

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

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Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Eighth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
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.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	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.
OSWALD, Theresa	Seine River	N.D.P.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	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, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
ROWAT, Leanne	Minnedosa	P.C.
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, Scott, Hon.	Brandon West	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, November 28, 2003

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PETITIONS

Highway 32

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

Rural highways are part of the mandate of the Province of Manitoba.

Under the previous commitment, the Province of Manitoba would be covering the costs of four-laning that portion of Highway 32 that runs through Winkler, Manitoba.

The Department of Transportation and Government Services has altered its position and will now undertake the project only if the City of Winkler will pay half of the total cost of construction. The provincial government's offloading of its previous commitment will cost the City of Winkler several million dollars.

The City of Winkler has now been informed that it will have to wait several years before this project could be undertaken.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Transportation and Government Services to consider honouring the previous commitment and complete the four-laning of Highway 32 through the city of Winkler, absorbing all costs related to the construction as previously agreed.

To request the Minister of Transportation and Government Services to consider the

responsibility of the Department of Transportation and Government Services for the construction of rural highways.

To request the Minister of Transportation and Government Services to consider the significant and strategic importance of the completion of four-laning Highway 32 through the city of Winkler, especially as it relates to the economic growth and development of the city of Winkler and its trading area.

To request the Minister of Transportation and Government Services to consider the valuable contribution of the city of Winkler and its trading area to the provincial economy and re-prioritize the four-laning of Highway 32 for the 2004 construction season.

These are submitted by Terry Hamm, Don Friesen, Darren Funk, Al Rempel 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.

Co-op Program for Nursing Students

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba. The background to the petition is as follows:

A co-op program for nursing students at the University of Manitoba was approved by the Senate and the Board of Governors.

* (10:05)

This program will provide the opportunity for students to apply their theoretical knowledge in the workplace through supervised work terms for which they are paid.

Students are hired by participating agencies under supervision of a workplace employee who serves as a mentor.

Students assume responsibilities suitable for their level of knowledge and expertise and will provide patients with much-needed nursing.

The co-op program will enable nursing students to acquire valuable experience by working with a seasoned mentor, become more proficient and better able to handle heavier workloads and increase their knowledge, skills and confidence.

This program will enable students to earn income to help reduce their debt load.

The Department of Health will benefit through reduced orientation costs for new graduates and an increased likelihood that new graduates will remain in the province.

Although the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) was unable to attend the round table held on November 7, 2003, he graciously sent a representative who restated his position to work with the students to reach a creative solution.

Several Canadian universities have successfully implemented nursing co-op programs. Several faculties within the University of Manitoba have such a program available to their students. Therefore, students within the Faculty of Nursing should have equal opportunity and access to a co-op program.

This program will offer students valuable experience and provide the confidence and strength they will need in the future.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Legislative Assembly to consider supporting the proposed co-op program.

Signed by Marc Asselin, Joyce Meyer, Carmen Asudhia 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.

Sales Tax Proposal

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba. These are the reasons for this petition:

The Mayor of Winnipeg is proposing a new deal which will result in new user fees and

additional taxes for citizens of the city of Winnipeg.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, people are still signing the petition.

One of these proposed changes requires the provincial government to approve an increase of the sales tax.

The Balanced Budget, Debt Repayment and Taxpayer Accountability Act requires a referendum to take place before the provincial government can increase major taxes, including the retail sales tax.

The Doer government has been silent on whether they will make the necessary legislative changes required to give the City of Winnipeg additional taxing powers.

* (10:10)

Taxpayers deserve to have a say before having any major new taxes imposed upon them.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Premier of Manitoba (Mr. Doer) notify the City of Winnipeg that the provincial government will not allow an increase of the sales tax without a referendum being held as required under balanced budget legislation.

This petition is signed by G. Dueck, H. Klassen, Irene Gledhill 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.

Walleye

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I wish to present the following petition. The background to this petition is as follows:

Fish stocks in Lake Winnipegosis began to decline in the 1960s. The walleye fishery on Lake Winnipegosis has been in serious trouble for many years.

A similar situation happened in Lake Erie, but it was handled much more effectively. In Lake Erie, a sound science-based management program was implemented and the stocks rebounded. As a result, production of walleye on Lake Erie for 1980 to 2001 averaged 182 percent of the estimated sustainable yield.

In contrast from 1980 to 2001, the average annual harvest of walleye on Lake Winnipegosis was about 14 percent of the estimated sustainable yield for the lake.

Much better management of a walleye fishery on Lake Erie shows that good management of a walleye fishery is possible.

The fishermen on Lake Winnipegosis have been deprived of an estimated 72 million of income between 1980 and 2001.

Economic models of the effects of such primary income loss usually estimate a significant multiplier effect and that may well mean a loss of several hundred million dollars in economic activity for the region.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Finance and the Auditor General to consider undertaking a thorough investigation of the provincial management of the walleye fishery on Lake Winnipegosis.

Signed by Ernie Chartrand, Russell Pelletier and Terrance Genaille.

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 15—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Police Powers Respecting Unsafe Drivers and Miscellaneous Amendments)

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Transportation and Government Services (Mr. Lemieux), that Bill 15, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act

(Police Powers Respecting Unsafe Drivers and Miscellaneous Amendments); Loi modifiant le Code de la route, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

* (10:15)

Mr. Mackintosh: Most notably, Mr. Speaker, this bill gives police clear powers to detect impaired drivers including those impaired by drugs.

Motion agreed to.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Balanced Budget Legislation Amendments

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, a week ago the Finance Minister (Mr. Selinger) admitted publicly that changes to the balanced budget legislation might occur. He said it was a possibility. Interestingly enough, when questioned in this House about these comments in this Legislature a few days ago, he avoided the question entirely, and now we know why.

As reported on CBC Radio this morning, during the minister's recent pre-Budget consultation meeting, the Minister of Finance began floating the idea of amending Manitoba's balanced budget legislation to allow the Doer government to legally run a deficit.

Could the Premier explain why his Finance Minister is trying to warn the public to the idea of returning to the old NDP ways of running a deficit? Step No. 1: Raid the rainy day fund. Step No. 2: Rob Manitoba Hydro blind. Is running a deficit step No. 3?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Well, I would ask the people of Manitoba to look at the outrageous rhetoric of the Leader of the Opposition and put that against the absolute sterling performance of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), Mr. Speaker.

I would point out to members opposite that the bottom line is very, very clear. This Minister

of Finance in the last 12 months and this budgetary set of policies that this Government has in place have resulted in two credit upgrades. Why has it resulted in two credit upgrades? Because this Government has paid down \$384 million in operating debt, resulting in a credit upgrade. Those are facts based on independent financial analysis conducted by people who are a lot more credible on the numbers than the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, the First Minister talks about outrageous rhetoric. It was in 1995 that he stood in this House when the previous Conservative government introduced balanced budget legislation. What did he call it? Quote: A silly pre-election ploy.

On top of that, Mr. Speaker, everyone on the side opposite stood in this House and talked about why it was condemning the balanced budget legislation. They spoke against it. That is outrageous rhetoric. Alarm bells clearly are going off in businesses and homes throughout Manitoba because the Premier's Finance Minister (Mr. Selinger) is out there promoting amending our balanced budget legislation, something Manitobans believe in. He is talking about amending it. Is it not interesting to be similar to Saskatchewan, another NDP province where they only have to balance the budget on their final year, the fourth year of their mandate?

Will the Premier come clean to Manitobans? Will he tell the Legislature today what are his plans to amend balanced budget legislation.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, we were pretty accurate in our worries about the proposed legislation that the Tories had brought in, in 1995 because at that time we said you could drive a truck through the sections of that legislation that would allow you to sell a Crown corporation, take an asset like a telephone system and put it into a rainy day fund, instead of putting all the proceeds of a sale of a Crown corporation into debt repayment and, lo and behold, in 1996 after the Tories said they would not sell the phone system, what did they do? They took the asset, they undersold it—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I ask the co-operation of all honourable members. I need to be able to hear the questions and the answers and right now it is very, very difficult to hear. So I ask the co-operation of all honourable members, please.

* (10:20)

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. They undervalued the asset. They sold it at a fire-sale price. They did not disallow themselves from buying shares and making money and their friends making money and their broker friends making money. They robbed the people of Manitoba of that Crown corporation. We amended the balanced budget legislation properly in office to get rid of that loophole to sell Crown corporations of Manitoba.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, I do believe the Premier yelled this loud about we will buy it back, we will buy MTS back. He yelled that loud, and what has he done?

During the Budget consultation meetings on November 27—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Murray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As usual, it is a credibility gap with the Premier and his Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) because it is interesting that in the November 27 edition of the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce newsletter, chairman John Pittman said, and I quote, he was at the public consultations of the Minister of Finance, and he said: Participating in the pre-Budget consultations was a bit of an eye-opener. I received the distinct impression the minister was looking for permission to change the balanced budget legislation.

Mr. Speaker, my question is very simple, to the Premier: Will he agree to not amend a change to weaken balanced budget legislation? Yes or no?

Mr. Doer: I believe the last occasion that we did amend the balanced budget legislation members opposite, because they were so embarrassed by the sale of the telephone system and the fact that

they undervalued it, sold the shares at \$13, many of their friends are now benefiting with \$40 a share because they undervalued something that we all owned and broke a promise, when we amended the legislation members opposite voted for our amended balanced budget legislation.

We have committed ourselves to balancing our Budget. We will continue to do so. We are not only balancing our Budget, I think there are only two provinces in Canada that are not only balancing the Budget but actually paying down operating debt, Alberta and Manitoba. We are one of those governments.

Balanced Budget Legislation Amendments

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, this Legislature would be better served if the Premier would simply answer the questions.

What he forgets to tell Manitobans is despite receiving over a billion-dollar increase on an annual basis in federal transfer payments, this Finance Minister has seen the rainy day fund fall from \$427 million to less than \$150 million. He has drained \$203 million out of Hydro in a year when they only had \$75 million worth of profits.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask this minister to come clean once and for all, to stand up in the House today and to identify to Manitobans what changes he plans to make to balanced budget legislation.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, just to put the facts on the record, when we came into office the Fiscal Stabilization Fund had been reduced to \$264 million because the two pre-election Budgets of the former government each took a draw of \$185 million in each of those two years. The year prior to that they took a \$100-million draw, so they had a draw of \$471 million in their past three years and at a time when the economy was the strongest it had been in over a decade across the country during that period of time.

Now the issue is will there be any changes to balanced budget legislation. We brought in changes in our first year in government, and we strengthened balanced budget legislation in order

not to double-count revenue, and the members opposite were forced to vote for it.

