with the stadium, with the Maple Leafs' centre, the Air Canada Centre that is full every night. Where do those people go before and after? They go to the bars, they go to the restaurants. Some come from many, many miles away and stay in hotels. I am sorry the Member for Fort Whyte does not understand cities, but I guess living in Fort Whyte you can kind of understand that. He does not understand the downtown, the heart of our city. That is a shame.

This Government has not simply acted on the opportunities in this city. We have acted on the opportunities in Brandon, in Thompson, in Steinbach, in Morden, in Winkler, in Carman. We acted on the opportunities in every part of our community, Neepawa, Minnedosa. What have we done in terms of this 650 million, I think it is, in total in the three years that my honourable friend from Russell seems to think is a billion. He has trouble with math, but it is actually 63,37 to 69,90. It is not hard to do the math on that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, take a look at the number of communities that are actively pursuing the ethanol opportunity that has been created through this Government's action, through the action of farmers in the Dauphin area, business people and farmers in Beausejour, the farming and urban communities in Killarney, the farmers of the Interlake, all of whom have come together to see if they can by working with producers of ethanol exploit the opportunities to stabilize their communities, provide new markets for distillers' grains, wet or dry, provide a possibility of using the excess heat and the carbon dioxide that comes off this process for greenhouses, provide a safe and sure market for their wheat or for corn, but probably in Manitoba's case, we are wheat.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it has been a delight to meet with companies like Commercial Alcohols, Husky, many others. There are seven companies that we have met with, all of whom are telling us that Manitoba has got it right because we have consulted with the producers, we have consulted with the blenders, we have consulted with the gasoline manufacturers, we have talked to the agricultural groups. We are working with the research and development of crops that are appropriate for growing the kind of wheat which can be most efficiently made into ethanol, the higher starch wheats. We are working with Saskatchewan on feed and feeding DDGs.

In other words, we took a comprehensive and balanced approach to this opportunity. What are we going to get from it? We currently import about 240 000 tonnes of soy feed. We will be able to substitute DDGs for that. That money that went into the United States to import soy will stay in Manitoba. We currently buy gasoline from Alberta to the tune of about \$55 million a year that will no longer go because that 10 percent of gasoline—we buy about \$550 million a year in total—but the 10 percent we will not buy in the future, \$55 million, that \$55 million will all circulate in the Manitoba economy.

We will create jobs, we will create a stable market for wheat, we will create a stable feedstock for our poultry and cattle and probably our hog markets. We will create rural community economic development, because the rural communities that have put forward ethanol strategies all want to be part of the process. They want to have equity, they want to have a stake in their future as a community, as an ethanol community.

Let me speak about Manitoba Hydro. Manitoba Hydro is a prudent and well-managed corporation and has been throughout its history when it began in the 1950s and it succeeded the former Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board.

* (16:50)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, every year, Manitoba Hydro provides a rate forecast in which it takes into account current water conditions, current power sales conditions, dam building oppor-

tunities, demand-side management measures. It provides this integrated rate forecast to the Public Utilities Board and to its board, and it becomes a public document. Every year for the last 10, 12 years, Manitoba has projected that under cautious and pessimistic assumptions they may need a rate increase in the future, and every year for nine years now the same Manitoba Hydro forecasts, one year later, indicate that that rate increase was not needed. It is exactly the same this year as it was last year, as it was the year before that, as it was the year before that and as it was the year before that, which is the year we were elected. There have been no rate increases, and every year a rate increase had been projected for that year. So the doom-and-gloomers on the far side—really I guess the far side is a good image—who cannot understand that even under their government exactly the same process took place and nothing has changed, ought to take a look at the integrated financial forecast for the Manitoba hydro-electric corporation.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me speak about the future of Hydro. Under the Kyoto accord, which Canada wisely signed and which this province strongly supported, the opportunities for Manitoba are simply boundless. You know, in 1950 Alberta struck oil at Leduc in a deep well, the first deep well in western Canada, and Alberta has had the tremendous resources flowing from their deep well. They are still discovering some, but not very much anymore. I do not wish the people of Alberta anything but good in regard to their future, and I hope they have used their wealth well to build an infrastructure that will survive the end of cheap oil, but Manitoba has hydro power and wind power.

The hydro potential of Manitoba is double our installed base, and if you include some of the other rivers, it is even larger than that, but let us just stay with double our installed base. Our installed base yields us revenues of \$1.8 billion a year currently, so one does not have to be too imaginative to see what potential revenues might flow from the aggressive development of the Manitoba hydro-electric system.

