

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

*Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable George Hickes  
Speaker*

**Vol. LVI No. 2 - 1:30 p.m., Tuesday, November 23, 2004**

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Eighth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
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.
CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
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.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
MURRAY, Stuart	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	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.
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 23, 2004

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

### PRAYERS

### MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon to ask for your indulgence to deal with the matter of privilege that was raised, in my view inappropriately, in yesterday's Throne Speech. I think members in this House, along with myself, felt somewhat uncomfortable in the presence of many of our invited guests on the floor of the Legislature to be debating a matter which I think has significance and is significantly serious in this Chamber, to be dealing with that kind of a matter just immediately after the Throne Speech.

Mr. Speaker, I think if that, in fact, is a rule of our Legislature, then we have an obligation to look at how we deal with matters of this kind in the House. I would recommend that a matter of this nature should be referred to the Rules Committee for review. In fact, I think that today, being the first day of debate on the Throne Speech, we should also consider sort of the first day of official business where matters of privilege then could be raised without being dismissed because of the earliest convenience in terms of a time factor.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that because I was not able to put my comments on the record yesterday with regard to the content of the matter of privilege and whether, in fact, a prima facie case has been established, that I would be allowed to do so today given that we tried to ensure that there was some order and some decorum in the House yesterday.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the honourable member for his comments. Normally when a matter is taken under advisement, that usually ends it. I was listening very, very carefully to the honourable Official Opposition House Leader's comments. I will allow the honourable member, and I will give you the reason why. It is because, when we make rulings on matters that I take under advisement, I want to make sure that we have all the available information that is out there and that the members who wish to make a contribution have had their chance to have their say

because at times we need that information to assist us in determining if there is a prima facie case or not.

When I do take a point of order or a matter of privilege, I have tended to hear all members that wish to speak to it. If the member feels that he did not have the opportunity yesterday because of his interpretation of what yesterday's event was, I accept his interpretation. I cannot say whether I agree with it or not, but I accept his interpretation of it.

I will hear the honourable member to make his contribution, but I would kindly ask at this time the honourable member to allow me to make a couple of introductions because we have a couple of new members. I would like to welcome them first, if you do not mind, and then I will revert back to the honourable official opposition.

### Introduction of New Members

**Mr. Speaker:** We have two new members that I am sure we are all anxiously awaiting to welcome. If you will just allow me that, and then we will revert back. Okay?

First of all, I am pleased to inform the Assembly that the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a letter indicating the election of Andrew Swan as member for the constituency of Minto, and I hereby table the notice of the member elected.

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to you Mr. Andrew Swan, member for the constituency of Minto, who has taken the oath of office, signed the roll and now claims the right to take his seat.

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

\* (13:35)

I am also pleased to inform the Assembly that the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a letter indicating

the election of Cliff Cullen as member for the constituency of Turtle Mountain. I hereby table the notice of the member elected.

**Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to you Cliff Cullen, the member for the constituency of Turtle Mountain, who has taken the oath, signed the roll and now claims the right to take his seat.

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

\* \* \*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I would like to draw the attention of the House to the Clerk's table where we have visiting with us Ms. Tonia Grannum, who is a committee clerk with the Ontario Legislative Assembly and who will be serving with the Manitoba Legislative Assembly on attachment until December 10.

On behalf of all honourable members, I would like to welcome you and hope that you enjoy your time with the Manitoba Legislative Assembly.

#### MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE

(Continued)

\* (13:40)

**Mr. Speaker:** As we previously agreed to, I will now hear the honourable Official Opposition House Leader on the privilege that was brought yesterday, but I want to make sure that we all understand that, in the future, we will not be doing this on a regular basis. I want to get the information so that the information you give me might assist me in coming back with a ruling.

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. May I begin by, first of all, thanking you as the presiding officer in this House for allowing us to break from, if you like, tradition or protocol to allow this matter to be dealt with today rather than having to deal with it yesterday in the midst of invited guests.

Mr. Speaker, the matter raised by the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Gerrard) is a serious matter.

Despite the fact that it was raised to the floor yesterday, in my view today would have been more appropriate. The issue is one that warrants consideration. I know that any matter of privilege has to meet the test of two conditions. One is that it is raised at the earliest time, and the other is that the member who is raising this can prove that there is a prima facie case in this particular instant.

Mr. Speaker, in my view, if we look at the comments that have been made in this Chamber by the minister responsible for this area, this indeed does meet the test that is put before us as legislators.

Mr. Speaker, I do believe that it is important for members of this Chamber to be able to give advice on this matter regardless of what side of the House they sit on, because I am sure that in making a ruling you want to take into account the advice that is given to you from all sides of the House. So I would hope that in your discussion you would allow for members on both sides of the House to stand today and to give you advice on this matter of privilege.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate why I feel that this matter does deserve some consideration. Our side of the House has called for a public inquiry on the issue of Hydra House. This is the right thing to do because of the comments that have been made in this Chamber by the minister who was then responsible for Hydra House and because it appears to the public and to all Manitobans and the members in this House that there seems to be a cover-up or there seems to be a fairly scandalous situation as it relates to Hydra House.

Mr. Speaker, I want to relate to the comments that were made by the then-Minister responsible for Hydra House who is now responsible for Health. In my view, the minister misled Manitobans and he also misled this House. That is a very serious situation because when we stand in our places, whether we are ministers or whether we are MLAs, there is a requirement of us to tell the truth, to make sure we do not mislead Manitobans and to make sure that we do not mislead each other in this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, as the matter relates to Hydra House, Minister Sale, pardon me, the Minister responsible for Hydra House at the time, on July 31, 2004, stated several things, but I think of most importance is the fact that he said, and I quote: "We are satisfied that the quality of service from Hydra

House and financial accountability that we receive is adequate. We have made all of the normal and some quite extraordinary checks into this issue. We are satisfied that what we are seeing is quality service, adequate accountability and a dispute between a former employee and the boss." He goes on to say, and I quote: "When we did our investigation, we met with the company's auditor. We received adequate explanations from the allegations that Mr. Small had made. I would suggest that many of the allegations, really, are matters for Revenue Canada, and if Revenue Canada of course chooses to audit this company they have every right to do so and to insist on answers to any questions they might have about whether or not there has been an appropriate income tax accounting for the issues of funds in the company. That of course is a federal matter."

\* (13:45)

Mr. Speaker, our own provincial auditor went in because he was suspicious that there were inappropriate accounting issues as they relate to the department, to the government and to Hydra House. He produced a very scathing report that we have been trying to deal with.

Despite the ahs on the other side of the House, Mr. Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Doer) has to take some accountability for this because he is the First Minister responsible. This side of the House has been calling for the Public Accounts Committee to meet and to bring forward witnesses who can testify as to what really went on. It is the Premier of this province who has an obligation to ensure that, on behalf of taxpayers of this province, those funds were expended appropriately, regardless of whether it is one of his ministers who is at fault or whether it is in fact an agency that is associated with the government that is at fault. That is what an appropriate action should be by the Premier of this province.

So, Mr. Speaker, now we have the opposition parties who have come to the point of frustration where we cannot get answers in the Public Accounts Committee because the government will not allow for other witnesses except chosen ministers to come forward. Yes, there has been an agreement by the government to have the minister who is now responsible for Health to come forward, provided that a former minister comes forward who is no longer in government, and we have no objection to that.

Mr. Speaker, we have no objection to that. We have stated that on the record. The member who was responsible in those years has said she has nothing to hide. She is prepared to come forward, but she has also called to the Premier (Mr. Doer). She has called on the Premier to ask for a full public inquiry where people can come before a public inquiry, put their hand on a bible, swear the truth and give the truth before an inquiry. That is what is required.

So, Mr. Speaker, the member, the Leader of the Liberal Party, who is a member of the Public Accounts Committee, had every right to rise on a matter of privilege, be it yesterday or today. Today is more appropriate, but, nevertheless, he has an issue, and this issue needs to have some serious consideration.

My advice to you, Mr. Speaker, is that this is a very serious matter. It does require a public inquiry into the allegations that have come forward from a very senior member of this Province and that is the provincial auditor. Any recommendations that the provincial auditor makes are not made lightly. He is accountable to the Legislature. He is accountable to the people of Manitoba, so any recommendations he makes are very serious and I would expect that the First Minister of our province would really pay attention to what the provincial auditor is recommending.

We have tried to follow the recommendations of the provincial auditor, and we have said bring forward witnesses, let us change the rules, bring forward witnesses to ensure that we get to the truth as it relates to Hydra House. As a matter of fact, we are understanding that funding is still flowing to Hydra House with no curtailment of funding, with no management plan put in place that has been disclosed to the public. Now, how is the public supposed to have any faith in what is happening at Hydra House when there has been no plan put forward, no plan communicated to the public through the media or through any other means by this government as to what they are doing with regard to bringing the accountability of the Hydra House issue into control?

\* (13:50)

Mr. Speaker, I say to you, and if there is any advice you can take from me as the Opposition House Leader, I only say that this a very serious

matter, that I agree with the member from River Heights who has brought this matter forward and that indeed we should proceed in this fashion. But, at the same time, I would welcome the opportunity to listen to the advice that perhaps can come from the government on this matter and other members of this Chamber.

**Mr. Speaker:** I would thank the honourable member for his contribution, and as I previously—

On the same matter of privilege?

I will hear the Member for Inkster first, and then I will hear the honourable Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson).

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a very serious issue that the government does have to come to grips with. Yesterday the Leader of the Liberal Party afforded the minister the opportunity to stand up and apologize. The Minister of Health (Mr. Sale) does need to apologize to this Chamber, first and foremost. Second, as has been pointed out from the Government House Leader and from both opposition parties, there is indeed a need for public inquiry.

I think that if we review what has taken place, you, too, would likely see the benefits of the need for a public inquiry, but I want to address the matter of privilege. *Beauchesne's* is very clear in Citation 115 which states a question of privilege must be brought to the attention of the House at the first possible opportunity. Even a gap of a few days may invalidate the claim for precedents inside the House.