Mr. Loewen: As the *Free Press* has indicated in its editorial, the minister spins another yarn.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister will not answer a very simple and straightforward question, I would ask him to stand up in the House today and guarantee to Manitobans that he will not amend the balanced budget legislation, and specifically, he will make no changes to clause 4.1, where it indicates that a negative balance requires an offsetting positive balance in the following year. Will he guarantee Manitobans that he will not make any changes to that?

* (10:25)

Mr. Selinger: What I will guarantee to Manitobans is what we have delivered in the last four years, balanced budgets, and that is what we will do.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to do something members opposite deliberately ignored dealing with, and that was the pension liability, which they let grow from \$1.8 billion to \$3 billion during their terms in office. Their plan was to destroy public service pensions. We have put a plan in place to deal with that, and that plan has been recognized by the bond-rating agencies as something long overdue and for which they gave us a credit rating improvement.

Mr. Loewen: It is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that this minister of the Crown continues to show contempt for this Legislature by refusing to answer very straightforward questions.

As the minister and his Premier have opened the door to amending the balanced budget legislation, I would ask them for once and for all to come clean with the people of Manitoba and guarantee that not only will he not change clause 4.1, which requires the Government to fund any negative balance with a positive balance the following year, but I want him to guarantee to the people of Manitoba that he will not amend clause 7, which indicates that there will be a reduction in ministers' salaries if they do run a deficit. Will he guarantee Manitobans that today?

Mr. Selinger: The short answer is that we are going to be balancing the budget in the future as

we have in the past, and we are going to be doing it while we continue to address the pension liability, which members opposite ignored. We are going to be doing it while we continue to manage our debt-to-GDP ratio in a downward fashion as we have done in the last four years, and we are going to be doing it by not short-changing the essential public services these members opposite so significantly savaged in the last four years. In other words, we are going to walk and chew gum, which the members opposite cannot do.

Hells Angels Associates Trial

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): The Hells Angels have this Justice Minister spinning in circles. Yesterday in court, all four Legal Aid lawyers refused to represent the Hells Angels associates because they all had conflicts. Now the Hells Angels will get the lawyers they want, some of the most experienced criminal defence lawyers in this province, all at taxpayers' expense.

Mr. Speaker, does this minister believe that the Hells Angels associates should receive the most experienced and the most expensive lawyers, all at the expense of taxpayers?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): It is this Government, the administration of this Province, that has been standing up for the interests of taxpayers when it comes to legal aid and that kind of approach will continue. I can guarantee, Mr. Speaker, we will do everything we can to make sure there is a challenge made when Legal Aid costs look like they are threatening the best interests of taxpayers in Manitoba. We have nothing to apologize for. We will continue to do that.

Mr. Hawranik: Mr. Speaker, the Hells Angels have brought this justice system to its knees. Not only will the defence be funded at the taxpayers' expense, but the most experienced and most expensive lawyers will represent them.

Mr. Speaker, I ask this minister: Should Manitoba taxpayers pay to defend members of the Hells Angels when the Hells Angels have made hundreds of millions of dollars from the

drug and prostitution trade in this country and when ordinary Manitobans themselves, ordinary Manitobans cannot afford to pay for these same lawyers?

Mr. Mackintosh: The outlandish preamble, of course, is the kind of phrasing that I am sure organized crime in this province would like to hear from people in office. It is not something that I agree with whatsoever. This is no time for jumpy Chicken Littles. This is time for defending the interests of taxpayers.

I remind members of this House that there is an offer on the table there in that matter and there is now a likelihood of some arbitration. The matter is proceeding and I am confident that officials are pursuing all the options that are available and are reasonable in the circumstances.

Mr. Hawranik: Mr. Speaker, the Hells Angels have shown this Justice Minister who exactly is in charge and who is the boss. The Hells Angels are in charge. They chose the most experienced defence lawyers they could find and the minister failed to find an alternative. Now he is faced with spending \$5 million or more to defend the Hells Angels who have made hundreds of millions of dollars from crime.

Will this minister now support our private member's bill which prohibits the Hells Angels from receiving a defence at the expense of the taxpayers of Manitoba, or will he instead blindly hand over \$5 million to the Hells Angels?

* (10:30)

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, I have heard two positions from members opposite on this issue which is before the courts. First, they say foot the bill whatever, just get this moving. They were going on that for a while and now they are saying, it seems to me, let us just have some stays. That is not on. As far as our officials can work on this issue, we are going to ensure that the twists and turns of this matter lead to one conclusion and that is continued and vigorous prosecution.

Hells Angels Associates Trial

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): The entire chaotic issue of government-funded lawyers for

the Hells Angels associates would not have developed if it were shown that they have the financial means to hire their own lawyers. In the November 1 edition of *The Winnipeg Sun*, months after this Government committed to giving \$2.4 million to the Hells Angels' lawyers legally, it announced that they were now looking for an outside investigator to take a closer look at the finances of the Hells Angels.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Justice indicate if that investigation is taking place and if it has changed the eligibility for Hells Angels for legal aid?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I remind members opposite when they are running around like Chicken Littles that the accused, Mr. Speaker, are incarcerated. There is no stay. You really wonder where the Conservatives were when without question they were prepared to put millions upon millions into the defence of the accused in a mega-trial involving criminal organizations. This side is standing up for taxpayers. We have a court decision now that is in the taxpayers' interest.

Mr. Goertzen: Mr. Speaker, that non-answer is disrespectful to Manitobans and it is unbecoming of a Minister of Justice and a Crown in this province.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Justice tell Manitoba taxpayers why he allowed a commitment of \$2.4 million of taxpayers' dollars to be made to the Hells Angels associates before an outside investigation of the Hells Angels assets was even considered by Legal Aid?

Mr. Mackintosh: Legal Aid performed its due diligence, Mr. Speaker, on the terms of eligibility I am advised. I am advised that investigations have been agreed on by Legal Aid according to information from officials. I cannot help but feel that members opposite would seem to gain some glee by seeing stays in this matter. I can assure Manitobans that I am confident that the officials both in the department and on contract are pursuing all reasonable options to ensure that the prosecution continues.

Mr. Goertzen: Mr. Speaker, earlier this week I jointly sent a letter to the Minister of Justice regarding the eligibility of legal aid for Hells Angels associates, and for the information of the House I would like to table that letter. Offering millions of taxpayers' dollars to members of a criminal organization is very serious. It takes millions of dollars away from those who may surely require this assistance. The minister has now had time to confer with his department officials.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Justice very clearly and directly: Have members of your department turned down any past offer of assistance from an outside agency, including the police, to obtain information relating to the financial assets of the accused Hells Angels?

Mr. Mackintosh: I know members opposite and some of their friends in Parliament would expect there would be an auditor knocking at a person's door, a member of a criminal organization, asking politely if they could see the books. That is completely oblivious to how organized crime operates, Mr. Speaker.

I hope members opposite will carefully look at our bill and support it because the legislation introduced in this House two days ago is to deal with what is a challenge of the assets of criminal organizations and that is how it is laundered. The bill puts in place for the first time in Canada a presumption that property owned by members of criminal organizations is the proceeds of crime, subject to seizure and forfeiture.

Hells Angels Associates Trial

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that our justice system is in chaos under this minister's watch and that the Hells Angels are running the show. Criminals who prostitute young girls and hook our kids on drugs could walk free as a result of the Doer government's incompetence. When will this Minister of Justice stand up for victims, take control and restore confidence in our justice system?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I know members

opposite do their research at the newsstand, Mr. Speaker, and even then the members opposite would know full well that there now is a requirement on the lawyers involved to consider the offer by the Province or else submit to a binding arbitration and mediation process. Simple as that.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Again, Mr. Speaker, that kind of answer from this minister after the months and months of haranguing that has gone on on this issue just shows that our justice system is in chaos under his watch.

The Minister of Justice's own Crown attorneys say that he is soft on crime. Mr. Speaker, defence attorneys say this minister is not acting in good faith and Manitobans are outraged at what is going on. Is there anyone in this province that has any confidence in this Justice Minister?

Mr. Mackintosh: We hardly need lessons from Conservatives on organized crime. The Hells Angels came into this province by 1997 while this government did nothing. Maybe I will correct the record, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite when they were in government notably did one thing about organized crime in Manitoba. They brought in the confidential gang hotline, which was neither confidential nor hot. It was not answered for five months at a time.

Mrs. Mitchelson: This is absolutely incredible. Five Hells Angels stand to walk free as a result of this Justice Minister's incompetence and lack of action. Mr. Speaker, when is he going to stand up for the victims in Manitoba, get some control over his department, change his soft-on-crime actions and ensure Manitobans are safe right here in our own community?

Mr. Mackintosh: Of course the hysteria of members opposite, Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Hells Angels will be glad to hear about. We do not agree with these wild statements, but it is under this Government that four pieces of legislation have been brought in, we have shut down 41 drug dens and prostitution houses, fortified biker bunker. There is more on the way. We have just brought in new legislation, the first of its kind. We have reorganized the justice system to focus on the challenge of organized

crime. We have nine specialized gang prosecutors and in terms of the issue in question, the individuals are in jail.

Hells Angels Associates Trial

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it is frighteningly clear to Manitobans why the Hells Angels set up a chapter a mere year after the Doer government was formed in 1999, Mr. Speaker, because they know that this Government is soft on crime. That is why they came to Manitoba.

What we see now under this Minister of Justice, we see a Justice Department that not only is known to be soft on crime, but is now one that is in total chaos. This is an outrage.

If this Minister of Justice and the Premier (Mr. Doer) will not stand up against the Hells Angels, will they please stand up for the women and the children of Manitoba that the Hells Angels prey on? Will you not do something about it?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Of course, they say do something. We do not know what, but do something. Oh, run around, Mr. Speaker, creating hysteria.

Mr. Speaker, I remind Manitobans—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Thank you. The honourable Attorney General, to conclude his comments.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, I remind Manitobans that the matter raised is a fee dispute. We are on the side of the men and women and children of Manitoba.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, the Premier and the Minister of Justice have continually misled Manitobans on this issue. All week we were asking questions about where the issue with the Hells Angels was going. Was it going to go to trial?

We were told that, yes, everything is in shape. Do not worry about it, everything is fine.

We find out at the eleventh hour, Mr. Speaker, that once again the credibility gap of the Doer government is evident for all Manitobans.

* (10:40)

Mr. Speaker, instead of this being amateur night on the Assiniboine, why does this Government not stand up for the women, the children of Manitoba? Get tough on crime. Make a statement that the Hells Angels are going to be put behind bars to protect Manitobans.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Justice has indicated, the accused are behind bars and have been for a period of time. Secondly, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) has said that he, and since the 1920s, a parliamentarian in the British parliamentary system cannot tell a judge what to do. That is a resignation of a whole government.