Consider what would happen if we added to that 1000 megawatts of wind power as it becomes more and more economical to do so, and think about the implications for industry in

Manitoba that can continue to enjoy the lowest power rates in North America. As power costs become more and more expensive with the rise in natural gas and the decrease in the availability of traditional, conventional, cheap oil, and as the costs of generating power by using dirty coal go through the roof under the Kyoto accord, I invite you to imagine the position our children and grandchildren are in, being the fortunate citizens of this province. I invite you to look into a future in which First Nations people are full partners in the development of our northern hydro resources and can begin to use the wealth that is generated to escape the third-world conditions in which they sometimes are still required to live by a federal government that has never taken seriously the disastrous consequences of the conditions on our First Nations' reserves.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, earlier in Question Period today the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) asked about tuberculosis. Now, he is a physician and he knows his public health history. He knows that, in the history of public health, it is absolutely clear that tuberculosis began to be eradicated not when modern medicine and antibiotics came into being. The incidence of TB was plummeting before the 1930s when the first sulpha drugs were released. The incidence of TB in this country was plummeting for only one reason, and that is because the standard of living was rising—the cleanliness of our housing, the cleanliness of our water. Our citizens' understanding of the importance of public health led to the tremendous decline in the incidence of tuberculosis long before there were sulpha drugs or penicillin, long before we had other tools at our disposal for the defeat of this disease.

The federal government needs to understand that tuberculosis in Canada is not entirely but virtually all found in remote and rural reserve and Inuit communities, and it is found there because of the crowded and inadequate living conditions. So that, I think, is tremendously important for us to understand, that partnering with our First Nations in the development of our northern opportunities is one of the ways in which the health care costs that all of us share in can be mitigated in the future, by increasing the health status of First Nations people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to turn for a moment to the kind of partnerships that we have enjoyed in the last three and a half years, with the early childhood community and our First Nations community, around issues of housing. This Government is widely seen by the experts in early childhood development as having got it right. Dr. Fraser Mustard, Dr. Richard Tremblay and others have said, at national meeting upon national meeting upon national meeting, that Manitoba is the leader in early childhood development in Canada. They say that that is for two reasons.

The first reason, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that we are the only government in Canada that has a standing committee of Cabinet, representing seven departments, that is charged by the Premier (Mr. Doer) and Cabinet to ensure that departments collaborate in the development of health child programs.

I have been privileged to chair that committee, and I have been privileged to work with colleagues who are committed to the health and well-being of families and children, through the work of that committee. We have allocated over 44 million new dollars to the work of the early childhood programs in this province, new dollars, not re-allocated from somewhere else, not double-counted—new dollars.

We put in place support for mothers who are at risk. We put in place support for young families who are at risk of losing their children to the child welfare system. I am told by many of the parent volunteers and parent aides that if they were not working with these families, those kids would be in care. So we prevented kids from coming into care.

Our fetal alcohol programs are seen in North America as models for the prevention of fetal alcohol syndrome, and I am proud of those programs, and proud of the mothers, and the women and the workers who put those programs into place, in a number of places across our province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the second reason that we have been successful is that we have believed in the communities, as opposed to the time when I worked for government and the party opposite formed government, and they would not sign

funding agreements with parent-child centres in the core area of Winnipeg. We have worked with parent-child centres across our province, some 80 parent-child centres that have come into being.

We have a coalition in every region of our province, 28 in total, a coalition of parents, early childhood educators, public health nurses, educators from the school system, day care workers, a whole range of people including parents in every region of this province. That is why Dr. Richard Tremblay and Dr. Fraser Mustard say we have got it right, because we believed in the community and built the programs up from the community. We have not tried to tell communities what they have to do. The result can be seen in letters, can be seen in phone calls from people who say to us if it were not for BabyFirst, if it were not for Early Start, if it were not for this program my family would not be well today. So I am very proud of that role, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The second area in which I think we have made tremendous gains is in the rebirth of the heart of our three largest cities: Thompson, Brandon and, in particular, Winnipeg, that had under the previous government the unfortunate title of the arson capital of Canada. When we came to government we stopped that problem but we knew that stopping the problem was not the issue. The arson capital had become the arson capital because the previous government did not know where the inner city was. They needed a road map to get down from the suburbs.