We can go back to April 1999 when then-Premier Gary Filmon, right after a Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, stood in the House, and I quote: "I rise on a matter of privilege. One of the fundamental pillars of our democratic institution is that members come to this House with accurate and factual information." It goes on: "The current Premier, then-Opposition Leader, acknowledged, on the same point of order we had raised a number of questions in the last week of June of this Legislature sitting." Both the Premier back then and the Leader of the Opposition back then recognized the importance of providing factual information to this House. The timing of the matter of privilege that the Leader of the Liberal Party brought forward yesterday, I would argue, Mr. Speaker, was in fact the most appropriate time to raise the issue.

It is serious, Mr. Speaker, because what we saw was public monies that were supposed to go towards Manitoba's most needy, the disabled. We saw trips to Florida, Cadillacs, meals, furniture, questionable salaries being paid, questionable renovations, expenditures that appear to be of a personal nature.

In 1999 the provincial auditor highlighted and expressed concerns within that department that there is a need for external agency-signed agreements. Allegations surfaced back in 2000. The internal review within that department was done in 2000, Mr. Speaker. This minister has not shared the financial component to that internal review.

In the House on July 31, and this is what it all boils down to, the minister, the-then minister indicated that we are satisfied that the quality of service from Hydra House and the financial accountability that we receive is adequate. Adequate, Mr. Speaker? By whose standards?

Mr. Speaker, the minister intentionally misled this House. He had the choice yesterday, when the Leader of the Liberal Party raised the issue, to do the honourable thing, what Gary Filmon did back in April of '99, and apologize for the severity of misleading the Chamber. We still challenge, we still ask for the Minister of Health (Mr. Sale) today to acknowledge and give credibility to this Chamber and say that, yes, he did mislead and he is sorry for misleading this House, and be more forthright with the information. There is a need for that public inquiry. We reiterate the importance of that need because this minister is still sitting on vital information that we know he has, but he is choosing to sit on that information, and that is just not fair. It is not just, and we are asking this government to do what is right for Manitobans. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Before I recognize the honourable Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson), I would just like to caution all members that when dealing with a point of order or a matter of privilege to choose your words carefully. There are unparliamentary words and "intentionally" is very, very close to "deliberately." So, I would just caution members to pick and choose your words very carefully.

\* (13:55)

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East):** Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to add a few comments to

the matter of privilege, a very serious matter that was raised yesterday by the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard). I want to indicate that there are more questions than answers today, four years after the present government was informed, and allegations were made around inappropriate expenditures at Hydra House.

Mr. Speaker, this government has had four years to fix the solution. Yet we have seen very little action on their part, and it begs the question what are they trying to cover up. What are they hiding? We do know that within government documents, there is a financial investigation that was done which they are not prepared to share with Manitoba taxpayers who footed the bill. I find it unconscionable that that information has not been provided.

Mr. Speaker, we know that financial information was available when the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) approved deficit funding to Hydra House. We do know that financial document was available when they increased funding to Hydra House by \$2 million, and they are not prepared to share that financial analysis with Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, we need to ask and have questions answered. Did the Treasury Board analysts within the government of the day, when deficit financing was approved, recommend that that funding flow? Did the Treasury Board analysts who do the due diligence on the \$2 million of increased funding to Hydra House, did they recommend approval of that, or was there some interference or some other direction at the political level in order for that to take place?

Mr. Speaker, there are many, many unanswered questions. The Premier (Mr. Doer) has indicated that the buck stops with the minister. Well, I would beg to differ. I think the buck stops with the Premier. The Premier has said the truth shall set us free. All Manitobans want is the truth, and it is important and incumbent that this Premier and this government call a public inquiry to get to the bottom of it so that former ministers of Family Services, so that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) and the Premier can appear under sworn oath to indicate what their role was in the mismanagement of Hydra House.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Government House Leader with new information. We are dealing with a

prima facie case, whether it is. I will recognize the honourable Government House Leader.

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** I hesitate to rise because I did put remarks on the record yesterday, but there were some new allegations raised this afternoon that I think must be responded to. First of all, the matter raised yesterday, in our view, Mr. Speaker, clearly does not come anywhere near a matter of privilege. Allegations as were levelled yesterday in no way would comprise a matter of privilege. The Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) rose today and then changed or reformatted, I understand, the complaint in terms of whether there was any deliberate misleading. I recall you earlier this year, I think it was in April or May, ruling on that matter and again there is no evidence, of course. This is a matter of public dispute and we know that members opposite will call for public inquiries. They do that every few weeks on various issues here and there, and of course they are getting up today and just doing their shtick.

Mr. Speaker, what we have—

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

\* (14:00)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I would like to remind the House that a matter of privilege is a very, very serious matter, and I need to be able to hear every word that is spoken. I ask the co-operation of all honourable members, please.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Derkach:** Mr. Speaker, just on a point of order of language. I am a little concerned that the Government House Leader would trivialize a matter of this seriousness by indicating that, well, members have to do their shtick. I ask him to choose his words a little more carefully in dealing with a serious matter as we are dealing with here this afternoon.

**Mr. Speaker:** I would like to remind all honourable members, if you are rising on a point of order, it is to point out to the Speaker a breach of a rule and not to use points of order as a means of debate.

The honourable member does not have a point of order.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Government House Leader, to continue.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Mr. Speaker, there was someone over here counting calls for public inquiries. I believe they had come up to the number eight by the opposition in the last little while on different issues.

Mr. Speaker, there were issues raised by the members opposite about the Public Accounts Committee. I want to make this clear for the record that we are certainly willing and able to have a Public Accounts Committee meet to deal with the questions and answers of two former ministers, and I think—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The Government House Leader has the floor.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Mr. Speaker, what we thought was important is that the minister who was in office at the time of the issues in question, the questionable expenditures, and the person who was in office at the time that we understand the internal audit functions were diluted be available to answer questions to Manitobans, as well as the former minister that the opposition is speaking of today.

Mr. Speaker, the opposition has said, "Oh, no, let's have a whole bunch of civil servants, and we need some others, with the notable exception, I might add, of the former responsible ADM and now the Opposition Leader's chief of staff."

At the same time we are prepared—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Mr. Speaker, the issue of how Public Accounts Committee is to work is a serious one. It is one that just two years ago was the subject of debate in this House. The parties unanimously agreed at that time to the rules as currently written. There now are some voices that we should change that practice. It is our view that if there is to be change it be done in a studied way, and we are prepared to have the Rules Committee meet next week, and in fact it is meeting next week to discuss that, among other things, where there are calls for change.

We will say this: If the opposition is prepared to meet to have questions and answers of the two former ministers, we are prepared to do so. We are

prepared to do so tonight, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps they will join us.

**Mr. Speaker:** I will remind all honourable members that I have taken this matter of privilege under advisement, and I will consider all the information that is brought forward. We will come back with a ruling.

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**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege, and this is not the one we have been dealing with. It is a separate one, and I would indicate, when we are dealing with a question of privilege, that this deals with the House collectively and the dignity and respect of the members of the Legislative Assembly.

I want to remind you, Mr. Speaker, that "privilege is the sum of the peculiar rights enjoyed by each House collectively . . . and by Members of each House individually." That is from *Beauchesne's*, the 6th Edition, Citation 24.

I believe that it is important to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that, as Speaker, you and your predecessors have continued to remind all members in this place they are honourable members, and they should show respect for one another.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is here I bring forward the concern and that is the subject of this particular matter of privilege. This deals with remarks by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) on November 9, 2004, said before a public meeting on the Governance Reform in Canada Conference. The Minister of Justice said, and I quote, "After speaking before the Legislature, it is nice to have a live audience." Clearly the implication of the Minister of Justice is that when he gets up in the Legislature—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. May I remind all honourable members once again that a matter of privilege is a very serious matter, and members rise on a matter of privilege when they deem their rights are being violated. I ask all honourable members for their patience and to hear the honourable member's right to raise a matter of privilege.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to point out the members of the Liberal caucus are

certainly alive and alert and listening. I am not sure which members he was referring to who are dead and asleep and not listening, whether it was those in the Conservative caucus or those in his own caucus, but what is clear is the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh), who should be at the very centre of improving the dignity of this Chamber, should not be conveying this kind of message.

Now it was not just any occasion. I think it is very important, Mr. Speaker, that you and other members of this Chamber are aware this was televised on the parliamentary channel and either has appeared or will be appearing before a national audience, the Minister of Justice on the parliamentary channel, the very channel that is supposed to represent the dignity of the collective houses of commons and legislatures in this country. More than that, this was a nationally televised conference and the conference as its title, the Governance Reform in Canada Conference, suggests this was about parliamentary reform. Surely, at the very forefront of parliamentary reform, there should be dignified and appropriate comments by the Minister of Justice of this Legislature when he stands before a national audience and represents all of us collectively in talking about the quality of the debate and the character of the people in this Legislature.

I think, Mr. Speaker, what I would add is, if this were an isolated slur on the dignity of this Legislature, then it might not be quite so worrisome, but one day when the Premier (Mr. Doer) himself was appearing on the town hall on CJOB, the Premier said—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

\* (14:10)

**Mr. Gerrard:** The Premier said on CJOB, that this was the real Question Period. Now, certainly, that is a slur on the dignity of the House if there ever was one, to suggest that the real Question Period is anywhere but in this Chamber. Certainly, the member from Carman, who was a Speaker for many years, will be one of the first to stand up and support the dignity of this Chamber and to make sure that—

**An Honourable Member:** You have to sit down first.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I will give you a chance.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, it is these sorts of attitudes which lead to ongoing discrediting of our institutions and the respect and understanding of our citizens for our institutions. When the First Minister of Manitoba and the House Leader (Mr. Mackintosh) play down the role of members of this place, it is not just the opposition, but it is all of us collectively: government ministers, backbenchers and opposition ministers. One would have to include, indeed, the Speaker in that as well, in the cavalier nature of these remarks. I would move that this House finds the statements of the Premier and Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) to be contemptuous and ones which go against the dignity of the House.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I hate to interrupt the honourable member, but when a member is moving a motion, they also need a seconder. So I would like the motion, "I move, seconded by" and then the motion. That way it is clear on the record.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I move, seconded by the MLA for Inkster,

THAT this House finds the statements of the Premier and the Minister of Justice to be contemptuous and ones which go against the dignity of the House and thereby direct the Premier and Minister of Justice to apologize to the House and all Manitobans for these cavalier statements against members of the Legislative Assembly and the people of Manitoba for whom they serve.