The judge ruled again yesterday on the issues of fees and representation. The judge also ruled a couple of weeks ago, based on arguments that this Government made that an individual does not have the right to a lawyer of their choice.

We were the ones, not members opposite, that took that case forward to the courts to establish that principle which will be the key to changing Legal Aid in Manitoba to ensure that the status quo will be changed dramatically by this Government and by the Minister of Justice, Mr. Speaker.

Gas Tax Accountability Act Administrative Costs

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, as Liberals, we were pleased that the Government will bring in legislation to ensure all provincial revenues raised through gas and diesel taxes are spent on highways, roads and infrastructure because we have seen for many years that the Government has paid lip-service to doing this but, in reality, fallen short.

Full dedication of tax monies raised in this way can allow for better long-term planning. We do have a concern about the NDP government's propensity for high administration costs. I ask

the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Lemieux) today whether the Government's administration costs will be allowable under the allocation for highways, roads and infrastructure, or whether the administrative costs will be funded separately so that Manitobans can be assured that all the money they pay in gas and diesel taxes will actually go to road and highway construction.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I think the member opposite said, we, the Liberals, are happy that the Government is bringing in legislation to guarantee all gasoline tax, diesel tax be returned to highways, roads, renewal of infrastructure and rapid transit and other items that are very clearly tied to the users.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is: Are the Liberals in Ottawa committed to following the Liberals alleged position in Manitoba? In the middle of a farm crisis, we asked the Liberals to drop the motive fuel tax which we do not collect from farmers here in Manitoba.

Do the Liberals in Ottawa collect the motive fuel tax from farmers under tough pressure? Yes, they do. Get that money back from Ottawa from the Liberals.

Mr. Gerrard: Manitobans would appreciate it if the Premier would actually answer a straightforward question once in a while. I note that Paul Martin is committing to help the city of Winnipeg, but Gary Doer and the NDP are killing the new deal.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Transportation—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would like to remind all honourable members when making a reference to other members, it is by constituency and the First Minister or the Premier and all other members by their constituencies if they are not ministers.

Mr. Gerrard: I stand corrected, Mr. Speaker. I ask the Minister of Transportation: The Government this session has introduced legislation that has the intent of diverting tax monies raised through gas and diesel taxes to subsidize the development of the ethanol industry in Manitoba. The legislation appears to be in direct

contradiction to the Government's Throne Speech promise to spend all gas and diesel tax revenues on highways, roads and infrastructure.

Is the minister of highways not promising the same money for two different purposes? Is the Minister of Transportation trying to suck and blow at the same time? Is the Government not promising money for highways and then using sleight of hand to use it for another purpose?

Mr. Speaker: Order. Before recognizing the honourable First Minister, I would just like to caution all honourable members about the use of parliamentary language. The reference to "suck and blow" could be interpreted in different ways.

This is the second time I have heard it this week, so I am asking the co-operation of all honourable members to kindly pick a different word.

The honourable First Minister, to conclude his comments.

Mr. Doer: I hope we can improve the decorum in the Chamber, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation has not yet been introduced, so we would ask the member opposite to save his indignation for actually reading the bill. It is actually useful to do that.

Secondly, both the federal and provincial governments are on side now on developing the ethanol industry as part of a climate-change strategy, and we think it is a good policy. Obviously, the ethanol industry has been supported by the previous government with the tax treatment and continued on for a 10-year period by us.

There are some elements that will deal with this growth in the industry and the tax revenues, and I think in terms of the gasoline tax accountability, the bottom line is there. We will be accountable for our taxes.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I think one of the many questions that is there, and it is a relevant question since we have a bill before us, relates to the use of the promise that the minister and the Premier have made in relationship to the use of the revenues from gas and diesel tax. We have,

in fact, two promises and two commitments going at the same time.

My second supplementary, Mr. Speaker, deals with the definition of the word "infrastructure." Are the Premier and the minister of highways planning to use this money to build more arenas, or is this infrastructure dedicated to the building of roads and highways and bridges?

Mr. Doer: Well, Mr. Speaker, apropos of the member's comments in the previous question, I think it is important to note the member talks about working with the City. The member was the one who wrote Mr. Chipman a letter congratulating him and the levels of government for supporting a new arena for downtown Winnipeg, but as soon as a few people ran around with yellow ribbons, he was putting out a press conference changing his position completely.

What the City needs is people who can work with them on projects to develop downtown Winnipeg and to develop a downtown future. Red River College, the new arena, the Millennium Library, Waterfront Drive, we are building a positive future for Winnipeg, not with two different positions like the member opposite.

Interlücken II Treatment Availability

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Well, Mr. Speaker, I begin by just noting that the arrogance that I have witnessed from the front bench of this Government is quite appalling. While this Government is prepared to spend millions of dollars on protecting thugs and hoodlums, innocent Manitobans cannot get access to our health care system.

Mr. Speaker, Faye Burton, a 49-year-old mother and nurse, is still waiting to get access to an ICU bed in order to be able to fight a cancer that has stricken her. Friends from her community have come around her and have done everything they can to ensure that Ms. Faye Burton can get Interlücken II, which is a treatment that requires an ICU.

She got her first treatment, Mr. Speaker. I am asking this minister whether he is prepared to intervene to ensure that Faye Burton can get the second treatment that she requires?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, as has been the case in this Legislature since I have been a member of this Legislature, when cases are brought to the minister, as it has been in this case, for a new form of treatment that has been passed on for questions in terms of our office, we follow up, and we have followed up in this regard.

The member knows that, Mr. Speaker. The member knows we take these things very seriously and that we look after these things where we can and that this matter will be dealt with as has been requested.

Mr. Derkach: I know the minister does attend to these matters personally because on other occasions he has, and I will stand in this House and thank him for the approach that he has taken in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, this goes beyond policy. This candidate is still healthy, but the cancer is advancing very rapidly. She got her first treatment 10 days ago. The treatment is supposed to be delivered at 10-day intervals. That 10 days, as I understand it, and I am not a medical doctor, has passed. The people whom she works with, she is a nurse, her peers have come around her and are trying to do whatever they can to encourage the health care system to ensure that this mother and nurse has an opportunity of survival.

Can the minister tell me whether or not there is any hope for this person in the next few days?

* (10:50)

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I cannot, by virtue of privacy, really discuss the details of this particular instance. What I can say is that this is a new form of treatment that has been provided to only two Manitobans, and it requires hospitalization.

I can also indicate that I have been advised that the individual or individuals receiving this treatment will be provided with the appropriate level of service.

Mr. Derkach: I want to ask the minister just one more question, and, Mr. Speaker, I want to table a letter in the Legislature today that describes the condition of this individual. This letter comes

from a Suzanne Burdette, who is a peer of this individual. I would table this letter for the minister.

I want to ask the minister: If in fact Ms. Faye Burton cannot get the treatment on a timely basis in Manitoba, is he prepared then to allow this patient to get access to treatment outside of the province, and will it be paid for by Manitoba Health?

Mr. Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, let me point out again, this is a new form of treatment requiring a new regime and new protocols to be put in place. Secondly, I can assure the member that we take all of these issues seriously. When we came into office and discovered the cancer waiting lists were beyond the level of safety, we opened up and said we would send patients to the United States. We reduced the cancer wait lists in half in this province. We have the lowest waiting lists for cancer treatment in the country. We do and continue to take every one of these issues seriously and will not put anyone's health in jeopardy.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, on a new question on this particular case. I just want to ask the minister whether he will not digress from this particular issue and whether he will let this family know that if in fact they cannot get access to this ICU bed in the Health Sciences Centre, whether in fact they will have the comfort of knowing that the system will move ahead and that her doctor, her physician, Doctor Wong, will be able to arrange for a bed for her outside of the province where she can get access to the treatment she requires.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I believe as recently as within an hour ago, someone from my office spoke with the Member for Charleswood (Ms. Driedger) about this issue, outlining some of the specifics, but I do not want to talk about specific cases. The member knows that we follow up. The member knows that we take these things very seriously. I think the member can perhaps talk to the Member for Charleswood about some of the specifics that were pointed out in that regard.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Order. I am going to be calling Members' Statements, and I would like the co-operation of all honourable members. If you wish to have a conversation, please do it in the loge or out in the hallway so that way we can hear the Members' Statements. So I ask the co-operation of all honourable members, please.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Fast Air Aviation Services

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski (St. James): Mr. Speaker, I was delighted to attend, along with Ron Lemieux, Minister of Transportation and Government Services—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would like to once again remind all honourable members, when making a reference to ministers, by their title and members and other members by their constituency. I ask the co-operation of all honourable members.

Ms. Korzeniowski: I was delighted to attend, along with the Minister of Transportation and Government Services, the Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Lemieux), and M.P. John Harvard, Member of Parliament for Charleswood-St. James-Assiniboia, the unveiling of two new aircraft to the fleet of Fast Air, a Winnipeg-based charter airline.

The aviation industry in Manitoba is well known for working co-operatively and in support of increased development in our province. Many industry leaders were on hand for the announcement including Dylan Fast, president of Fast Air; Paul Soubry Jr., president of Standard Aero; Barry Remple, president of the Winnipeg Airport Authority; and Gord Peters, president of Cando Contracting and president of Central Manitoba Railway, Athabaska Northern Railway.

Fast Air is one of the leading charter airlines in western Canada and flies out of the Winnipeg International Airport located in my constituency. Founded eight years ago, Fast Air has since flown six million miles with charter customers. From Winnipeg they can fly directly to any city in North America on short notice.

Mr. Speaker, this occasion highlights the importance of business aviation in Manitoba.

This year alone, Manitoba's commercial aviation industry is worth \$550 million. The aviation industry directly employs more than 5000 people in the province with another 4000 jobs working to support the industry.

Mr. Speaker, the Winnipeg International Airport has become one of the busiest cargo terminals in Canada and a major hub of aviation activity. With plans for a new terminal on the horizon, the future is certainly exciting. Passenger traffic in Winnipeg will reach three million this year and is projected to be four million in a decade.

Commercial aviation also provides vital links to Manitoba's remote northern communities and connects all Manitobans to international destinations through the Winnipeg International Airport. Fast Air is also a valuable resource as a medivac backup. The growth of Fast Air is yet another example of a healthy and strong aviation industry in Manitoba. When small—[interjection]

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

Ms. Korzeniowski: When small carriers are able to purchase new planes, we know that we are seeing a vibrant and growing industry. Congratulations to Fast Air and its employees on the acquisition of two new aircraft to the company's growing fleet.

Mennonite Central Committee

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): I am pleased to rise today to put a few words on the record about the pork-canning project that is currently under way in Winkler.