In sharp contrast, we went to the communities of the inner city of Winnipeg. We said to them this is your community. What do you want to do to save it? What can we do to help you turn it around? In each case citizen groups came into being, in Spence, West Broadway and the North End Community Renewal Corporation, and the spin-off housing corporations in each case came into being. We said to them we can give you five years of funding at a fairly low level, but you do not have to go out and match that. You do not have to seek each year to survive. We are going to make sure you survive for at least five years. Now go do your job. What is the result? In Brandon, the Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation, 400 housing

units built, converted or improved in the last three and a half years. Outstanding work in the parks and walkways and streetscaping in the city of Brandon, and done through a partnership, the City of Brandon, the district planning council, the Province of Manitoba, the Government of Canada.

* (17:00)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the city of Winnipeg over 1000 units of housing compared to what during the previous government's time? Zero. Zero units of housing in the inner city of Winnipeg. One thousand units plus, renovated, converted or rescued from falling off the market over the last three and a half years, and, you know, not one unit delivered by the Government of Manitoba. Every single unit was delivered by a citizen group, a non-profit group, a community-based organization that has not just put in place housing, but they put in place street patrols, training programs, employment programs so that the community is not just looking better, the community is feeling better and has a faith in its future. They are proud to say: We live here, this is our community, and we are making it a better place to be.

I want to turn for a moment to the issue of people who have the special need of being on social assistance. I want to deal first with the area of disability. I was honoured by our Premier to be named Manitoba's first Minister for Persons with Disabilities, but I was honoured because I have worked with that community for over 30 years in a variety of ways. I pay tribute to the talented advocates and the talented leaders of that community who made not just Winnipeg but Manitoba a lighthouse in disability issues: Jim Derksen, Allan Simpson. I can go on and on and name Yvonne Peters, Dale Kendel.

The disability community has now been able to have the right to keep up to \$100,000 in a trust fund or inheritance to make their lives better. If I turn to those who are able to work on social assistance, what do I see? A 60% reduction in the numbers on social assistance who are able to work since we formed Government. The previous government with the workfare program had 60% more people on welfare than we have today, because we believe in working with people. We believe in a hand up,

not a handout. We believe in training. We believe in rebuilding people's hopes and dreams, whether they are early childhood educators, nurses, doctors, inner-city residents, business-people, students. We have been, and will be in the future, a government for all Manitobans, regardless of where they live, who they are, or what they make, because we believe that when you are a government for all the people, you will be a good government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that is what we have been.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): It is certainly a pleasure for me to be able to comment on this Budget, the fourth Budget of the Doer government. Before I do that, though, I just want to say that it has been a real pleasure to serve in this Legislature on behalf of the constituents of Gimli for the past 15 years. Also, I want to thank everyone who helped me get elected and get re-elected four different times in the last 15 years, including my wife and my family and the president of my constituency association, plus all my executive and all the volunteers who helped to get me re-elected four times in the last 15 years.

Actually, I was involved in five elections: 1986, when I lost to John Bucklaschuk, then won in 1988, 1990, 1995 and 1999. So it has been a real pleasure though, and an honour, to serve the constituents of Gimli under three different boundaries, three different changes in the boundaries. I was first elected in 1988 when St. Clements was in my constituency. That is an area served by the Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) now, a very, very good area there east of the river that was part of my constituency too. I enjoyed serving that area because I did grow up in the Libau area so I was familiar with East Selkirk. My wife comes from East Selkirk too, so I am familiar with the East Selkirk and the Libau area and most of the St. Clements municipality. So that was a part of my first boundary.

The second boundary, of course, included Gimli and the Municipality of Rockwood, which included the towns of Teulon, Stonewall and Stony Mountain, and that was including Gimli and Winnipeg Beach and the Rural Municipality of Gimli. That was, actually, a very good area to represent too. It was a pleasure to represent the

communities such as Stonewall and Rockwood. Stonewall, at that time, was the fastest growing town in Manitoba. It was a real pleasure to represent that area and some very good people in that area also.

Of course, now, the third change in the boundaries, which I was elected under in 1999, is the Rural Municipality of St. Andrews, West St. Paul, Gimli and the Winnipeg Beach area, an excellent area and rather new and different for me because it was more urban, which ran right around the town of Selkirk and represented a constituency, or the Municipality of St. Andrews along the Red River. A very good area that also, at one time, was represented by the Member for Selkirk. I really appreciate the opportunity to be able to represent them.

I also want to recognize and thank all members of our caucus for the opportunity to work with them. It has been a real pleasure to serve as a caucus chair and the government Whip for 11 years from 1988 to 1999. I also want to thank our former Premier, Mr. Filmon, and all my former colleagues who have served in the government of Manitoba from 1988 to 1999; it was a real pleasure to work with them and an opportunity to provide good government to the people of Manitoba.