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, in terms of the matter of privilege, it is a very serious matter, and the member who speaks almost makes my point, when here it is, almost 45 minutes after the period that would normally be Question Period, is, in my view, respectfully, abused with the matter of privilege that pre-empts the Question Period. I think, when we had the BSE crisis here some 18 months ago and the Liberal Party of Manitoba rose on a matter of privilege on where they were going to sit instead of worrying about the plight of BSE farmers, it is time the members took stock of the respect of the people of Manitoba and what are the priorities.

It is not impossible to have a sense of humour, as the Minister of Justice attempted to do with his presentation that may have damned all of us in terms of his comments, and it is also not impossible to pay

respect to the public of Manitoba in terms of the real questions they asked about their real lives and still have respect for this institution.

It is a frivolous waste of our time with this point of privilege. Let us get on with Question Period.

**Mr. Derkach:** Mr. Speaker, not to take up the valuable time of this Chamber, but any time a matter of privilege is raised, I think it requires a response that is carefully thought through, and I do not think that any of us in this Chamber should be lecturing each other or you, or indeed, the member who rose on a matter of privilege, as to how inappropriate or appropriate it may be.

I find this matter of privilege a little humorous because it does raise an issue, but it simply raises the issue of how disrespectful members of the government have been with regard to the parliamentary process in this Chamber and in this province.

I further reflect on comments made by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) in the magazine I think all of us receive called *The Canadian Parliamentarian* where he has put a very partisan spin as a Minister of Justice of this province to comments he has put in print into that magazine, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Health (Mr. Sale) now is waving his hands as this is trivial. We know the character of him with regard to the truthful statements made in this House. We do not have to reflect on those at this moment.

Let me say to the Minister of Justice, with regard to the comments made to the Leader of the Liberal Party, that I was offended by the comments made by him in the *Parliamentarian*, because there is no room in that magazine for partisanship, Mr. Speaker.

This minister indicated that he made all these changes to the rules in this House, taking all of the credit for all the changes made to the parliamentary process here in this Chamber, without once indicating that it is a collective will of all members of this Chamber when we make changes to the rules and the processes in this Chamber. In that regard, I would have to agree with the member from River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) in terms of this issue.

Let us be honest. In the overall scheme of the seriousness of the matters we have before us, this is not indeed the most serious, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** I think I have probably heard sufficient argument. If the honourable member is rising because he feels there is some point that has not been touched upon, I will hear the honourable Member for Steinbach very briefly.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** I do rise because I had the opportunity to attend the conference where the offending comments were made, and I do say the conference was very worthwhile and was well done by the Faculty of Law. I think that the minister, who was the first to speak at the conference, did do a disservice in terms of some of the comments he made that were very partisan in terms of the decorum in this House and certainly echoed many of the comments that were raised by our House Leader that appeared in the *Parliamentarian* magazine.

I thought the Leader of the Liberal Party would be rising because, interestingly enough, at the conference every speaker who talked on reform of democracy in Canada and in Manitoba took questions except for one. There was one speaker who refused to take questions, and that was the Minister of Justice.

I wonder why he did not want to speak on reforming the number of days that the House sits on talking about accountability in the Legislature. He did not take questions. I think that could have been the matter the Liberal Leader raised. I certainly would echo the comments of the House Leader that the Minister of Justice needs to pick his words more carefully when he is in that type of a forum, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Member for Inkster, you have additional information that has not been heard?

**Mr. Lamoureux:** I think that if we sense in terms of in 2003 this House sat for 37 days, so, since the last provincial election, some 530 days, we sat 75 days, there has been a consistent concern from the Liberal Party as to the lack of respect for this Legislature from this government.

As opposed to pointing out the individual as the Minister of Justice, Mr. Speaker, it should be pointed

out that he is the Government House Leader. There is a big difference between the two, because ultimately he is the one that does the negotiations with opposition parties and myself in regard to the House proceedings and so forth. So there is a little bit more of a responsibility in terms of trying to portray this Chamber in a more positive light.

**Mr. Speaker:** A matter of privilege is a serious concern so I am going to take this matter under advisement to consult the authorities and I will return to the House with a ruling.

\* (14:20)

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### PETITIONS

#### Highway 200

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Highway 200 is paved from Winnipeg to the Canada-U. S. border except for approximately a 10-kilometre section between highways 205 and 305 which remain unpaved. School buses, farm equipment, emergency vehicles and local traffic must travel on Highway 200 which is dangerous, if not completely impassable, during wet spring weather and other times of heavy rainfall.

Due to unsafe conditions, many drivers look to alternate routes around this section when possible and time permits. The condition of the gravel road can cause serious damage to all vehicles.

Insufficient traffic counts are not truly reflective of the traffic volumes because users tend to find another route to avoid this section. Traffic counts done after spring seeding, during wet weather or during school recess are not indicative of traffic flows.

Maintenance costs for unpaved highways are high and ongoing. It would be cost effective to pave this section.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Transportation and Government Services (Mr. Lemieux) consider paving Highway 200 between highways 205 and 305 to ensure a smooth, safe and uninterrupted use of Highway 200.

Signed by Michel Alarie, Giselle Alarie and Henri Courcelles and others.

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

### Pension Benefits

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Pension benefits for thousands of Manitoba health care workers are being cut because the government has refused to support the front line health care workers in their desire to maintain their existing Health Care Employees' Pension Plan.

The government is doubling the early retirement penalty to 6 percent a year from 3 percent.

There will be no cost of living benefits for retirees in the foreseeable future, which means that inflation will erode retirees' pension cheques over time.

The government's refusal to support the existing pension plan will have a negative impact on hundreds of front line health care workers.

The government is demonstrating a lack of respect for front line health care workers by its decision to allow administrative costs in the regional health authorities to skyrocket by millions of dollars.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the provincial government to consider redirecting administrative cost savings to front line health care workers.

To request the provincial government to treat front line health care workers with the respect they deserve, and to consider supporting the health care

employees' pension plan by not cutting pension benefits.

Signed by Linda Bennet, Anita Best, Monique Loewen and others.

### **Minimum Sitting Days for Legislative Assembly**

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

The Manitoba Legislature sat for only 37 days in 2003.

Manitobans expect their government to be accountable, and the number of sitting days has a direct impact on the issue of public accountability.

Manitobans expect *[interjection]*—agree to 80 days, and we will change it. Manitobans expect their elected officials to be provided the opportunity to be able to hold the government accountable.

The Legislative Assembly provides the best forum for all MLAs to debate and ask questions of the government, and it is critical that all MLAs be provided the time needed in order for them to cover constituent and party duties.

Establishing a minimum number of sitting days could prevent the government of the day from limiting the rights of opposition members from being able to ask questions.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba to consider recognizing the need to sit for a minimum of 80 days in any given calendar year.

Signed by Alda Ruiz, C. Pagaduan and Laura Caraney.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Standing Committee on Crown Corporations Third Report**

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Chairperson):** Mr. Speaker, I present the Third Report of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**Mr. Speaker:** Dispense.

*Your Standing Committee on Crown Corporations presents the following as its Third Report.*

#### **Meetings:**

*Your committee met on Thursday, September 9, 2004, at 9:30 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.*

#### **Matters under Consideration:**

*Annual Report of the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission for the year ended March 31, 2001*  
*Annual Report of the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission for the year ended March 31, 2002*  
*Annual Report of the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission for the year ended March 31, 2003*

#### **Committee Membership:**

*Substitutions made prior to the September 9, 2004, meeting:*

*Mr. Faurichou for Mr. Eichler*  
*Mr. Cummings for Mr. Maguire*  
*Mr. Cullen for Mr. Tweed*  
*Ms. Korzeniowski for Ms. Irvin-Ross*  
*Mr. Dewar for Mr. Jha*  
*Hon. Mr. Smith for Hon. Mr. Mackintosh*  
*Mr. Reid for Mr. Maloway*

#### **Officials from the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission Speaking on Record:**

*Carmen Neufeld, Chair*  
*Don Lussier, President & CEO*

#### **Reports Considered and Adopted:**

*Your committee considered and adopted the following reports as presented:*

*Annual Report of the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission for the year ended March 31, 2001*  
*Annual Report of the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission for the year ended March 31, 2002*

#### **Reports Considered but not Adopted:**

*Your committee considered the following reports but did not adopt them:*

*Annual Report of the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission for the year ended March 31, 2003*

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Standing Committee on Justice  
Second Report**

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Chairperson):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the Second Report of the Standing Committee on Justice.

**Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk):** The Standing Committee on Justice presents the following—

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**Mr. Speaker:** Dispense.