The Mennonite Central Committee regularly cans meat for needy people around the world. This year it is hoped that the food will assist poor expectant mothers and children in North Korea. Relief groups are concerned about hunger in North Korea where up to 60 percent of the children suffer from malnutrition.

Working in shifts that start at 5 a.m., up to 350 MCC volunteers are processing the meat at Winkler Meats over a three-day period. Generous donors have provided more than 175 hogs

for this worthy project. Volunteers are taking part in all parts of the canning process, from deboning the meat to manning the cooking vats, to washing and labelling tins for the meat.

Mr. Speaker, as Wilf Unrau, chairman of MCC's meat canning campaign in Manitoba, stated and I quote: "We're laughing and enjoying every minute of it. The fellowship is awesome. I think something like this gives people a sense of satisfaction, knowing they are helping people who really need it."

Mr. Speaker, this year MCC hopes to process 20 000 cans of pork for the relief project in North Korea. In past years, MCC has also donated canned meat to Iraq.

I would like to thank Mr. Dyck of Winkler Meats and all involved in the pork canning project for so generously giving of their time and resources to see this wonderful project to completion. Your efforts are appreciated more than you know. Thank you.

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): As all members in this Chamber are no doubt aware, it has been a very difficult six months for the cattle producers of this province. The border closure to cattle exports on May 22 as the result of the BSE crisis was a catastrophe which quickly escalated into a full-blown disaster in the Interlake region as it was compounded by drought and a grasshopper infestation. Early on in the summer, pastures were finished and winter hay crops were coming in at 10 percent to 20 percent of normal yields.

No markets and no more credit at the bank put our ranchers in an impossible situation in very short order. A variety of provincial programs and some federal assistance came on stream at the end of the day to bridge people through the worst of the crises, but initially people were in a very desperate state.

In this time of dire straights, the Mennonite Central Committee and the Mennonite Disaster Service got involved, as they have many times in the past, to help organize and expedite shipments of hay and straw out of the annual crop producing areas up into the drought zone. Initial meetings were held at the Vidor Machine

complex in the Okno area just north of Arborg, and the actions of the group accelerated from there as government staff and others became involved.

The MCC also organized cash donations, using their connections with various church and community groups. The emotional and spiritual needs of the many people under stress were also attended to.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the ranchers and numerous affected communities in the Interlake that I represent, I offer sincere thanks to the Mennonite Central Committee and Disaster Services for the help they gave in our time of need. It was much appreciated and will not be forgotten.

Triple R Community CDC Awards

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Mr. Speaker, on October 22, I was pleased to attend the eighth annual Triple R Community Futures Development Corporation Entrepreneur and Volunteer Appreciation Evening. The well-attended event acknowledged the efforts of volunteers—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I ask the co-operation of all honourable members. It is very difficult to hear. The honourable Member for Morris has the floor.

* (11:00)

Mrs. Taillieu: Mr. Speaker, the well-attended event acknowledged the efforts of volunteers as well as the entrepreneurs who have developed and expanded businesses in the region. The theme of this wonderful event was: Volunteers do not necessarily have the time, but they do have the heart.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the many individuals honoured at the event and highlight but a few of their contributions to Manitoba communities. People like Norbert Tessier, Elizabeth Bidolsky, Jim and Elsie Dooley, Pat Pidalski, Jack Rempel, Lisa Funk, Glen Friesen and numerous others have all contributed in important ways, making their corners of the world a little brighter.

From Morris, Charlie and Rita Covernton, Murial Haight, Don Johnson and Lorna Lewis worked collectively on researching and presenting the history of the Valley Agricultural Society, Manitoba Stampede and the Big "M" Centre. Marvin Gerbrandt from the R.M. of Morris was honoured for helping revitalize his community of Lowe Farm through co-ordinating the construction of a community coffee shop. Leona Nickel of Rhineland was honoured for her outstanding work with the Alzheimer's Society and for various fundraising organizations.

David Friesen of Altona was recognized for his participation on numerous community boards and for promoting community participation with his employees. From Plum Coulee, Henry Hepner was congratulated for his coaching abilities and time spent helping out with many different community events. Sam Sadler of Emerson, in addition to serving as town councillor and mayor, served on many local boards and was actively involved in the school and church.

The "Got Ice" committee from the R.M. of Montcalm, specifically Russel Sabourin, Paul Sabourin, Ivan Sabourin and Mike Gilmore, spearheaded the efforts and fundraising for—

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave? [*Agreed*]

Continue on.

Mrs. Taillieu:—artificial ice in the St. Jean arena. Leonard Schultz from the R.M. of Franklin was a founding member of the Dominion City Elks, served as treasurer of the park and pool and was a volunteer firefighter for 25 years.

Mr. Speaker, it has been my privilege to honour these fine Manitobans and their many efforts at making this province a better place to live. The generous and sacrificial spirit with which these folks give their time and talents is most worthy of our congratulations.

TLC Guide

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): I would like to bring the attention of the House to a new Tenant

& Landlord Cooperation Guide that was recently published by the West Broadway Neighbourhood Housing Resource Centre.

While the TLC Guide, as it is known, was produced in the inner city to promote the good management of rental buildings, the information it contains applies across Manitoba and can be used to benefit other communities. The TLC Guide is in response to a study conducted by the West Broadway Neighbourhood Housing Resource Centre with financial support from the Winnipeg Inner-city Research Alliance and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

The research showed that tenants and landlords both lacked key information about their roles and responsibilities to each other. The study also determined that this knowledge gap was a primary cause of many problems and disputes arising between tenants and landlords. It is worth noting here that over 90 percent of the housing in the West Broadway section of my riding of Wolseley is rental in nature.

These information challenges have been answered with the publication of the TLC Guide which is available free of charge from the West Broadway Neighbourhood Housing Resource Centre. The guide contains a detailed description of both sides of the tenant-landlord relationship and also discusses important topics such as safety, neighbourhood stability and how to access local services such as mediation.

It was my pleasure as the MLA for Wolseley to attend the official launch of the TLC Guide. I want to congratulate the members of the community who made it happen. These include Linda Williams and Rico John of the West Broadway Neighbourhood Housing Resource Centre, Bob Shaer, president of the Professional Property Managers Association, and the many concerned residents of West Broadway who donated their time and energy to the project.

Mr. Speaker, by working co-operatively with our municipal and federal counterparts, our Government has seen over 1600 new housing units created in Winnipeg since 1999. Using a co-operative approach, the creators of the TLC Guide have given all of us a valuable tool for the successful management of all rental housing in

this province and it is my pleasure to share their success story with this House today.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the Lord Selkirk School Division junior parliament, from three schools: Selkirk Junior High, Lockport Junior High and Happy Thought School. These schools are in the constituency of the honourable Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), and also the honourable Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson), the constituency of Gimli.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ADJOURNED DEBATE (Fifth Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: Resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), the proposed motion of the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Murray) in amendment thereto, and the proposed motion of the honourable Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) in further amendment thereto, and the debate remains open.

The honourable Member for St. Norbert (Ms. Brick)—[interjection]

On further discussion of the House leaders—order, please. On discussion with the House leaders, it had been agreed to that it would be the Opposition, and the Government would give up their spot yesterday to an opposition member, and that opposition member spoke last in the government spot, so now, under our rules, I will recognize the Opposition, the Member for Charleswood.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to have this opportunity to rise today to respond to the Throne Speech. It gives me great pleasure to have the opportunity to address the members of the House, the people of the province and,

particularly, my constituents of Charleswood, whom I feel very honoured and privileged to represent.

To the people of Charleswood, I would like to express my gratitude for their confidence and faith shown in me in this past election. I will continue to work hard on their behalf, as I have for the last five years, and be there for them as they need my services. I am committed to my constituency and to the people I represent.

I would like to welcome back to the House all honourable members, particularly the new members that were elected in this past election, new members from all sides of the House, and welcome them to something that I, certainly, hope they will find as interesting, exciting and rewarding as I have found it in my five years.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

I would like to issue a warm welcome to our new pages and to the six legislative interns, and hope they, too, find it to be a rewarding experience. To the Speaker, I would like to say that I appreciate his patience and fairness in doing his job and welcome him back to the House, as I welcome back the table officers and the Sergeant-at-Arms.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Throne Speech was a disappointing one for many Manitobans. It was more timid and safe than visionary. There was political poetry, but no vision. When our province is crying out for some strong leadership and strong policies to rejuvenate it, we hear regurgitation of old ideas or old announcements.

Where was the strategy to grow the economy, to make the province competitive? There was nothing in this speech to give Manitobans confidence that the Doer government has a plan to provide meaningful tax relief, and to create an environment that will attract new business, and create real jobs.

A recent survey of Manitoba's top 200 business leaders provides a scary insight into how business is feeling about investing in Manitoba these days. The survey conducted by the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce confirmed that Manitoba's high taxes, pro-union labour laws

and anti-business climate is making it very difficult for companies to invest, expand and do business here, which means, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are falling short of our potential on economic growth and on job growth. The survey is also about our standard of living, what we can expect to earn and what chances we have of our children staying here when they grow up.

My children are at the age where they are making important decisions about their future. The call of Alberta and other provinces right now is very strong. As a mother, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I feel that this is devastating. But, if there is no opportunity for them here, what choices do they have? Because of the Doer government's policies and their negative effect, families are being split apart.

In the survey, 64 percent of the companies said they were doing the same or worse than last year. The result, dismal job growth in Manitoba. In October of this year, there were only 200 more jobs than there were a year ago. Only 13 percent of the respondents thought the Doer government was doing a good job at promoting economic development in Manitoba.

This, certainly, paints a dismal picture for this province. The Premier's attitude towards business is becoming more arrogant and more disturbing, especially when he says our chambers of commerce are one-trick ponies who know nothing about how to run a business. I cannot imagine anything more disrespectful. That type of attitude is not likely one which will attract new companies to want to set up here when you have got a Premier of this province that makes comments and has beliefs like that.

But then this Premier is not so interested in private investment anyway. His idea of how to make things happen is through public sector projects and big governments, as we have witnessed with his increasing size of his Government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the NDP formed government in 1999 they inherited the strongest economy in a generation, thanks to the policies and hard work of Gary Filmon and his caucus. The Doer government did not have to do much in the last four years, because they could coast on the effects of the previous government, and it

lulled them into complacency. But that is now changing, and the Doer government is facing some very hard realities. When the Doer government inherited the strongest economy in a generation, they should have nourished it. They should have strategized as to how to keep it strong. They should have used it to build a stronger Manitoba in a way that was sustainable. They should have positioned Manitoba so this province could reach its potential.