Also, I want to congratulate those who are planning to retire from both sides of the Legislature, from our caucus and from the New Democratic caucus. I want to wish all those who are retiring good luck, I am sure you will find things to do, and I want to wish them good health in their retirement.

I understand the Premier was in Gimli this morning to make a couple of announcements—

An Honourable Member: More. More.

Mr. Helwer: More announcements in Gimli, that is right, the Premier (Mr. Doer) was there this morning. As a matter of fact, I was not invited, unfortunately. Anyway, I am pleased that one of the announcements was for the New Iceland Heritage Museum in Gimli, which announced \$70,000 to help bring a Viking ship from Newfoundland, a replica, that is going to be displayed in Gimli at the museum.

It is an excellent museum, for those of you who have not been to Gimli to tour the New Iceland Heritage Museum. It certainly is excellent, and the people there do an excellent job of displaying the artifacts. The museum is very well run. It is open to the public all summer. I want to thank those who made this grant possible to the museum. It will help them, and get this Viking ship going.

* (17:10)

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Also, he made another announcement, and that was a new lease for the Gimli Industrial Park, whereby the Province is leasing to the Municipality of Gimli, for another 15 years, part of the industrial park that is still owned by the Province. Some of it is now owned by the rural municipality, but some is still owned by the Province and will be leased to the Rural Municipality of Gimli under the industrial development committee there that runs the industrial park. I understand it is for a very nominal fee of \$1. That should help the committee there to maybe attract new businesses and new industries to the industrial park in Gimli. I think this certainly should help that area too. I want to thank everyone involved for that announcement this morning.

There are some things that are of concern to me that are happening in the Gimli constituency. One, of course, is that we could lose the rail line from Selkirk to Gimli. It is because this Government has really done nothing to encourage a private operator who was going to actually take over the railway from CP last year. That would have solved the problem. Some of the history there is that in 1999, CP had announced that their intentions to abandon the Winnipeg Beach rail line. This is of great concern to us, because of the distillery at Gimli, and it would certainly have an effect on them.

Since then, of course, there was a company, Cando Contracting, which wanted to buy the railroad and take over the railroad from CP and operate it as a small branch line. That would have solved the problem. That would have kept that branch line in operation, and would have also been able to serve the distillery there. That would have really solved the problem, but that

did not work out, because of labour legislation that was brought in by the New Democratic government—Bill 18. That is really because it would make Cando Contracting have to accept the successor rights legislation, which would mean they would have to have the union. That is no good to Cando Contracting, because it is a company that is owned by the employees, operated by the employees. There is no need for Bill 18 to have this effect on short-line operators such as Cando Contracting.

Back in August of 2000 the Minister of Labour at that time said that Bill 18 would not impact short-line railways in Manitoba. She was so wrong, because it did have an effect, definitely, on branch lines and short-line railways. I would hope that somehow this Government, under the Minister of Industry, Trade and Mines (Ms. Mihychuk) and the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Smith) would try to make some kind of a deal with CP, and whether it be CANDO Contracting, or if there is another company that wants to take over the rail line, that is fine.

An Honourable Member: It is imminent, Ed.

Mr. Helwer: Well, we have been working on this for over three years now, your Government, and nothing has been happening. I am a little concerned that we are going to lose that distillery at Gimli unless you do something very soon to make this thing happen—

An Honourable Member: Talked to the mayor and council out there. I just met them the other day.

Mr. Helwer: Well, there is nothing—*[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Helwer: Mr. Speaker, I only have a short time and I would appreciate trying to get my remarks in as soon as possible.

I want to impress upon this Government the importance of this branch line from Selkirk to Gimli and how important it is that we keep that line operating. I know that the Chambers of Commerce from Winnipeg Beach and Gimli

were in to see the minister some time ago, as a matter of fact, on March 26, to try to convince him of the importance of this thing and to try to get them to do something to make sure that, whether they have to repeal Bill 18 or a section of Bill 18, they try to lease this line to somebody to operate it. I am sure that CMR, which is Cando Contracting, is still interested in this line, but they will not accept the successor rights. I really do not blame them for that. I think that is an important issue there, and I hope that gets dealt with.

Mr. Speaker, some of the other accomplishments I wanted to talk about in the Gimli constituency: We have a new hospital under construction in Gimli that is very important. It was started by our government and continued by the Doer government. I appreciate the fact that the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) and the Premier (Mr. Doer) did see fit to continue that project and see it go ahead because that is very important to Gimli and the whole Interlake area. It is certainly a needed facility, and I am pleased that project is going ahead. I know the contractor doing the work there is a good contractor. There is an inconvenience to the staff there, but the new hospital will be of great benefit to the Gimli and Interlake area.