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

**Meetings:**

*Your committee met on Thursday, November 18, 2004, at 6:30 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.*

**Matters Under Consideration:**

*Bill. 47 - The Legal Aid Services Society of Manitoba Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société d'aide juridique du Manitoba*

**Membership Resignations / Elections:**

*Substitutions received prior to commencement of meeting:*

*Mr. Swan for Hon. Ms. Oswald*

*Mr. Dewar for Mr. Santos*

*Mr. Goertzen for Mr. Cummings*

*Mr. Eichler for Mr. Faurschou*

**Public Presentations:**

*Your committee heard 10 presentations on Bill 47 – The Legal Aid Services Society of Manitoba Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société d'aide juridique du Manitoba from the following individuals and / or organizations:*

*Ken Mandziuk, Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties*

*Byron Williams, Public Interest Law Centre*

*Veronica Jackson, Manitoba Bar Association*

*David Joyce, Legal Aid Lawyers Association*

*Allan Fineblit, Law Society of Manitoba*

*Sheldon Pinx and Saul Simmonds, Manitoba*

*Criminal Defense Lawyers Association*

*Michael Williams, Private Citizen*

*Sarah Inness, Private Citizen*

*Laura Friend, Private Citizen*

*Val McCaffrey, Private Citizen*

**Bills Considered and Reported:**

*Bill 47 - The Legal Aid Services Society of Manitoba Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société d'aide juridique du Manitoba*

*Your committee agreed to report this bill with the following amendments:*

*THAT Clause 6 of the Bill be amended by adding the following after the proposed section 6:*

**Tariff review**

**6.1(1)** *At least once every two years, the council must review the tariff of fees paid to solicitors for providing legal aid.*

**Consultation with advisory committee**

**6.1(2)** *The council must consult with the advisory committee when conducting the review.*

**Report to minister**

**6.1(3)** *The council must provide the minister with a report on the findings of the review. The report must set out any recommended adjustments to the tariff of fees and provide an explanation for any recommendation.*

*THAT Clause 6 of the Bill be amended by adding the following after the proposed subsection 8(5):*

**Meetings**

**8(5.1)** *The committee must meet at least four times each year. One of the meetings must be a joint meeting with the council.*

**Executive director and chair to attend**

**8(5.2)** *The executive director and the chair of the council must attend each meeting of the committee or send a delegate on his or her behalf.*

*THAT Clause 6 of the Bill be amended by adding the following after the proposed section 8.1:*

**Information to advisory committee**

**8.2** *The chair of the council must provide the advisory committee with the following information on an annual basis:*

- (a) the number of applications for legal aid;*
- (b) the number of applications approved;*
- (c) the number of eligible applicants who requested the appointment of a specific solicitor to provide legal aid;*
- (d) the number of eligible applicants who had legal aid provided by their requested solicitor.*

*THAT Clause 7 of the Bill be amended in the proposed subsection 11(2) by striking out "An applicant" and substituting "In order to determine whether an applicant is, or continues to be, eligible to receive legal aid, the applicant".*

*THAT Clause 9 of the Bill be replaced with the following:*

**9** *Section 14 is replaced with the following:*

**No right to choose lawyer**

**14(1)** The executive director or an area director must appoint a solicitor who is a registered member of the panel to provide legal aid to an eligible person or group.

**Consideration of request**

**14(2)** In making the appointment, the executive director or area director must consider any request by the person or group for the appointment of a specific solicitor.

*THAT Clause 10 of the Bill be replaced with the following:*

**10** *Subsection 15(1) is amended*

- (a) by striking out "selected by or appointed for an applicant" and substituting "appointed to provide legal aid"; and*
- (b) by striking out "for that applicant" in the English version.*

**Mr. Martindale:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Fort Garry (Ms. Irvin-Ross), that the report of the committee be received.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts  
Fourth Report**

**Mr. Jack Reimer (Chairperson):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**Mr. Speaker:** Dispense.

*Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts presents the following as its fourth report.*

**Meetings:**

*Your committee met on the following occasions:  
Tuesday, September 7, 2004, at 1:00 p.m.  
Wednesday, September 8, 2004, at 1:00 p.m.*

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

**Matters under Consideration:**

*Provincial Auditor's Report on Compliance and Special Audits for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2001*

*Public Accounts Volumes 1, 2 and 3 for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2002*

*Public Accounts Volumes 1, 2, 3 and 4 for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2003*

*Auditor General's Report – Value-for-Money Audit, Student Financial Assistance Program dated September 2002*

*Auditor General's Report – Audit of the Public Accounts for the year ending March 31, 2002*

*Auditor General's Report – An Examination of RHA Governance in Manitoba January 2003*

*Annual Report of the Operations of the Office of the Auditor General for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2003*

*Auditor General's Report – Follow-up on Previously Issued Recommendations on Business Planning and Performance Measurement Report dated December 2003*

*Auditor General's Report – Audit of the Public Accounts dated March 31, 2003*

*Auditor General's Report – Information Technology Report dated March 2004*

*Auditor General's Report – Investigation of Hydra House Ltd. And a Review of the Related Department of Family Services and Housing Financial Accountability Framework, considered at the September 8, 2004, meeting by unanimous consent of the Committee*

**Committee Membership:**

*Substitutions made prior to the September 7, 2004, meeting:*

*Ms. Irvin-Ross for Mr. Santos*

*Substitutions made by leave at the September 8, 2004, meeting:*

*Mrs. Rowat for Mrs. Mitchelson*

**Motions passed at the September 7, 2004, meeting:**

*Your committee agreed to the following motions:*

*THAT the committee consider reports as on the agenda until 3:30 p.m., and that at 3:30 p.m. the committee move to consider the questions submitted by the MLA for Fort Whyte.*

*THAT when matters under consideration for a particular Public Accounts Committee meeting have been determined, that the Chair shall notify by letter, the administrative heads of organizations whose mandate relates to the Auditor General reports under consideration, requesting them to attend the meeting with such other officials from their organizations as they deem necessary to respond to questions the committee may wish to ask them; and the above motion be referred to the House leaders and the House Rules Committee for consideration; and request the Rules Committee report back to this Committee by September 30, 2004.*

**Motions passed at the September 8, 2004, meeting:**

*Your committee agreed to the following motions:*

*THAT the Public Accounts Committee recommend to the House that PAC meet a minimum of 20 occasions each year and more often as required to clear up the backlog of reports before the Committee.*

*THAT the Public Accounts Committee recommend to the House that the committee's Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson be given responsibility for determining when meetings are convened, proposing meeting agendas, and determining who to call upon to attend the meetings in order to answer questions from the members.*

**Officials Speaking on Record:**

*Mr. Jon Singleton, Auditor General of Manitoba  
Ms. Bonnie Lysyk, Deputy Auditor General and Chief Operating Officer*

**Reports Considered and Adopted:**

*Your committee has considered and adopted the following reports as presented:*

*Public Accounts Volumes 1, 2 and 3 for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2002*

**Reports Considered but not Adopted:**

*Your committee has considered the following reports but did not adopt them:*

*Provincial Auditor's Report on Compliance and Special Audits for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2001*

*Public Accounts Volumes 1, 2, 3 and 4 for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2003*

*Auditor General's Report – Value-for-Money Audit, Student Financial Assistance Program dated September 2002*

*Auditor General's Report – Audit of the Public Accounts for the year ending March 31, 2002*

*Auditor General's Report – An Examination of RHA Governance in Manitoba January 2003*

*Annual Report of the Operations of the Office of the Auditor General for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2003*

*Auditor General's Report – Follow-up on Previously Issued Recommendations on Business Planning and Performance Measurement Report dated December 2003*

*Auditor General's Report – Audit of the Public Accounts dated March 31, 2003*

*Auditor General's Report – Information Technology Report dated March 2004*

*Auditor General's Report – Investigation of Hydra House Ltd. And a Review of the Related Department of Family Services and Housing Financial Accountability Framework, considered at the September 8, 2004, meeting by unanimous consent of the Committee*

**Mr. Reimer:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), that the report of the committee be received.

**Mr. Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Member for Southdale, seconded by the honourable

Member for Elmwood, that the report of the committee be received.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** No? Hold it. Point of clarification?

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, on a point of clarification, I note that in the report that has been tabled by the Chairperson of Public Accounts, there was an action that was asked for by the Public Accounts Committee and was passed unanimously at the Public Accounts Committee. It is my request, or I guess a clearing up of whether or not the motion that was passed at Public Accounts requesting a particular action, and this particular motion was unanimously passed, whether in fact the Legislative Chamber does now have an obligation to act on that particular motion that was unanimously passed.

**Mr. Speaker:** For clarification for the honourable member and to all honourable members, it is very inappropriate for me, as the Speaker, to be dealing with the committee work. What I deal with here in the House is with a motion brought forward by the Chair of the committee. That is all I can deal with. Any questions dealing with the committee should be addressed to the committee. I can only deal with the motion that is brought forward.

**Mr. Derkach:** I guess, Mr. Speaker, this is more of a question on process, because it is very rare that a motion is passed unanimously at a particular committee. This one is a fairly significant committee. It is the Public Accounts Committee, which is a committee dealing with the accountability of government.

In this particular case, a motion was unanimously passed asking for action to be taken on a particular issue. It is for that reason I am wondering whether, in fact, it is the Legislative Assembly, and whether it is the Minister of Justice or the House Leader, who is responsible to report an action that has been deemed necessary by a committee, and whether that should be referred to another committee. What, in fact, is the right procedure, Mr.

Speaker, when a motion like that is made? I do not know of any process that could follow up on an issue of that nature.

**Mr. Speaker:** Any questions pertaining to the committee are very inappropriate to address them to the Speaker. They should be addressed within committee or the House leaders should get together and discuss it together, but not to bring it to the Speaker for some form of clarification. It should be either dealt with in a committee or for future dealings with it discharged. The House leaders should deal with them because it is very inappropriate for the Speaker to tell the committee what they have to do and what they cannot do. The committee is the committee of the members of this House. I can only follow through with directions that are given to me from the committee.

I have to inform the member, regrettably, that it is very inappropriate for me to be trying to deal with this issue as the Speaker. What I deal with, I deal with a motion that is brought forward. I never had a chance to complete it, so I will complete it now.

\* (14:30)

It has been moved by the honourable Member for Southdale (Mr. Reimer), seconded by the honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), that the—[*interjection*] I am putting a vote forward.

I respectfully acknowledge the information you are sharing with me to all honourable members, but there is absolutely no way I can deal with the issue of a committee unless the committee gives me directions from the committee, and I share that further.

If there are concerns of the committee, you deal with that in your committee or, if there are concerns the two House leaders should get together and discuss that amongst the House leaders. That is what I would strongly, strongly recommend.