* (11:10)

Instead, they squandered those opportunities and they went at things the easy way, the NDP way. They spent money. In fact, they have spent about a billion dollars in new money. Are Manitobans better off than they were four years ago? Has hallway medicine been solved in six months with \$15 million? Absolutely not. Have diagnostic waiting lists been slashed? Absolutely not. Four of the five diagnostic waiting lists have gone up. In fact, the MRI waiting list is the highest it has been since the NDP formed government. Has the nursing shortage been solved? Absolutely not. The nursing shortage went from 700 to over 1500 vacancies under their watch. Patients waiting for cardiac surgery have died. In fact, 11 patients in this province have died on waiting lists waiting for cardiac surgery.

Rural communities are in despair for fear of their hospitals closing. Despite the Premier's claims that they will be treated as fairly as other citizens in this province, there are already some rural hospitals that have closed. It is rural hospital closure by stealth, because the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) is not being forthright about his intentions, as we are now witnessing, with how he has set up the consultations in the Assiniboine Regional Health Authority.

Have crime rates gone down? Absolutely not. The Hells Angels have moved into Winnipeg in 2000, and crime rates have increased. The latest statistics show that Manitoba is No. 1 for homicides, No. 1 for robberies, No. 1 for motor vehicle thefts, and the latest stats for Winnipeg are No. 1 for homicides, No. 1 for sexual assaults, No. 1 for assaults, No. 1 for robberies, No. 1 for violent crimes, No. 1 for motor vehicles thefts. For the third consecutive year, we are leading the way. I do not think that is what

Manitoba wants to be leading, or known for and this, really, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is nothing short of disturbing.

Has our education system been strengthened to ensure that all children receive a quality education? Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, no. In May of 2002, six out of ten Grade 3 students were not meeting expectations when it came to simple addition and subtraction to 10. Now teachers are extremely frustrated with the Doer government's assessment program, which they say is taking valuable time away from teaching.

Is our economy strong? No, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Manitoba lost 6200 jobs in this last year according to Stats Canada. That is a 1.1% job loss rate, the second worst in Canada, tied with Saskatchewan. That is 6200 people less not paying taxes or spending money in this province.

The Fraser Institute released a study in September showing Manitoba posted the third worst overall employment growth and private sector employment growth in the country over the last five years.

U of M economist, John McCallum, said that all of these numbers are very disturbing and is calling for a thorough government study to examine the problem.

Because labour force growth and a vibrant economy go hand in hand, the Government should really sit up and take notice of some of this information. Let us find out what is wrong with it and let us deal with it before it is too late, but as we have seen in this particular Throne Speech, there was no vision in the Throne Speech to address any of these issues. Instead, the Government is going to just coast along and hope, what, that things are going to fall into place by themselves?

Are we competitive? No, we are not. We have the highest personal income taxes west of New Brunswick. We have anti-business labour laws. We have the second highest corporate tax rate in the country. Stats show that out-migration from Manitoba is rising, and our property taxes are amongst the highest in Canada; and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is causing Manitoba to lose ground.

Are our Crown corporations safe? Hardly. This Government tried to raid MPI of \$30 million to pay for university infrastructure. They are trying, right now, to raid WCB of \$1.6 million to pay for health infrastructure at the Pan Am Clinic. They have raided Hydro of \$203 million, a large chunk of the \$288 million the Government said it was going to take over three years. Hydro did not have that money, and they had to borrow it in order to give it to the Government. Well, what a ludicrous way for a government to do business.

They are dipping into the rainy day fund so that they can spend more money; all at a time when we are seeing transfer payments from the federal government at levels we have not seen in absolutely years. So they are dipping into the rainy day fund so they can spend more, at a time when it is not raining. That rainy day fund went from a high of \$427 million, when they formed government, and it is now less than \$150 million, when the recommended amount to be kept in that fund is \$350 million.

It would not take much right now for that fund to be wiped out; and for the Government to have to be dipping into it, when they have seen a billion dollars in new money since they have formed government, is a very irresponsible way to manage this province.

To balance their books, they are using Hydro as their slush fund; and they are taking money from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. They are like kids in a candy store. When they get more money, it absolutely burns a hole in their pocket and they have to spend it all when they see these glorious sights, like you would in a candy store. Hurry up, and spend it. Ramp up the spending in the Budget. Live for today. Let us not worry about tomorrow. Tomorrow is going to take care of itself, and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that puts Manitoba at some jeopardy down the road.

What did they do with the \$141 million more money they just got from the federal government? Why did they not put that into the rainy day fund? It was unexpected money. Why do they feel they have to spend everything that happens to come their way?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, has forced amalgamations of school divisions saved any money? Absolutely not. In my particular area, in the Pembina Trails School Division, in this year's budget alone, \$1.3 million of a \$6-million expenditure increase is attributed to amalgamation. That is coming from the taxpayers of my area, because that translated into a tax increase for all of us. What is it going to be next year after all of the salaries are harmonized?

There is a major labour dispute right now in my school division over gaps between wages of workers from the merged former divisions doing the same job. Harmonizing contracts is going to be extremely costly. The NDP could never say where they were going to find the \$10 million in savings that they had touted so loudly. They could not demonstrate where forced amalgamations would improve the education system, and we are now starting to see that happen. School division amalgamations were legislated without a plan, without adequate consideration of the financial consequences of the mergers, and the taxpayers of this province are the ones that are now bearing the burden of some pretty irresponsible decision making by this Government.

What does all this signal? It signals that things are not all that rosy in Manitoba. Just ask cattle producers facing the mad cow crisis. The NDP paid for an expensive PR campaign in Winnipeg to cover up their unwillingness to provide a desperately needed cash advance program that would truly help families in crisis because of BSE. Food bank usage in rural areas has gone up. Children are unable to get new winter clothes or can no longer participate in hockey, figure skating, piano lessons and many other things because these families have no money.

Many cattle producers are struggling to pay their property taxes even though they have no money, but because they are a proud group of people, they are doing their best under such horrible, horrible circumstances. Some cattle producers have already ended up killing their cattle. I am just so sad to say that there have even been hints at suicide by some. That is so disturbing and more disturbing because this NDP government just does not get it. What they offered to the cattle producers was totally,

absolutely inadequate to deal with this agricultural crisis of the century.

What about giving new taxing power to the mayor? Well, where was the Premier (Mr. Doer) at the beginning of this? Why was he not more forthright with our mayor instead of having a million dollars being spent? Typical of the way for an NDP government to do business. They do not worry so much about that money because it is not their money. I think Winnipeg deserved better from this Premier around this whole issue. I do have to say I do give the mayor credit for putting out a new idea. I do give him credit for getting the debate out there about some of the things that need to happen in Winnipeg because we do have to find a solution to some of the challenges facing the city.

* (11:20)

This NDP government has squandered an opportunity in this Throne Speech to give Manitobans some faith and hope that the health care system was going to be improved. Their vision, if one could even call it that, consisted of regurgitation of old promises and old ideas. There are major issues in health care that absolutely must be tackled. In the Throne Speech, the Premier and the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) said there was no crisis in health care. They fixed it. Well, I would like to ask the Minister of Health to explain to Manitobans how there is no crisis when Manitoba is short 1100 nurses, when 1200 nurses are working between two to four jobs just to get full-time work, when patients are waiting forever to see a specialist because we are short 65 specialists in this province. How is this not a crisis?

How can the Minister of Health and the Premier say there is no crisis when diagnostic waiting lists have gone up significantly, and right now the MRI waiting list is the highest it has been in the last four years? How can there be no crisis when over 4000 patients are waiting for cataract surgery, 4000, when administrative costs for health care have skyrocketed? In the WRHA alone, those administrative costs have gone from \$5 million to \$16 million, and in the rural RHAs those administrative costs have doubled. How is that not a crisis? How is it that the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) has no

control over these issues? How is it not a crisis when we now have 20 000 people with serious gambling problems identified in this province? How is it not a crisis when he is closing rural hospitals and preventing people in southwest Manitoba from having a real say about the issues in their area?

How can the Minister of Health say there is no crisis when 1000 children are waiting for dental surgery, when 1400 patients with chronic pain are waiting up to a year and a half to be treated and when 11 patients have died waiting for cardiac surgery? Really, what in heaven's name do this Minister of Health and this Premier call a crisis?

The plan to address diagnostic waiting lists was recycled. What they announced before did not work for the past four years, but they re-gurgitated it again in this Throne Speech. I do have to say I will give them credit for one part of their waiting list reduction plan and that was to create a wait-list registry. It was something that my party had put forward as an election platform, and I do think it has a lot of merit. I am glad they took our idea, I am glad they are putting it out there, but I am absolutely worried that the Minister of Health is going to water it down. He wants to find a way just to put it out there to defuse any criticism, to get ahead of some of the criticism, but he is already talking about only having a very small version of what that might look like. It needs to be broken down by hospital, by procedure and by doctor. If he does not do that, he is going to rob patients of having choice. He is going to rob them of an opportunity to improve their access to care. Mr. Deputy Speaker, with the Minister of Health's poor track record at accountability, he is already sounding like he is going to put a basically useless scaled-down version of what really should be out there.

And why is Manitoba the last western province in Canada to post waiting lists? Why does the Minister of Health always have to be dragged, kicking and screaming, to do the right thing? A perfect example of that was when he had warnings from me prior to cardiac patients starting to die. He did not listen to those warnings. He should have listened to those warnings. He should not have treated that so negligently

and perhaps we would not have seen 11 patients in this province die waiting for cardiac surgery.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Mr. Speaker, I waited eagerly in this Throne Speech to hear what the Premier's vision was for the newly created portfolio of Healthy Living and was sorely disappointed to hear nothing. What a lost golden opportunity, but I imagine that the Premier cannot define it because it was never fully envisioned. The new job will unfold as the new junior minister flies by the seat of his pants, a flurry of activity, an illusion of doing something, when really what we have is a ribbon cutter for a very tired Minister of Health, a minister too tired to keep his election promises and a minister too tired to put forward a truly useful vision for improving health care in this Throne Speech.

Mr. Speaker, I find it ironic that the Premier would create a junior Minister of Healthy Living (Mr. Rondeau) in a junior portfolio under the Minister of Health and leave in place a tired Minister of Health, leave him in the most challenging of all the portfolios for far too long and in fact, an unhealthy length of time. A very contradictory move indeed. Tired ministers make mistakes, and when we have seen 11 patients die in this past year, Mr. Speaker, we cannot afford to have any more mistakes happening. This tired minister has given us a mediocre health care system that in many ways has deteriorated over the past four years. It is absolutely amazing to me that he got to keep his job.

Not one mention in the Throne Speech on Manitoba being the biggest spender in health care in the country. Not one word on how to sustain that funding. Not one word on how to find efficiencies in health care. Not one word about innovative reform. Not one word about evaluation of regionalization. Just more of the same, more of the status quo, more of blindly pouring money into a system and not being able to say if this money is making a difference in patient outcomes.