Some of the other accomplishments that we are really pleased with are in Stonewall. Prior to 1999—my former boundaries—we built a new hospital there plus expanded the personal care home and also built another senior citizens housing there. Those are all projects that were needed in the Stonewall area. The hospital there, although it was smaller than the old one, I believe it was only 15 acute care beds, is new and serves that community well. I know they have had some problems with the medical staff over the years at Stonewall, but now they have got that ironed out. I hope that will continue. I know that the Interlake Regional Health Authority is working hard to make that hospital and all the hospitals in the Interlake work properly. I think that the health care that we have provided by the Interlake Regional Health Authority, whether it be in Selkirk or Gimli or Stonewall or Teulon or whatever community, is working quite well. I want to congratulate the Interlake Regional Health Authority for a job well done there.

Also, during my term as MLA, we have made a number of improvements to highways, especially Highway 8. We completed Highway 8, Highway 9 between Gimli and Winnipeg Beach, some of the highways in the St. Andrews area, River Road, which was a big improvement to that area, because there are some very good properties in there with good housing complexes in that area. We are glad that we could improve those kinds of roads.

Also, I think one of the main accomplishments that I am very proud of is the fact that we were able to convince our government, at that time, the Minister of Highways, to build the overpass on Perimeter Highway and No. 7 highway. That, certainly, was a big improvement. It made things a lot easier for us to come to Winnipeg to work, and for the residents of Stonewall, Gimli, Teulon, Stony Mountain area to go to work in Winnipeg. It, certainly, made a big difference; it really sped up things. That overpass over No. 7 is a big improvement, and I certainly appreciate everyone from department of highways who completed that project, plus the City of Winnipeg for completing the four-lane Route 90 into Winnipeg. I think that was also a big improvement to the highways. I think those are just some of the accomplishments that I appreciate being able to have been involved with.

Drainage, of course, in the Interlake and Gimli constituencies is always a big issue. During my term of fifteen years as a member, it seems every year we get one large rain with four or five, six inches or more, and it creates a flooding problem, and the drainage system that we have is very, very important. I was pleased that we were able to complete part of the drainage improvements to Netley Creek, which is of great importance to the municipalities of St. Andrews and Rockwood. The expansion there increased the capacity by about 50 percent and made the drainage from St. Andrews, Rockwood and the Municipality of Armstrong, which the water runs right through. It certainly improved things there a lot. I was pleased to be involved in that and work with the municipalities involved there.

* (17:20)

That is another thing I can be very pleased of. I have always had excellent co-operation with the municipalities that I have had to work with. In the fifteen years as an MLA I have dealt with many municipalities, many councillors, mayors and reeves over the years, and I can, certainly, appreciate that we have always had an excellent working relationship with all of them.

I did want to talk a minute about Manitoba Hydro and how this provincial government is balancing the books on the backs of the hydro customers of Manitoba and on Manitoba Hydro. Also, there is no doubt, there is going to be—Manitoba Hydro has already said that they are going to increase their rates by some 20 percent in the next five years. This is very unfortunate because when we were in government Manitoba Hydro was a very well run Crown corporation, and our government stayed clear of operating it. We let the CEO and Manitoba Hydro run it; they did an excellent job.

Unfortunately, that is not the case today. Our Premier and ministers are involved in trying to get Manitoba Hydro to do certain things because they are in bed with the City of Winnipeg. They are going to build this big office complex here in the city of Winnipeg. I do not know if that is needed or if downtown Winnipeg is even the right place to build this. It was a sweet deal that the Premier and Manitoba Hydro and the minister made with Manitoba Hydro and the City of Winnipeg to take over city hydro. Unfortunately, I think there is nothing wrong with the fact that they took over Winnipeg Hydro, but the fact that there were so many conditions attached to it, where they have to pay them an income for so many years plus build their headquarters downtown, I think this is unfortunate. I think the Government should not have been involved in that kind of trying to micro-manage a company, a Crown corporation such as Manitoba Hydro, because Manitoba Hydro was a very good company.

I only hope that even though they are taking only \$52 million this year from Manitoba Hydro, last year it was \$280 million to balance the books of the Government—well, that is unfair. It is unfair to Manitoba Hydro, it is unfair to the people of Manitoba because of the fact they are balancing the books on the backs of the

customers of Manitoba Hydro, and that is very unfortunate for them to do that.