I will briefly hear the honourable Member for Fort Whyte. I have not completed putting the question. Normally, I would not entertain a question while I am putting the motion, but under the circumstances I will allow this.

**Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I will be brief. Under the rules of

operation for Public Accounts, which were mentioned by the Government House Leader (Mr. Mackintosh) just recently, one of those rules stipulates that the Public Accounts Committee can pass motions that bring recommendations forward to the House.

I believe what the Opposition House Leader (Mr. Derkach) was trying to clarify is in the last Public Accounts Committee meeting, two motions were passed unanimously by all members of committee, including the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that were making recommendations to the House. I think what we are asking for is clarification because now that those motions which were passed unanimously have been brought forward to the House, what is the process under which those motions will be dealt with within the House?

It is not correct to say that those can be referred back to the committee because, in fact, the House rules state that it is the committee's prerogative to pass motions that will force an action, and possibly debate, on the floor of the House. That is what we are asking for clarification of. It is clearly in the rules regarding the operation of Public Accounts, and we are just asking for clarification of that.

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I just suggest that the whole matter raised is moot. I understood that the matters before the Public Accounts Committee dealt with the Rules Committee looking at the procedures for Public Accounts Committee. It is meeting next week.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I have been very patient in listening to members, but I have to once again remind the House that it is very inappropriate to be bringing these questions to the Speaker because they should be dealt with by the committee. The Chair of the committee has brought forward a motion that I, as the Speaker, deal with that motion, but nowhere in that motion do I see anything else that is pertaining to it. If there are questions or misunderstandings of the workings of the committee, either the House leaders get together or interested members to deal with—I have just been advised from the notice that I was given that there will be a Rules Committee meeting very shortly, and that could be addressed there if they choose, or if you choose to go to the loge and discuss it, or wherever you want. I cannot, as the Speaker, unless the committee directs it to me,

I cannot tell the committee what to do. It is very, very inappropriate. Very inappropriate.

**Mr. Derkach:** It is not often that we deal with a matter like this, and I understand that, because the rules that were passed are still relatively new, we have to work through this. I guess the point that I want clarified is if we accept the report, that report, I would presume would have included within it the motions that were unanimously passed at the committee which direct the Legislative Assembly to take certain actions, Mr. Speaker, and those were passed unanimously. Now, if we adopt that motion, if we vote on that motion right now and we adopt the report, does that mean that the House Leader then is charged with the responsibility of carrying out on behalf of government, on behalf of this Assembly, the action that was called for by the motions that were unanimously passed in the Public Accounts Committee?

Mr. Speaker, if it requires a recess before we vote on this report so that you, the House Leader and I can get together and decide on what the action really means, then I am prepared to do that.

**Mr. Speaker:** Just for further clarification the committee cannot direct the House to take action; the committee cannot. The committee can only recommend to the House—*[interjection]*

Order. Let me be very clear on this. The committee can recommend to the House to take action. Then, whatever action would be appropriate is usually, normally and pretty well always negotiated between the House leaders for what action will be taken on behalf of their caucuses. That is the process, and I would strongly, strongly encourage the House leaders and people who have questions to take time, go to the loge or meet after Question Period and discuss this further because the House right now is only dealing with the motion that has been brought forward by the Chair of the committee.

**Mr. Derkach:** Well, Mr. Speaker, there are some important consequences as a result of the motions that were passed at Public Accounts Committee unanimously. I think the rules do stipulate the calling for action by the Public Accounts Committee and do say that, in fact, the Public Accounts Committee can recommend things to the Assembly. Now, I would ask that we defer the vote on this report until such

time that the House Leader and I have had an opportunity to discuss this matter and that we get on with Question Period. We can deal with this matter either tomorrow or later today.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Mr. Speaker, the question has been called. There was some recommendation made and, as a result of the recommendation made, we did not wait for it to come to the House. The House leaders began discussions, research was commenced, and we are going to have some meeting on the issue of Public Accounts Committee procedures. I think the matter is moot. The matter is being moved on.

**Mr. Speaker:** My role here is to put a motion that is brought before the House, and this time for the final time I will do this and this time I will complete it. If you have any further questions you wish to discuss, please use the—

**Mr. Derkach:** I know the government would like to push this off, sweep it under the carpet, Mr. Speaker, but that is just not the case. The rule book that we have adopted does allow for what happened in Public Accounts. That was done legitimately. There were two specific motions that asked for action from the Assembly. I do not know the process on how this can be acted upon. The House Leader says that we are already moving our feet. What he is moving his feet on is he has called a Rules Committee meeting for December 1, but it does not specifically speak to the actions that have been called for unanimously by the Public Accounts Committee of this Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, we need to act to that and I ask that a vote on this be deferred until such time that you, the House Leader and I can get a clearer understanding. There is no way that I can put a vote, either for or against, on this report until that matter is cleared up.

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

\*(14:40)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I am going to be putting the question, and I would just like to remind all members of the House that if there is a change in situations, by leave we can do whatever we, you know, appropriately in the House, by leave. So if there are to be adjustments in the future there are always opportunities, but right now I am dealing with a motion that is brought right forward to me and I am not going to let this turn into a debate because we

have been going on. I am going to hear one more and that is it.

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you might deem it appropriate that we would delay the question being put until after Question Period, thereby allowing some time for you and both House leaders to have the discussion on this prior to the vote being put.

Would that be appropriate that we deal with Question Period first?

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable member has asked it to be delayed until after Question Period. I will ask the House. What is the will of the House?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** It only takes one to deny leave to let it go and I heard some nos. So now I will put the motion. The motion is moved by the honourable Member for Southdale (Mr. Reimer), seconded by the honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), that the report of the committee be received.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Yes.

**Mr. Speaker:** Agreed?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Speaker:** No. Okay.

#### Voice Vote

**Mr. Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion, say yea.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

**Mr. Speaker:** All those opposed, say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Mr. Speaker:** In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

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

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**Mr. Speaker:** Order. We are still at committee reports.

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

**Ms. Marilyn Brick (Chairperson):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the Sixth Report of the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development.

**Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk):** Your Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development presents the following as its Sixth Report.

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Mr. Speaker:** Dispense.

*Your Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development presents the following as its Sixth Report.*

**Meetings:**

*Your committee met on Monday, September 13, 2004, at 6:30 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.*

**Matters Under Consideration:**

*Bill 22 – The Water Protection Act/Loi sur la protection des eaux*

**Committee Membership:**

*Your committee elected Mr. Dewar as the Vice-Chairperson.*

*Substitutions received prior to commencement of meeting:*

*Mr. Penner for Mrs. Mitchelson*

*Hon. Mr. Ashton for Hon. Ms. Allan*

*Hon. Mr. Struthers for Hon. Mr. Chomiak*

*Hon. Mr. Bjornson for Mr. Jha*

*Hon. Ms. Wowchuk for Ms. Oswald*

*Mr. Swan for Hon. Mr. Sale*

*Mr. Nevakshonoff for Hon. Mr. Selinger*

*Mr. Cummings for Mrs. Driedger*

*Mr. Eichler for Mr. Penner*

*Mr. Dewar for Mr. Nevakshonoff*

**Public Presentations:**

*Your committee heard 15 presentations on Bill. 22 – The Water Protection Act/Loi sur la protection des*

*eaux from the following individuals and/or organizations:*

*Bryan Ferriss and Peter Mah, Manitoba Pork Council*

*Ian Wishart, Keystone Agricultural Producers*

*Stuart Briese, Association of Manitoba Municipalities*

*Greg Bruce, Ducks Unlimited Canada*

*Betty Green, Manitoba Cattle Producers Association*

*Jim Stinson, Private Citizen*

*Jonathan Scarth, Delta Waterfowl*

*Allen Tyrchniewicz, Prairie Habitat Joint Venture*

*Robert Rodgers, Manitoba Conservation Districts Association*

*Gaile Whelan-Enns, Manitoba Wildlands*

*John Holland, RM of Springfield*

*Dan Benoit, Manitoba Metis Federation*

*Councillor Gord Steeves, City of Winnipeg*

*Glen Koroluk, Private Citizen*

*Elizabeth Fleming, Provincial Council of Women*

**Written Submissions:**

*Your committee received one written submission for Bill 22 – The Water Protection Act/Loi sur la protection des eaux, from the following organization:*

*Ted Ross, Roseisle Creek Watershed Association*

**Bills Considered and Reported:**

*Bill 22 – The Water Protection Act/Loi sur la protection des eaux*

*Your Committee agreed to report this bill without amendment.*

**Ms. Brick:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Radisson (Mr. Jha), that the report of the committee be received.

**Motion agreed to.**

**TABLING OF REPORTS**

**An Honourable Member:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the—

**Mr. Speaker:** I have not recognized the honourable member.

I am pleased to table the Annual Reports of the Legislative Assembly Management Commission for

the years ended March 31, 2003, and March 31, 2004, copies of the reports have been placed on the members' desks.

I am also pleased to table in the House the reports of members' expenses for the year ended March 31, 2004, in compliance with section 38(1) of the Indemnities, Allowances and Retirement Benefits Regulations.

**Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the 2003-2004 Annual Report from Manitoba Health, which includes the Annual Report of the Manitoba Health Services Insurance Plan.

**Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the 2003-2004 Annual Report from the Department of Education, Citizenship and Youth.

#### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to introduce in the public gallery Springs Christian Academy 44 Grades 9 and 11 students under the direction of Mr. Brad Dowler. This school is in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger).

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

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### Property Taxes Education Support Levy

**Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome all the pages officially to this Chamber and, of course, welcome the new Clerk.