With almost a billion dollars of new money in health care, you would think we would see monumental improvements. Instead, parts of the system are absolutely in crisis. Blindly pumping

money into the health care system is only going to perpetuate the system's inefficiency.

This Government had an opportunity in a Throne Speech at the beginning of their second term to put forward a great vision for health care, a great plan for health care, but then this Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) said he does not think it is his job to provide the province with a grand scheme for health care. What a shame, Mr. Speaker, because what we are left with is a mediocre health care system because the minister cannot articulate a vision.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba is a province with much potential, a lot of untapped potential and a lot of untapped opportunities. We should not accept the status quo. We should not accept mediocrity from this Government. We need a government that will put the priorities of Manitobans first and move this province forward.

Mr. Speaker, from the early origins of this province, I do want to say that it has been our party that has been the explorers, the dreamers, the visionaries and the builders. We saw what Manitoba could become if we worked together for a common goal, and it was Conservative governments that have left the greatest legacies in this province, a provincial road network, Manitoba's first technical college, workers' compensation, crop insurance, services for the deaf, student loans, low-cost rental housing, social allowance, medical insurance.

Imagine, the Tories brought in medicare to Manitoba. Would the NDP ever once acknowledge that? Hardly, but it was the Tories that introduced medicare to Manitoba, and it is something that we highly value.

We also introduced the Winnipeg Floodway, fiscal responsibility, smaller government, income assistance, balanced budgets, debt repayment, just to name some of our legacies. This is a strong legacy for which we can be very proud. No other party has had as positive an impact on Manitoba as the Progressive Conservative Party.

What has this Premier's (Mr. Doer) claim to fame been? Where has he left his mark? It has been a very timid four years, and it looks like we are on the track to another timid four years.

Right now, Mr. Speaker, a lot of it looks like a dangerous backwards slide, back to the dark days of Howard Pawley.

We cannot let that happen, and I pledge to continue to work my hardest to keep the NDP government accountable, to push them to reach higher than mediocrity, because, Mr. Speaker, I think Manitobans deserve a lot better than that. Thank you.

* (11:30)

Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert): It is with a heart swelling with honour and great pride that I rise today to speak in response to the Speech from the Throne.

Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your administration of this Legislature over the past two sessions. You always display excellent decorum, patience and fairness in the execution of your duties. It is obvious that a lot of thought and deliberation go into the creation of an appropriate response to dealing with questions related to parliamentary procedure. Your leadership and patience in trying to maintain an appropriate atmosphere of mutual respect are a great benefit to all members of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome back the pages to the Chamber and congratulate them on their outstanding academic achievement which has placed them at the top of their class and allowed them to be selected to fulfil this role. I hope they find their time here interesting and educational. It is my hope that they maintain an open mind and do not become disillusioned by the sometimes dynamic and heated exchanges that take place in this Chamber. It is important for them to keep in mind that many of the people who become involved in politics hold very firmly to their beliefs and are very forthright in speaking their mind on issues that triggers their emotions. It is my hope that the experiences of being a page in this Chamber may awaken in them the desire to one day enter political life.

I also want to welcome back the Clerk of the Assembly, the table officers and the Sergeant-at-Arms. I want to thank these people for making our jobs appear effortless. They spend countless

hours working behind the scenes to ensure that this Legislature functions efficiently. I am especially appreciative of the time and energy they committed to leading us through educational workshops that have assisted in making the business of the House much easier for us to understand. I want to thank my caucus colleagues for their patience and willingness to make time to answer the numerous questions I have posed of them. Their words of advice have proved to be very valuable. I greatly appreciate that they never seem to be too busy to help me solve a problem.

More than anything today I would like to thank the people of St. Norbert for the confidence they have shown in me by electing me as their representative. I would like to express my gratitude to them for giving me this great opportunity. It is a profound honour for me to be elected to this House as the first member of our party to represent St. Norbert. To me there is no higher honour than to be elected to help move our province forward in a progressive and socially responsible fashion.

Mr. Speaker, like many of my peers I thank my parents and family for providing a strong foundation and a sense of purpose that enabled me to have the confidence required to forge ahead in the political arena. My mother, Janet Lorraine Moore, who passed away 17 years ago, always encouraged me to dream big. She encouraged all five of her children to strive for their dreams and to have the confidence that their dreams could be attained. She would have been one of my most devoted supporters if she was still with us today.

My father, James Milton Moore, showed his children the value of hard work and the importance of doing a job well. My siblings, Susan, Robert, Christopher and Cynthia, showed me how to share and how to make my voice heard at the dinner table. My in-laws, Tina and Raymond Brick, have also helped shape my thoughts and character. They have inspired me with their love for each other and their caring for their fellow man. They always have time for family and friends. They are a great example of the type of people our licence plate, Friendly Manitoba, describes.

Many people have asked me why I got involved in politics. Entering political life was not a lifelong ambition for me. I became motivated by my attendance at the MTS hearings. Upon being informed that the Conservative government was going to privatize our publicly owned telephone system, I decided that I needed to become more informed on the issue. My research confirmed all my suspicions. This move was going to cost ratepayers more money for service and was going to make the cost of telephone service unaffordable to people who were economically disadvantaged. Being a speaker at these hearings proved to be a very challenging task. My name was dropped from the speaking list twice because you had to be present when your name was called or you would not be able to speak. Working at a full-time job, I was only able to attend the evening sessions of the hearings, and each time my name was called I was absent. The hearing rules were such that each speaker was only given two opportunities to speak, and if you missed your turn twice, then your name could not be listed a third time. Upon finding out I could not speak, I enlisted the assistance of the NDP critic for MTS who lobbied on my behalf and made it possible for me to speak.

I remember a beautiful soft blanket of snow falling outside as I listened to the other speakers speak very eloquently and passionately about their publicly owned telephone system. Their arguments were compelling. At 12:50 a.m., as the last speaker at the hearings, I was given an opportunity to present my thoughts on the subject. I stood in front of the members of the committee and read from the dictionary the definition of democracy. My argument was that privatizing MTS was not democratic. The Conservative government did not run on the platform of privatizing the telephone system, and it was not in keeping with the wishes of the majority of Manitobans.

The other concern I expressed was that as a past employment officer with the City of Winnipeg I knew that it was imperative for any job-seeking individual to have a phone so they could receive calls about interviews. How can people who are economically disadvantaged afford to have a phone when those rates were going to be

rising as the result of the utility paying dividends to shareholders?

Sadly, all my predictions of increased fees for ratepayers have come to pass, and we are now paying a higher rate for this service. As a result of my involvement in these hearings, I started to do some reading and some soul searching and found the New Democratic Party expounded beliefs very similar to my own. I desperately wanted to stop the erosion of our health care system, the privatization of our publicly owned utilities and the underfunding of our education system. I am a very strong believer in the need to walk the walk, not just talk the talk.

I decided to become involved and take on a leadership role by seeking a nomination for the constituency where I reside. I want to commend the other candidates who ran in St. Norbert for they, like myself, are individuals who are willing to walk the walk. They included Mr. Barber from the Green Party, Ms. Greenwood from the Manitoba Liberals, and Mr. Laurendeau from the Progressive Conservatives. These people ran fair and honest campaigns that did not become personal or hostile.

Prior to the 2003 provincial election, the constituency of St. Norbert was represented by Mr. Marcel Laurendeau. I would like to pay tribute to him for his 13 years of service to the members of our constituency. It has been said by my colleagues that he was a good orator and he did an admirable job as House leader.

* (11:40)

Mr. Speaker, this is our Government's sixth Speech from the Throne, and it continues to build on the good work that has been accomplished in the last four years that we have been governing this province. This speech lays the framework our Government will follow in the upcoming year. It outlines our plans to improve the quality of life for Manitobans by building our economy, continuing to improve our health care system, by providing new opportunities for youth while ensuring the safety of residents and our communities, and by placing a very much-needed emphasis on sustaining the quality of our water for future generations.

As I have gone door to door in my constituency, the people of St. Norbert have told me

time and time again that health care is of the utmost importance. On November 12, I was pleased to attend a thank-you event for donors to the Victoria General Hospital Foundation capital campaign along with my colleague, the MLA for Fort Garry. Our Government has committed to contributing \$5.5 million for a new oncology clinic and critical care units as well as an expanded day surgery unit and emergency department at the Victoria Hospital. The foundation has been working very hard to raise matching dollars through their capital campaign, and they are more than halfway to meeting their goal.

The members of the foundation, as well as all the constituents of St. Norbert are thrilled to see this much-needed revitalization and rebuilding taking place. Improving facilities is only half of the story. We need trained staff to operate the facilities, and our Government is delivering in this area.

We have added 500 additional training spaces for technicians, therapists, health care aides, nurses and doctors. Almost three times as many nurses graduated in 2002 as in 1999. We have also recruited 500 nurses from across the world with the nurses' recruitment and retention program. Hospital equipment is receiving much-needed attention. Since 1999, \$115 million has been spent for new and replacement medical equipment. The new gamma knife that was unveiled on Friday, November 20, 2003, at the Health Sciences Centre is a perfect example of the type of innovative equipment we are investing in. Gamma knife surgery is a cutting edge form of light surgery that beams hundreds of gamma rays, radiation-filled light beams, with pinpoint accuracy to kill brain tumours or fix tangles of blood vessels known as aneurysms.

Mr. Speaker, for patients who receive this type of surgery, the time required to recover is greatly reduced from several months to several days. What a boon for everyone in the province. It is estimated that as many as 100 Manitobans will benefit from this surgery and about 150 more people will travel from across the province to receive the surgery. In addition, our Government has reduced the wait lists for cancer treatment by half.

I have had the very difficult experience of providing support to a very close friend who

underwent treatment for cancer. I watched him suffer needlessly as he waited in excess of 16 weeks to receive radiation treatment for non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. He knew that the longer he had to wait, in between the rounds of treatment, the more likely the cancer was to spread. This was my training partner, an individual that I trained with to run the half-marathon. He was not successful in his fight against his cancer, and I know the anguish he went through. I really believe we have an obligation to make treatment of these diseases occur as quickly as possible for these people who are suffering this tremendous hardship.

The introduction of the Minister for Healthy Living is an initiative that is very forward thinking and innovative. The volunteers from the Richmond Kings Community Centre, where I was the president, and St. Norbert Community Centre know the value of healthy living. They spend countless hours organizing activities to encourage the children, youth and adults in our community to participate in active living pursuits.

We know that heart disease and stroke are leading causes of premature death and the incidence of diabetes is on the rise. In Canada last year, health care cost about \$112 billion. That is so much money it is hard to even be able to fathom how much it is. The costs for health care is skyrocketing.