I also think a rate hike of 20 percent would certainly be unheard of. I think in the time that we were the government, there was never a rate increase of anywhere near that amount and, as a matter of fact, it was always lower than the inflation.

I just want to mention another thing about my constituency, and that is the announcement that they are going to expand the Red River Floodway, the Winnipeg floodway, which is certainly of great concern to me because the outlet of that floodway comes into the Red River just south of Lockport in my constituency. Unfortunately, you cannot expand the floodway 50 percent as the engineers want to do it and dump that water into the Red River and not effect the people downstream. I appreciate the fact that they are going to dredge the river plus try to improve the flow. It is badly in need of dredging, no question. Also, they are going to put some bank stabilization in. That is something that has to be done, and I know that should be done. There is no way I can agree with the fact of putting another 50 percent of capacity on that river floodway and putting that water back into the Red River north of Lockport and flooding the people downstream, including the town of Selkirk.

The member from Selkirk is going to live to dread the day that that is going to flood the town, the city of Selkirk and my constituents north of Selkirk. There is no other way. It cannot help but happen. I hope the member of Selkirk, the MLA there, I am going to make him eat those words that he said: It will not effect them. It will have a major, major effect on downstream from Lockport. Not only that, it will have an effect on the people. It could be south of Lockport because that water could back up and could back right into Winnipeg. I do not know how the engineers could design a project like that and take the water around Winnipeg. That is fine. I have no problem with that because we have to save the city of Winnipeg, but they cannot dump it into the Red River like that. It has to be a plan. The engineers have to look at a better way of doing this and taking that water right to the lake somehow or another so that it does not effect the

people north of Lockport, including the city of Selkirk. I only hope that that can be improved.

I only have a few more minutes left, so I want to try to make the most of my speech here. Another thing is the fact that the Capital Region and the Regional Planning Advisory council, which was supposed to report to the Province by May of last year but still has not reported. Now I understand that, in that report they have turned over to the Government already and turned over to the mayors and reeves of the municipalities, there is a tax-sharing scheme involved there. I am afraid that my residents, my constituents in West St. Paul and St. Andrews are going to get stuck with paying a tax to the City of Winnipeg to try to balance the revenue for the City of Winnipeg. I would be definitely against that.

I want to emphasize my being against that because the City of Winnipeg can operate on their own, and I want to give our municipalities such as West St. Paul and St. Andrews an opportunity for them to look after their own business. There are lots of opportunities in West St. Paul and St. Andrews. They are great municipalities and lots of opportunities there, and I would only hope that they will continue to be able to attract industry and attract housing there and put in the necessary services of sewer and water, whatever they need to make sure that the services are provided. I know that through the Manitoba Water Services Board, there have been applications put in, but nothing has been approved, I understand, for sewer and water extensions in the municipalities of West St. Paul and St. Andrews. We are very, very scared of this tax that the Regional Planning Advisory council has proposed and passed on to the Government. I only hope that they do not agree with that and do not pass that on to the people of those constituencies.

I also want to talk a bit about how the Government has proposed even a 6% decrease in the income tax of the middle-income bracket. Well, they are doing that very simply by not including the bracket creep in there. So, if they were to include the partial de-indexing of the revenue there, they would find that it could be a 6% tax, but it really is not, because they have eliminated the bracket creep which eats up most of the savings from this modest tax cut. You ask:

What is bracket creep? Well, that is the tax policy that allows income tax to increase without a rate hike. In a sense, it is legalized theft, and this provincial government has made off like bandits with this, because they are going to, on one hand, reduce the rate and stop the bracket creep, and therefore it will probably only cost them very little. So the 6% cut is really maybe only a 1% cut, if that. So that is unfortunate because it really does not tell the whole story as to how the tax is going to be applied.

* (17:30)

I also want to talk about the business tax for a minute. It is unfortunate that Manitoba's business climate is very weak today, and, because of the corporate tax being increased, that does not really dissuade high-income earners from moving from this province to other provinces. Also, the Province today is going to receive some \$2.5 billion from the federal government in transfer

payments, and that is an increase of some \$200 million this year alone, but since 1999 they have received about \$1.25 billion more revenue than we were getting prior to 1999.

Mr. Speaker, I realize my time is up, so thank you for this opportunity.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Is the honourable member finished his comment?

Mr. Helwer: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: When this matter is again before the House, the debate will remain open.

The hour being 5:30 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Tuesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

April 28, 2003

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