Yesterday, as we know, this government released their Speech from the Throne. I thought what was very interesting was what was not in the Throne Speech and, not surprising, what we did not hear was the fact that the Doer government has no long-term economic strategy. There was not one mention in the Throne Speech about how we want to drive to be a "have" province, an understanding that all provinces in western Canada, including NDP Saskatchewan, are on their way to being a "have" province. I understand that maybe the Premier sees

that long-term economic strategy as a bit of a Rubik's Cube, and it is a tough thing to do, but Manitobans deserve better. That is what should have been in the Speech from the Throne yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, it was interesting that in 60 minutes in that Speech from the Throne, there was one minute, sixty seconds, on justice. How long does it take to steal a car in the province of Manitoba? We did not hear one commitment from this Doer government yesterday on their commitment not to close one rural hospital, no commitment from this government. In fact, we did not hear in the Throne Speech yesterday about any commitment towards our BSE farmers out there that are suffering, not one commitment.

So, Mr. Speaker, I was very amazed that even the Premier, after 554 days, has realized that there is a crisis going on in rural Manitoba. I thought it was very interesting that what we heard from this government was that they talked about eliminating a portion of the special levy off farmland. What I find very interesting, the right thing to do, and if this Premier had the proper will, he would have done what Manitobans want, and that is to eliminate the education tax off residential property and farmland.

Mr. Speaker, we have struggling farmers, and I ask the Premier today. He could have done the right thing, and for \$47 million eliminate that special levy. He could have done that yesterday. I ask him will he, before 2007, do the right thing and eliminate the education portion off residential property and farmland. Will he do the right thing?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, in the preamble of the member opposite there are a number of vacuous allegations, and let me deal with a couple of them as they followed in the order in which they were presented. Number 1, in terms of an economic vision, Manitobans' average income is twice the national average. It is, on average, \$1,500 per person in Manitoba, and I would point out that certainly exceeds anything members opposite had to celebrate in the 1990s.

\* (14:50)

Secondly, in terms of economic vision, they are accountable for their own decisions. They voted against the new arena in downtown Winnipeg; they did not support the new arena. They have absolutely no economic vision. I understand from the media that

they did not even have a resolution on their convention floor from the rank-and-file delegates dealing with BSE. We did, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I can only entertain one question at a time. There are lots flying all over the place. The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor.

**Mr. Murray:** Well, as always, the Premier loves to be a bit of a nose-stretcher. We understand that, but the fact of life is if this Premier would tell the truth, this side of the House on the arena supported the taxpayers getting involved in the arena. Oh. Oh. Now they do not want to hear it. We supported it on the basis that there was a business plan. They voted against that. That is what they did.

Mr. Speaker, in this Speech from the Throne, what we heard from this Premier yesterday was nothing in terms of the rising property taxes that we see in the province: Brandon, Thompson, Winnipeg. This Premier did nothing with respect to the education tax for people living in urban centres. Why does he not do the right thing? He said in his own press release that we have the money. What is missing from this Premier is the will to do the right thing. Why does he not do the right thing and before 2007 say to Manitobans we will eliminate the education tax off residential property and farmland because it is the right thing to do?

**Mr. Speaker:** Before we get too far in Question Period, I would just like to remind all honourable members that members in this House are all honourable members and you are playing with words when making reference to tell the truth. All members are honourable members, and I just caution all honourable members to pick and choose your words carefully.

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, I would point out to the member opposite that Hansard will keep members opposite accountable. You have a record. It is on the record. This is what the so-called Finance critic said in the House: We will be known across Canada as a rinky-

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

#### Point of Order

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

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, it is a known fact that the Premier has very little regard for members of this Chamber. You just rose a moment ago and asked that we choose our words carefully, and I would ask that this also apply to the Premier of our province.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable First Minister, on the same point of order.

**Mr. Doer:** Yes, I withdraw "so-called."

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay, that should take care of the matter, but the honourable First Minister has the floor.

**Mr. Doer:** Ready to go. I was at the post for a long time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Finance critic said that we will be well known throughout Canada as having a rinky-dink building squeezed into a site that was too small for our downtown, that has the risk of destroying downtown Winnipeg for the next 40 years. Members opposite voted against the private-public new arena, and they were only too happy to show up for the gala opening. That is the phoniness people will not stand for in Manitoba.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

If members wish to have a conversation, we have two empty loges on each side of the House. You are more than welcome to use those, but I need to be able to hear the questions and the answers.

**Mr. Murray:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The interesting thing, of course, is that the Premier will not answer the question. The problem is that this Premier does not understand that Manitobans want what is right for everybody, not just for one sector, but for all Manitobans, and that would be to treat them equally and eliminate the education tax off residential property and farmland.

Mr. Speaker, I ask this Premier, I ask him to do something. I ask him not to be such a small thinker and a tinkerer. I am asking him to think big. Look at that big picture out there, do the right thing on behalf of Manitobans, and stand up in front. He said he has the money, stand up in front of Manitobans, make a

commitment that before 2007 his government will eliminate the education tax off residential property and farmland because it is the right thing to do.

**Mr. Doer:** We thought big when we went ahead with a private-public new arena in downtown Winnipeg, Mr. Speaker. The small thinkers are the members opposite who voted against the new arena. They voted against the Legislative Assembly to support the government's decision to provide all financial documentation, including the term sheet to the provincial auditor should he decide to make an examination, an audit of the True Entertainment complex.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba supports a True North Entertainment complex proposal as set out on the term sheet. You voted no. We voted big. We voted yes. You are petty. We are big. We are going forward, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Property Taxes Education Support Levy**

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** Thank you very much—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

The honourable Member for Tuxedo has the floor.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The report of the minister's working group on education finance has officially been shelved, and there is no plan before us today from this government to deal with our archaic education funding system in our province.

Mr. Speaker, we are one of the last provinces left in Canada to rely on property tax levies to fund education. Given the fact that it was stated in an article in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, the province is about to see its annual revenues grow by an extraordinary \$500 million a year, will the Minister of Education agree today to use these funds to provide meaningful tax relief for all Manitobans, and eliminate the education taxes off residential property and farmlands?

**Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth):** Mr. Speaker, thank you for

the question. Just a few numbers for the record, the average increase in Winnipeg from 1990 to 1999 was 53.2 percent; from 1999 to 2004, minus 5.9 percent. Our friends in the Interlake, they increased 129.5 percent from 1990 to 1999. Under our watch, in 1999 to 2004, a 2.7% increase compared to 129.5% increase.

We are funding education at the rate of economic growth; put a hundred and five million dollars into education when members opposite chose to ignore the education system with announcements like zero, zero, minus 2, minus 2, and a small 2% increase. We are committed to education, Mr. Speaker.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Mr. Speaker, this Minister of Education wants to talk about real property tax increases, education tax increases. Let us look at the city of Winnipeg alone. Since this government came to office in 1999, in the city of Winnipeg alone, the education portion of property taxes have increased by some 33 percent, 500 million in extra revenues to this province. The money is there.

Does this government have the political will to make it happen and provide property tax relief to Manitobans?

\* (15:00)

**Mr. Bjornson:** Mr. Speaker, we are committed to education. It is a priority for this government. We have a robust education system, and a robust education system contributes to a robust economy.

We are funding at the rate of economic growth. Compare our investment in education to the members opposite. I am very proud to be sitting on this side of the House, and our record. As a former teacher, I saw their commitment to education and what it did to our classrooms. I saw 800 teachers no longer employed under the previous administration. Teachers were being laid off, class sizes were increasing, and do not get me started on capital. We are committed to education, Mr. Speaker.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** No, Mr. Speaker, the Education Minister may not want to talk about capital without talking about a glitch in their system, but we will go there later.

We are talking about \$500 million of increased revenues to this province. We have heard from

Manitobans. They want meaningful tax relief of the education taxes off their property. The government has the ability to do it. Do they have the political will to go ahead with it?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, the rate of capital investment in the first five years under our government is double, double the rate of capital investment by the previous members. In fact, when you look at the last four years of the former government, minus 2, minus 2, zero and plus 2 in a pre-election year; no change, no reductions in the ESL, the second education tax on property. We are progressing with our election promises. Members opposite in the late eighties promised to bring education funding to 80 percent, including the elimination of the ESL.

The real question is this: Are the members opposite going to vote against the Speech from the Throne that reduces the education tax on farmland by 50 percent, effective April 1, 2005? Are they going to vote for it, or are they going to vote against it?

#### **Property Taxes Education Support Levy**

**Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale):** Mr. Speaker, the Premier can stand up and talk about all the glorious things that he proposes he did, but I want to point out to him that since 1989, pardon me, 1998 to '99, the special levy increase to the property taxpayers of Winnipeg rose 33 percent. He can talk about what he is doing to education, but it is at the lowest percentage of funding of any government that has been in power here in Manitoba.

I would like to point out the fact to the minister that the assessment rate here in Winnipeg over the last while is going up between 20 percent to 30 percent. The mayor has indicated that he is going to be holding the line on the municipal levy. Will he be able to guarantee to the people of Winnipeg and to the municipalities that the educational levy will not be rising?

**Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth):** Mr. Speaker, the property tax credit was increased by this government to \$400. We have eliminated the education, or are reducing the education support levy, levied by the Province. We have increased the tax credit to seniors, and, as we announced, we are reducing the portioning on

farmland by 33 percent when we promised 20 percent. We know the realities in rural Manitoba. We are reducing it by 33 percent and moving towards 50 percent.

The member opposite has to take into consideration what we have done with respect to property tax credits, and there has been a net decrease in Winnipeg of 5.9 percent in four years.

**Mr. Reimer:** Mr. Speaker, I am always amazed at the creative accounting that comes from that side of the House. They talk about a decrease, but figures have shown that the property assessment has gone up—pardon me, the taxes have gone up 33 percent, and these are the figures.

I would also like to point out the fact that the former mayor of the city, Mayor Glen Murray, when he moved on to Toronto, and I remember they did an interview of his tenure here in Winnipeg. He said, "I felt like I was a hostage when I was the mayor. We have a premier in Manitoba who barely understands urban issues." It has come out clear and very distinctively in his Throne Speech that there is no help for the City of Winnipeg other than a few things that they have thrown, crumbs on the table. There is no problem, there is no urban strategy coming out of this government. I want to ask this Premier what he is going to do for the City of Winnipeg to take the property tax off, the educational property tax off.