As a graduate of the Faculty of Physical Education at the University of Manitoba, I know the benefits of living a healthy life. Through this new department, we can have a huge impact on the way people live their lives. We can encourage them to eat healthy, to refrain from smoking and to enjoy the benefits of daily physical activity. Preventing disease before it occurs will go a long way towards stemming the tide of our ever-increasing health care costs.

The Healthy Child Initiative is an example of a very successful program that has been paying huge dividends in the area of healthy living. The Healthy Child coalition of the Fort Garry and St. Norbert communities has been working very hard on behalf of residents in St. Norbert and Fort Garry to ensure that the objectives of the program are met. In the St.

Norbert area, the Ryerson family centre, the south Family Resource Centre, the Parc La Salle Parent-Tot Centre and le Centre de la Jeune Enfance de Saint-Norbert, at École Noël-Ritchot school are all examples of very successful programs that are funded through this initiative.

What makes it so successful is that the residents of the community and the service providers have banded together to decide which programs should be funded. This program works well because it is community driven. It empowers the citizenry to make decisions for themselves. Who knows better what services should be in the community and funded than the partners who are on this team?

The St. Norbert constituents have always enjoyed an enriched community life by being bordered by the University of Manitoba. This institution languished under the Conservative government. Crumbling facilities and steadily increasing tuition fees were the order of the day. Under our Government, tuition fees have been reduced by 10 percent and have been maintained at this level for the last three years.

As a result of this decision, our province's university tuition fees are the third-lowest in Canada. This makes Manitoba an attractive place to study, reduces student debt and helps to keep students here. Our efforts to ensure the affordability of university and college education is proving to be very attractive for students as university and college enrolment has increased by 30 percent.

To ensure accessibility for all students, our Government established the Manitoba bursary program in 2000-2001. This program works with the Canada Millennium Scholarship to help ensure that students with a demonstrated need can afford a post-secondary education.

Mr. Speaker, the ACCESS program gives those students who are disadvantaged by educational background, personal circumstances or remoteness fair and reasonable access to post-secondary education. The combined funding increases of 2001 and 2002 has seen the program receive an increase of 7.8 percent in funding.

The husband of the Governor General, John Ralston Saul, said in an interview with the *Winnipeg Free Press* of June 2: The Governor General and I think this is one of the most important educational programs in the country. It is a very intelligent way of removing artificial barriers from access to education.

Our Government has committed to ensuring that future infrastructure needs of the University of Manitoba are met. We have kick-started the capital campaign with a \$50-million investment that has levered over \$200 million of private contributions. This money has allowed the university to undertake the reconstruction of the Engineering building that was in such disrepair that the roof leaked every time it rained.

* (11:50)

The money has also been used to construct the Arthur V. Mauro student residence. This building is a great addition to the university, as it allows students to live in accommodations that meet the 21st century needs that they have, needs such as private cooking and eating facilities, access to the Internet and facilities that they can use to maintain healthy living, such as a weight room. This has allowed the students to live in a more comfortable setting, and it has been a great boon for the university.

The Government is also investing \$9 million towards the construction of a \$25-million Richardson Centre for Functional Food and Nutraceuticals. This centre will provide researchers of numerous disciplines and their industry partners with a state-of-the-art facility that will enhance their opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to work together to develop functional foods such as calcium-enriched orange juice, flaxseed bread and oat bran cereal.

In October, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to meet with the directors of many of the children care centres in St. Norbert, such as the Epiphany Children's Centre, Univillage Daycare, St. Norbert Children's Centre, Bairdmore Day-care Centre, Kings Park Day Care Centre, Campus Day Care Centre, Dalhousie Day Care and Ryerson School Age Centre. They expressed their appreciation to our Government for making child care a priority over the last four years.

Since 1999, Manitoba has increased its investment in child day care by over 41 percent. Our plan for child care advances three major objectives: maintaining and improving quality, improving accessibility, and improving affordability. We are committed to ensuring that by March of 2007 wages and incomes for service providers will increase by 10 percent, that 450 more early childhood educators will be trained, and that 5000 more spaces will be funded.

The directors I met with were especially appreciative of the fact that recruiting trained staff had become much easier now than it was in the 1990s when the advertisements they placed received no responses at all.

Mr. Speaker, there is no project that is more important to St. Norbert than the redevelopment of the floodway. In 1950, Winnipeg was hit by the worst flood since it was colonized. In direct response to the threat of flooding that occurred, a system of waterways was constructed to divert floodwaters from the Red River around Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, the floodway was built at a cost of \$63.2 million. The floodway has saved Winnipeg 17 times since it was originally constructed. Many of us remember the devastating effects of the 1997 flood, but no one remembers it more than the residents of St. Norbert, who were forced out of their homes and could only sit by their phones and wait anxiously for word about the effects of the flood on their homes.

The imposition of police patrols that enforced the stay-out advisory was reminiscent of a state of war. Groups like Action Saint-Norbert are working hard on behalf of St. Norbert residents to ensure that future floodway expansion includes recreation opportunities in addition to flood prevention. For St. Norbert residents, the commitment our Government has made to ensure that expansion of the floodway to protect the city in the event we experience a once in 700 year flooding is unbelievably comforting. The introduction of Water Stewardship Minister is very important to all Manitobans.

In the community I represent, the St. Norbert Arts and Cultural Centre has been working hard at raising our awareness about the need to

live in harmony with our environment. Over the months of May to September, 15 women built their own homes, grew and made food, shared their skills and created a culture based on holistic principles of life in balance with nature. This exhibit, called The Living Earth Culture Village, was such a success that they plan to renew it again next summer.

As a government, Mr. Speaker, we have been taking leadership in ensuring our environment's sustainability for future generations. The introduction of The Biofuels and Gasoline Tax Amendment Act, that will mandate the use of ethanol, will assist in reducing the amount of greenhouse gases we produce. The announcement that a new subdivision in Whyte Ridge will be heated by ground source heat pumps will assist our environment by reducing the amount of fuel burned to heat these new homes.

In January of 2000, Mr. Speaker, Manitoba Hydro launched enhancements to its Power Smart program to help Manitoba families and industries save energy. This program is proving very popular with Manitobans. In moving to the future, our Government plans to expand on low-impact hydro and clean energy alternatives like wind power. These programs taken together bode well for the environment.

Manitoba is an ethnically diverse and multi-cultural society. I have enjoyed the opportunity to represent the Government at several cultural activities, such as the Yellow River Chinese Association celebration and the Azorean Cultural Centre's anniversary celebration. These events were fantastic. At the Azorean Cultural Centre's anniversary celebration, I was made to feel at home and welcomed as part of their family.

Our commitments to the expansion of the Provincial Nominee Program is helping to ensure that our province maintains its excellent reputation as a tolerant and diverse society that welcomes new immigrants and provides a home for them. This year we have the highest number of immigrants in 10 years entering our province. We intend to increase this number even further.

It is programs such as the community-based language training program that operates out of Mary Mother of the Church that supports these

new immigrants in learning English that makes our province successful in attracting new immigrants. New immigrants are how we will be able to move forward into the future. They will help us in making our province a place for everyone.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my husband and children for their support over the last years. It is thanks to their assistance that I was able to undertake the tasks of being able to be an elected official. I would also like to conclude by saying that this Throne Speech points the direction in which we want to take this province, a direction that is positive and is a great leap forward in the right direction.

* (12:00)

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hour being twelve noon, pursuant to Rule 45(3), I am interrupting the proceedings in order to put the question on the motion of the honourable Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), that is, the subamendment to the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. Do members wish to have the subamendment read?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

THAT the amendment be amended by adding thereto the following words:

THAT this House further regrets

1. that since assuming office this Government has been both arrogant and extreme in its disregard for the people of Manitoba; and

2. that this Government has no plan to address child poverty in Manitoba, the highest in Canada, and instead blames the federal government for this problem; and

3. that this Government has not been forthright with the people of Manitoba in outlining its plans for health reform, leading to uncertainty amongst patients and health care providers and cutbacks in health services and lost jobs; and

4. that this Government has failed to have any environmental strategy in place to protect the

quality of water and quantity of downstream water in this province; and

5. that failing to adequately fund an education system that will meet the needs of our future citizens and workforce; and

6. that failing to implement an effective strategy to address the growing problem on criminal gang activity, by offering hope and opportunities for youth who are being lured into gangs, accompanied by an effective justice system response to gang crime.

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

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in support of the subamendment, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I know under our rules it is required to have the support of four members of this Chamber in order to request a recorded vote. Given the nature of this particular amendment being chosen from previous amendments on Throne Speech, I would ask if you might be able to canvass the Chamber to see if in fact there are an additional two members that would be prepared to allow for a recorded vote.

Mr. Speaker: Is there support of four members to request a recorded vote? Seeing none, the honourable member does not have support for a recorded vote.

I declare the subamendment lost. On division? On division.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Resumed debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) and the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Murray) in amendment thereto, and the debate is open.

Mr. David Faurichou (Portage la Prairie): It is a pleasure for me to rise and participate in the debate regarding the Throne Speech which was read last week. I would just like to begin by welcoming all members back to the House and to say that it is an honour and a privilege to serve in this Chamber and that we should all recognize that less than one one-hundredth of 1 percent of Manitobans have the opportunity to serve in this Chamber. We should all feel very privileged to have this opportunity to represent our constituencies and not ever to lose that in the sometime fury of debate and issues.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate yourself for once again being successful within this Chamber's election to serve as Speaker of the House and congratulate you on your success in doing so.

I want to take this opportunity to welcome back the staff of this Assembly that serve us well in the Chamber. I also want to make mention of those that we do not see in the Chamber that serve the Chamber. I speak specifically of those that prepare Hansard each and every day transcribing tape to print. I want to recognize the students that are having the privilege of serving this Chamber as pages this year. I hope that their experience is one that they will remember for their entire life. I also would like to recognize the six persons that have joined the staff of the two major caucuses of this Chamber. I speak specifically of the interns that have joined us, three serving with the New Democratic Party caucus and three with the Progressive Conservative caucus.

I have, Mr. Speaker, had the privilege of participating in the internship program committee that made the selection of this year's interns. I will say that the resumes that were submitted for selection to the program offered by this Assembly were no less than outstanding. Some of the candidates' resumes were ones that I personally will say that recorded grade-point

averages that this member would not even dream of. I am pleased to say that the program is recognized and attracts candidates of such high caliber.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that it is an honour and a privilege to represent the great constituency of Portage la Prairie. I will do my very best to always bring forward the views and opinions and the concerns of constituents of Portage la Prairie. The constituency that I represent, I would like to make mention that it is one of the original 24 constituencies that were recognized in the very first gathering of elected representatives in 1870 when the Province of Manitoba, known as the postage-stamp province, joined Confederation. I will, though, note that the population distribution of Manitoba, when Manitoba entered the Confederation, was pretty much limited to the waterways and lakeshores in Manitoba.

Being that the Assiniboine River dissects the constituency of Portage la Prairie, back in 1870 there was more than a sixth of the population of Manitoba within the confines of today's boundaries known as the constituency of Portage la Prairie. Having that type of percentage of population representation within the first Legislature of Manitoba, I now can say that I represent five seats that were formerly recognized within those boundaries. It is quite a task, when that is considered, to represent the diverse interests of all those constituents because, Mr. Speaker, I will say that the Portage la Prairie constituency is unique within this Chamber because it possesses, within the constituency boundaries, all ministries of government, including that of agriculture and conservation and education and health care. Appreciating that there are now 18 ministries of this Government, I will say that it is a challenge to represent those issues of that diverse nature.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank my family: Lori, my wife of 22 years and our children, Aaron our son, 21 years, our daughter Jenna, 19 years, and our daughter Katelyn, 15 years, for their support and understanding, the love they have demonstrated through sometimes very trying moments. As one can appreciate in public life, you stand the scrutiny of not only your friends but all constituents. In a community that is rural by nature, even though it

has an urban component, it is not very far from the farm. That way, people look to you for many things, some of which I can help and some that I cannot, but I attempt to do my very best to be there and help if ever I can.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank my campaign team for the extraordinary dedication that they exhibited through the general election this year. I did have the opportunity to host a barbecue at our residence for those who participated actively in the campaign. I will say those who attended that day numbered more than 100 persons. I just would like to take this opportunity to say thanks for their volunteer time dedicated to the election of oneself to this Chamber. I am truly grateful.

As mentioned earlier, I represent very diverse issues in the constituency of Portage la Prairie. I want to first speak about the Aboriginal component of the constituency of Portage la Prairie. I represent four Aboriginal First Nations' bands, three officially recognized and one unofficially recognized: Long Plain First Nation, Dakota Tipi First Nation and Dakota Plains First Nation. As well, half of the former Waterhen First Nation now resides in Portage la Prairie after the very highly publicized breakup of that band in the constituency of Dauphin, that were relocated to Portage la Prairie after the confrontation that was so highly publicized.

* (12:10)

Mr. Speaker, it is incumbent upon all members of this Chamber to look at the complexity in the demographics of our constituency and to bring forward issues that are important to the constituents. I say at this time that Long Plain First Nation is attempting at this juncture in time to initiate a protocol with the two respective municipalities in the constituency of Portage la Prairie, the City of Portage la Prairie specifically and the Rural Municipality of Portage la Prairie, who have most recently come together to form a planning district.

On Monday next, December 1, 2003, the Long Plain First Nation chief and council will be meeting with the Rural Municipality of Portage la Prairie council and the City of Portage la Prairie council to discuss the protocol, which

they are wanting to see put in place, so that an effort can be made to work co-operatively in the best interests of everyone in planning for the future, not only for those of us who are alive today, but for the lives of future generations as well.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to commend all current council members, the mayor, the reeve and chief for showing the vision and understanding of the importance of coming together in a show of co-operation and teamwork. I wish them the very best in their deliberations in establishing a protocol, which will serve all members of the constituency of Portage la Prairie, regardless of rural, urban or residing on the reserve.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to take this opportunity to say what it means to me to be a member of an elected body such as the Chamber of which I am standing at the present time. Recently, yesterday specifically, I spoke of a gentleman who had my utmost respect, that being Rev. Sidney Walmsley. Reverend Walmsley touched all of us in Portage la Prairie. I will say the most moving moment, which I reflect upon, is that upon his presentation to the unity task force sponsored by the federal government that came to Portage la Prairie a number of years ago examining the issue of what it means to be Canadian.

Reverend Walmsley made a presentation to that renowned task force that brought tears to everyone in that room. Mr. Walmsley spoke of what it meant to be Canadian and of his service as a Canadian to the greater community. He mentioned his participation as a commando in the British army and how after the war he returned to Canada and dedicated his life to the service of others. He took it upon himself, through his studies, to receive ordination into the United Church of Canada and served as a chaplain for the Manitoba Developmental Centre as well as the chaplain for the reserve units of Virden and Portage la Prairie.

I will say what we need to do is not only recognize what these outstanding individuals contribute to our community, but we must represent those individuals because sometimes, as outgoing and competent and effective as they may be, they do need help. I would like to ex-

press to all of my colleagues the dilemma that faced Mr. Walmsley in his waning years. Reverend Walmsley, as I mentioned, served in the British military because his family prior to the war went to Europe and the U.K. Because he served in the British military as a Canadian, he was ineligible for any benefits from the British government because he was Canadian. They did not recognize him as a veteran because he was Canadian, even though he served, and served with distinction, as a commando in the British army.

He returned to Canada and served Canada in the capacities which I have mentioned and being recognized by the Canadian military. However, because he was a Canadian serving in a foreign military, he was never, ever, able to be recognized as a veteran here in Canada. As one can appreciate, a person of the cloth lives a very modest lifestyle. Reverend Walmsley looked to elected representatives, such as myself, to try and represent him and put forward the case that he, as he had served, should be recognized as a veteran.

I will say that the member of Parliament from Portage la Prairie-Lisgar, Mr. Pallister, as well as myself made an effort to convince the federal government, the Minister of Veteran Affairs, to take it upon himself to correct this wrong. I am afraid to say, at the passing of Reverend Walmsley, the distinction of being recognized as a veteran of the Second World War and of service in the military was never granted to Major the Rev. Sidney Arthur Walmsley, C.D. I regret not being successful in that endeavour, and I will continue to pursue that because that is something I believe very strongly must be righted.

Mr. Speaker, I listened to other presentations within the Legislature on the Throne Speech. I get dismayed at some of the context of the addresses in this Chamber. Members opposite bring up time and time again the sale of the Crown corporation known as MTS by the Progressive Conservatives when in power. I would like to say that I was not part of the government at the time of the sale of MTS. However, I support that position of the government, because if one was to fully examine the

rationale behind the sale of MTS one would support it. I believe the members opposite have not sat down as I did and fully examined the pros and cons of the decision to sell Manitoba Telephone System.

Mr. Speaker, the sale of MTS generated over \$400 million for Manitobans. That \$400 million was in the reserve fund, more commonly known as the rainy day fund—

An Honourable Member: For all Manitobans.

Mr. Faurschou: —for all Manitobans' use in the time of crisis, one-time expenditures, not an ongoing fund to make up the difference which otherwise would have been considered deficit financing.

Mr. Speaker, \$400 million was there. Yes, the previous Progressive Conservative government did sell MTS, but the current Government of the New Democratic Party spent the proceeds. So who really did sell MTS?

I will say that not any mention has been made of the Progressive Conservatives' purchase of Centra Gas. If one was to look at the ledger: number of Crown corporations before Tory rule and after Tory rule, the number is the same. No mention has been made of an acquisition and another Crown corporation created, be it a subsidiary of Manitoba Hydro, but Centra Gas was added to the Crown corporations list.

I want to say there should be fairness in debate in this House. One should do the research before one takes opportunity to speak. I also feel that the members opposite are being a little bit hypocritical in so far as the sale of MTS, being that it was made to the public. Manitobans were given preferential treatment when it came to the sale of MTS shares. All Manitobans were given that opportunity. I would like to ask the question of each and every member of the governing side of this Chamber. How many shares of MTS did they purchase?

* (12:20)

Some Honourable Members: Zero.

Mr. Faurschou: Why did they not purchase MTS?

They stand in this House day after day after day expelling, verbalizing the need to own MTS by Manitobans. Why would they ask government to do something that they are not willing to do themselves? It makes no sense, and the word "hypocritical" comes to mind.

Why would you not buy MTS as an individual, when, sitting in the Chamber, you would say that you would buy it? No way. No way will I ever agree with individuals that say one thing as an elected representative that they would not do personally. It just goes against my grain, and against the honourable title that we all bear as members of this Chamber. We must be willing to do as individuals what we say we are prepared to do as elected representatives.

Just to finish off on the point of MTS, the last speaker in this Chamber made the point that rates have risen and that those that are challenged with income to pay the bills and that MTS rates as a publicly traded company have risen. Yes, they have risen by slightly more than 50 percent since the actual sale of the company. On the other side of the ledger, here in Manitoba long distance rates have decreased. Overall, it is a saving to Manitoba users of Manitoba Telecom System services.

Mr. Speaker, many members on the opposite side of this Chamber look to Saskatchewan as the guiding light. Let me turn that attention to SaskTel, the only Crown corporation in the telecommunications business in all of Canada. What has happened to their rates in the last four years?

I do not see any of the members offering up an answer to that question. I will enlighten the individuals as to what has taken place in Saskatchewan with SaskTel rates. Mr. Speaker, they have risen in excess of 70 percent, a greater increase than Manitoba Telecom System here in Manitoba. The members opposite should be standing and thanking the Progressive Conservative Party every opportunity they have on behalf of Manitobans, because we now have a more cost-effective telecommunications service

in this province than the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, one of the members opposite has asked about Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation. Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, I will say, is a well-run organization and a credit to all those involved. At the outset, though, we cannot forget that by an act of this Chamber more than 2000 Manitobans lost their livelihood with no compensation. We cannot forget the impact that had on the families here, in the province of Manitoba, that in many cases moved elsewhere to ply their trade within the insurance business that was no longer available to them here in Manitoba.

But time does heal. Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, as I mentioned, is doing a good job, but there is room for improvement. As the MPIC critic, one of the proposals that I made to this Chamber, which I am very happy to see the Government taking action on in this year's Budget, and that is for an office for an advocate to represent those appearing before the Automobile Injury Compensation Appeal Commission.

Mr. Speaker, there is always the other side of the ledger. I always try to bring balance to this Chamber. In that budgetary document within Estimates we had the opportunity to examine the

establishment of that advocate's office. That advocate's office is going to cost Manitoba taxpayers \$480,000, almost half a million dollars for set up, \$190,000 alone for the office of that advocate in its establishment. I do not know how I can spend \$190,000 setting up an office.

We are allowed, as members of this Chamber, \$10,000 to establish our constituency office. I wonder why the Government believes each sitting member of this Chamber can do for \$10,000 what they are saying \$190,000 is needed to do. I leave that question with the members of the Government to ponder because I wonder at times how you could even spend \$190,000 in the confines of an office.

Mr. Speaker, in closing my remarks I just want to say, on behalf of the constituents of Portage la Prairie and, I believe, on behalf of most members of the Chamber that had the opportunity to serve in the time of Mr. Ed Connery, that Mr. Connery and his lovely wife, Bev, celebrated their 50th anniversary.

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

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, November 28, 2003

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