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** When the member opposite was the minister of urban affairs, the taxes in the city of Winnipeg went up over 68 percent. They went up on the basis of three factors: one, they did not change the ESL; two, they reduced the property tax credit which is subtracted from the tax bill; and, Mr. Speaker, they reduced the operating grants to the school boards.

Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of the fact that Red River College, the new Hydro facility that was going to be built in the suburbs is going to go downtown, the new NRC building is going to be in downtown Winnipeg. We have invested in the Waterfront Drive, and we are investing with a private-public partnership in a new Millennium Library and a new entertainment complex downtown. Members opposite had a boarded-up Portage Avenue when we came into office. We are changing that every day, and they are voting against it.

**Mr. Reimer:** Mr. Speaker, I should point out to the members opposite, if he is referring to the entertainment complex downtown, the entertainment complex downtown is now hosting David Copperfield, a great illusionist. Here in the Chamber we have the Premier as the great illusionist.

The taxes under this Premier continue to go up, the user fees and everything. We are talking about the educational portion on residential here in the province of Manitoba and the city of Winnipeg. Will he be taking the educational portions off the property taxes in the near future? He has the money. He has over half a billion dollars coming into the Treasury. Use it the way he should because when we get elected, it is coming off.

**Mr. Doer:** In terms of illusions there are no illusions about Hansard and your vote against the new entertainment complex. It is right on the record. There are no illusions about the Finance critic of the Conservative Party calling it a rinky-dink project, Mr. Speaker. No illusions about that. It stays in history forever.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite promised to raise their contribution to education funding up to 80 percent. They had their chance for 11 years and instead taxes went up 68 percent on the education taxes in Manitoba. The public is actually quite smart. They remember that the members opposite promised big and delivered the opposite. We are absolutely delivering on every promise we made on education taxes. Today the real challenge is, given the fact we have exceeded our promises on education taxes on farmland, are members opposite going to vote against a 50% tax decrease, '05; for farmland taxation for education? Are you for it or against it?

#### **Winnipeg Police Service Funding for New Officers**

**Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet):** Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech mentioned that up to 20 city of Winnipeg police officers will be funded from a share of Winnipeg casino revenues. The statement, "up to 20 police officers" gives us little comfort when we are at historically high levels of homicides in the city of Winnipeg. I ask the Minister of Justice: How many city of Winnipeg police officers will be hired? One, two, three or twenty, and when?

\* (15:10)

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to correct, actually, the member's statement. In yesterday's Throne Speech a commitment was made to add, across Manitoba, 40 new police officers.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Mr. Speaker, revenues from casinos are decreasing because of the smoking ban and the new Brokenhead casino. It is expected that revenues will be decreasing and will decline. What we need is stable, predictable funding for police; not funding tied to casino revenues. We need funding coming out of the new \$500-million fund that is coming from the federal government.

I ask the Minister of Justice, when casino revenues decline, does that mean that the Province will fund fewer officers, and the City of Winnipeg will need to fire officers to correspond with decreasing revenues.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to confirm that, in addition, not only was it announced today that there are 20 officers going to the city of Winnipeg and 20 outside of Winnipeg, but there is an amount of \$4.5 million this year to go, not only to the 40 new officers but, also, to a family violence intervention team that is based on a project that was tried in Winnipeg.

I am very proud that the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Ms. Melnick) was making that announcement today.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Mr. Speaker, the only economic plan we have seen from this government is to depend on its addiction to revenues from gambling to fund its spending habits. Now we see that the only Justice plan that this minister has is to fund Justice from gambling revenues.

The Doer government and the Justice Minister are gambling on safety, and I ask this Minister of Justice will he commit to at least 20 new Winnipeg city police to be funded by the Province immediately in order to deal with the safety concerns of Manitobans.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Mr. Speaker, I think that it is important to recall that the amount for the City of Winnipeg is from the percentage of revenues from casinos in Winnipeg, and that amount next year is 5 percent but, contrary to what the member opposite is

alleging, it increases to 10 percent in the year 2006. We are very proud to be sharing these revenues with the City of Winnipeg.

Even more importantly, it is important that there is this commitment to the officers on the front line so that they know we are there to assist them. In addition to all of the other opportunities that the Throne Speech talks about and commits to, this is a government that is committed not only to policing, but to hopes and opportunities to reduce crime throughout this province.

### **Diabetes Strategy Implementation**

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Mr. Speaker, in late 1998, after two years in the process, this diabetes strategy was finalized and forwarded to Manitoba Health for implementation. Can the Minister of Health tell us why yesterday's Throne Speech announced the launch of Manitoba's first diabetes strategy given that the Doer government has been rolling out this strategy for the past four years?

**Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to let the member know that over the last few years we have developed in partnership, and full partnership with First Nations communities, with the RHA, with the federal government and as my colleague, the Minister for Healthy Living (Ms. Oswald), announced last week with a group called the Alliance, which represents heart and lung, stroke, diabetes, cancer, kidney working together to pool their resources on prevention to launch a very significant chronic disease prevention and management strategy in partnership with the federal government.

This very major project, we think, will allow us to have staff on the ground in every First Nation community, which is not something that was part of the original strategy that the member talks about. The commitment of First Nations to be in full partnership with us on the ground to prevent gum disease—*[interjection]*

**Mrs. Driedger:** Yesterday when the minister was asked a question about the health strategy, he did not know a thing about this particular strategy that has been in place already for four years. In fact, the former Minister of Health, in speaking about this

strategy, said, "I give credit to the previous administration for the preparation of that particular material."

It has been recognized across the country. I have been told across country that the diabetes initiative that has been put together is probably the best diabetes initiative in the country. One of the deliberate initiatives that took several months was to actually put in place several of those initiatives and move them out. So the diabetes initiative has been actively pronounced and is being pursued and funded by the Department of Health.

Can the Minister of Health tell us why he misled Manitobans when he said that this strategy was never implemented?

**Mr. Sale:** I am also delighted to tell the member that what she may not realize is that the partnership with First Nations was never specifically involved in the strategy in a full partnership way. I want to bring her attention to a quotation from Carol Dinkavitch, Canadian Diabetes Association, who said on CJOB, "We are advocating at the national level for a national prevention strategy for diabetes, but we are certainly very pleased that here in Manitoba our provincial government is prepared to move forward. The need is also so great, I guess we are excited about putting some dollars towards prevention now where we can make such a huge change."

I think we are working in partnership. We put forward a new \$6.2-million strategy with the federal government around chronic disease management. I think that this new strategy will change the course of this disease in First Nations and northern communities, Mr. Speaker.

**Mrs. Driedger:** The comments from the former Minister of Health are on the record. They stay in history. This diabetic strategy has been around for four years and has been rolling out for four years.

In comment to what the current Minister of Health just said about it not having involved Aboriginal people, I would like to indicate that the strategy steering committee consisted of Grand Chief John Muswaggon, Grand Chief Francis Flett, Acting Grand Chief Sidney Garrioch and was fully developed along with all of the Aboriginal communities. So this Minister of Health does not even know what he is talking about.

I, again, would like to ask this minister why he misled Manitobans yesterday when he said that this strategy, recognized as the best in Canada, why he did not even know that it was in existence and that it was actually rolling out.

**Mr. Sale:** The plan that was put forward by the previous government in the original strategy document did not promise to fund services in First Nations communities, Mr. Speaker. There was no funding prepared or provided for First Nations communities. That is the big difference.

The questions that Manitobans are asking is whether the previous government and this opposition in the election in 2003 said they could do all these things with 1 percent, Mr. Speaker. How can you fund health with 1 percent?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. This is the last time. I just want remind all honourable members to put the questions and the answers through the Chair.

**Mr. Sale:** My point is that, in promising only 1 percent when we funded regional health authorities at 6.2 percent, how can they talk about prevention? How can they talk about acute care? How can they talk about any of the things they claim are important today when they said they were going to spend 1 percent on health care to fund our health care system in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker? They have no credibility.

#### **Hydra House Internal Report Release**

**Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose):** The long shadow of Hydra House has now got us an hour and three quarters into this very brief session. We have seen stonewalling by this government all summer about information on Hydra House.

**An Honourable Member:** Wrong.

**Mr. Cummings:** Well, the Premier wants to say wrong. Maybe the Minister of Family Services is prepared now to stand up and give us the financial information that they have been withholding from the public.

**Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Family Services and Housing):** Upon receiving the report from the Auditor General earlier this summer, it put in place a five-point action plan. We accepted that

report from the AG, and our response was to move forward, to make sure that the concerns that were raised in the AG's report were not revisited in the future.

Now, we have learned since that in 1994 the Agency Relations branch was cut in the Department of Family Services and Housing. This was the mechanism through which the department would have been able to properly monitor the expenditures of these agencies. We know that we are here today, not because of what has happened recently, but because of what happened in 1994. That is the financial information. That is the truth, Mr. Speaker.

\* (15:20)

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Speaker, I would advise the government not to be applauding and get too excited about what the minister just said because she, or the government and her predecessor, had information in the year 2000 that indicated there were concerns about the financial management at Hydra House. They ignored that. There was alleged mismanagement, and now the minister wants to talk about the auditor's report.

The internal report that reviews the financial activities at Hydra House will not be released to the public. Why not, and when?

**Ms. Melnick:** Again, Mr. Speaker, I think we should talk about the progress that has been made which will greatly reduce the chances of that ever happening again. When we focus on service purchase agreements, we see that despite the AG's reports in the early nineties that supported the development of service purchase agreements, in 1999, there were 55 service purchase agreements signed. Now these are the contracts through which we determine services to be provided and remuneration.

I am pleased to let the House know today that we have almost 150 service purchase agreements now signed, the most amount in the history of Manitoba.

#### **Hydra House Public Inquiry**

**Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose):** Mr. Speaker, again, I am very disturbed by the approach of this government. We can all hold hands and go smiling

forward, but the government knew that there were allegations of financial mismanagement in 2001. They knew in the year 2000. But, between 2000 and 2002, they sent an additional \$2 million to Hydra House, \$2 million, knowing full well that there were allegations of mismanagement.

Will she now agree that if she is not prepared to provide the information which the opposition has been asking for the last year and a half, we have been asking very carefully, in fact, we called for an auditor's report back in 2000, if she will not provide that, will she agree to a public inquiry?

**Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Family Services and Housing):** Mr. Speaker, again, we recognize that because of the ability that was cut from the department in 1994, the department did not have the capacity to monitor. We are rebuilding that capacity—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Melnick:** We are rebuilding that capacity, Mr. Speaker. We are rebuilding the capacity under the Agency Accountability Unit. This unit will have expertise that is needed to monitor and work with agencies. The branch that was cut in 1994 had four members. We will have five. Two of those five positions have currently been filled, and we are working as quickly as we can to fill the rest, so that we will have that capacity, so that we will greatly reduce the chances of another Hydra House happening.

#### Physician Resources Shortages

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, in the 1999 Throne Speech, the present NDP government promised solemnly that they would rescue our health care system, ensure health care was available to Manitobans when they needed it, and address province-wide shortages of health professionals.

Today, in Winnipeg, the operating rooms may be closed because of lack of anesthetists. In Brandon, a shortage of pediatricians means delivering a baby may be impossible there. Sometime later this fall, in The Pas, Ashern and many rural areas, there are severe shortages. A notice today in Ashern informs people that there will be no doctor in the community 11 of the next 18 days. Even the Minister of Health

said on Monday that there is a critical shortage of doctors, nurses and technologists.

I ask the Minister of Health why his government has failed so abysmally to keep the solemn promises of his government's 1999 Throne Speech.

**Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, during the 1990s, we lost 116 doctors in this province. Since we formed government there are 139 more practising in Manitoba. The year we formed government 210 nurses graduated from our nursing programs. This past July, 781 graduated from our nursing programs. There are 99 anesthetists in Winnipeg. There are 8 vacancies currently, and we are recruiting aggressively for those vacancies. We will do everything we can to cover the slates that need to be somewhat slowed down because of a shortage of anesthetists. In fact, at the Grace Hospital, a doctor has volunteered to cover those extra slates so that as much as possible they will not have to be reduced.

Mr. Speaker, we work every day to bring great doctors like Doctor Menkis to Winnipeg.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health and the Premier (Mr. Doer) broke one of the very first promises they made in this Chamber in the 1999 Throne Speech. They have since broken many, many more promises. I now table an information sheet circulated today in the community of Ashern showing it will be without any physician coverage for 11 days in the very near future. Ashern is a community with a major hospital, a dialysis unit, and it is a major referral centre for many communities, including Moosehorn, Hilbre, Grahamdale, Fairford, Gypsumville, St. Martin, Lake St. Martin, Little Saskatchewan and Dauphin River. Even in the darkest days of the Filmon government things were never so bad in Ashern.

Mr. Speaker, health care in this province is in chaos, and the Minister of Health is trying to cover-up. I ask the Minister of Health, how could he leave so many communities in limbo without access to *[interjection]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Sale:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During those dark days the former government cut enrolment in our medical college from 85 to 70, thus ensuring that seven years later there would be 15 fewer doctors

graduating in Manitoba. That is why we brought it back up to 85, and in the year 2005-2006, those 15 new doctors will be available to serve our province. We have entered into purchase of service return agreements with over 45 doctors who will currently be available to us very shortly to address this shortage.

We are moving the medical college enrolment up to 100, Mr. Speaker, so that we will have doctors available to our province. We are moving forward with advance practice nurses. I am as concerned as anyone about the shortage, and we are working every day to make sure that Winnipeggers and Manitobans have access to acute care doctors when they need it, where they need it. *[interjection]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I need to be able to hear the questions and the answers. I ask the co-operation of all honourable members. Has the honourable minister concluded? You have about eight seconds to go. Are you concluded? Okay.

#### **Hydra House Public Inquiry**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the government in regard to the public has the right to know what the government knew, and when it knew it, regarding Hydra House. We know that the government was aware of financial mismanagement, that the government has been lacking in terms of being forthright with the Legislature here in regard to providing the information that we know it has. That is the reason why we are demanding that there be a public inquiry in regard to Hydra House.

Mr. Speaker, earlier in Question Period, the Premier (Mr. Doer) said that the Legislature, the Hansard, will hold you accountable. I am asking the Premier to hold his minister, his former Minister of Family Services, accountable for what he said in Hansard. The public has a right to accountability on the issue of Hydra House.

My question to the government is this: When will we see that accountability?

\*(15:30)

**Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Family Services and Housing):** Mr. Speaker, there is a

process in place around the Public Accounts Committee. I undertook to bring information back to that committee. I encourage members opposite to cooperate in setting a date so the committee can sit, and it is at that time that the information will be reported to Public Accounts.

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

#### **MATTER OF PRIVILEGE**

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Official Opposition House Leader is rising on a matter of privilege.

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell):** I rise this afternoon on a matter of privilege which relates to the report that was tabled by the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee and the action that was requested and was passed unanimously by the Public Accounts Committee and the fact that the Assembly was directed by the Public Accounts Committee to deal with certain matters. These matters in some way have to be dealt with by this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

All of us consider the processes of this Legislature as being important. The public accounts process is one where the public can hold the government accountable for the actions it takes, for the monies that it spends or perhaps the inappropriate actions the government undertakes. Unfortunately, that is one of the major concerns about this particular government. It is the inappropriate actions that are being taken by departments and ministers and agencies that relate to this government.

Mr. Speaker, we have been calling for the Public Accounts Committee revisions for months now. Under the new rules the government is obliged to call four Public Accounts Committees before the end of a calendar year. In this whole past year, all we have seen are two occasions for the Public Accounts Committee to meet. There are still two outstanding meetings that have to be held by the Public Accounts Committee, and those are not being called because there is a fear we will be calling for witnesses. I can make that public. We will be calling for witnesses because that is the only way to get to the bottom of issues.

Today the report from the Public Accounts Committee came forward. I had a question and a concern about how we were going to extract from that report the motions that were passed unanimously

at the Public Accounts Committee. How can we extract those from that report and adopt them in this House, Mr. Speaker? The advice I was given was that there was no mechanism to do that. Additionally, there was no way to shelve that particular motion. The government would not allow that report to be tabled or to be delayed until such time that we could figure out how we were going to deal with it. So, with the greatest of respect to the Chamber, to the greatest of respect to the government, we simply could not go along in adopting a report that did not fulfil the mandate and the requirements and the motions that were passed at the Public Accounts Committee.

Mr. Speaker, this is the first occasion that I have to raise this. I do not want to delay Question Period any longer, so I thought I would rise right after Question Period to raise this issue.

The second condition I feel that I am meeting is that this is an infringement on the rights of every member of this Legislative Assembly who in good faith votes for a particular action to be taken and then that action just simply seems to die because it is incorporated into a report that comes into this Legislature and then the report is adopted and there is no mechanism to extract those particular actions that were called for on this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I want to refer to the rules we have before us that govern the Public Accounts Committee. There is a need to revise these rules because some of them are somewhat vague. Therefore I think there is a need for all of us to get together and ensure that we clarify some of the rules that have been put into this book. I refer to Rule 96(c) where it says one of the responsibilities of the Public Accounts Committee, one of the mandates of the committee, is to review and make recommendations to the House on the functioning of the committee and its rules.

Mr. Speaker, it is under that particular rule that the motions were passed. I might add that the motions were approved and adopted unanimously by the committee. That means members on the government side of the House, on the government side of the committee, agreed with the opposition members in the committee that this particular action was important and should be taken. Therefore, I saw no opportunity other than through a matter of privilege to address these issues, and that is why I am raising the matter of privilege at this time.

I know that a matter of privilege has to be followed by a substantive motion. I do not know whether my motion will be in order, but, indeed, in an attempt to try to get some form of action by this Assembly on the motions that were passed in the Public Accounts Committee, I move, seconded by the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings), that the Legislative Assembly adopt the motions that were passed by the Public Accounts Committee on September 7 and September 8; namely, that when matters under consideration for a particular Public Accounts Committee meeting have been determined and the Chair shall notify by letter the administrative heads of the organizations whose mandates relate to the Auditor General reports under consideration requesting them to attend the meeting with such other officials for their organizations as they deem necessary to respond to questions the committee may wish to ask them, and the above motion be referred to the House Leaders and the Rules Committee for consideration and request the Rules Committee to report back to the committee by September 30, 2004.

Now the date is delayed, Mr. Speaker, but I cannot do anything about that because that was the motion.

The other motions that were passed unanimously, Mr. Speaker, were made on September 8, and one was that the Public Accounts Committee recommend to the House that the Public Accounts Committee meet a minimum of 20 occasions each year, and more often as required, to clear up the backlog of reports before the committee.

The other one was that the Public Accounts Committee recommend to the House that the committee's chairperson and vice-chairperson be given the responsibility for determining when meetings are convened, proposing meeting agendas and determining who to call upon to attend the meetings in order to answer questions from members.

Mr. Speaker, I repeat that these motions were passed unanimously at the Public Accounts Committee, and I am asking through this motion that they be adopted by the Legislative Assembly.

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I look forward to your ruling on this matter, and I just note that the honourable member alleges that the committee has directed the House by way of the report. It is my understanding

that a committee could never direct the House to do anything. In fact, only the reverse could be true and that is that only the House could direct the committee to do something. The committees of this House are creatures of this House and are subservient to it.

Mr. Speaker, though I will reiterate that I believe the matters raised are moot and that there have been ongoing discussions, indeed, I look forward to discussing with the opposition options for change, not just to the Public Accounts Committee processes, but other processes in this House. We can, hopefully, move toward some resolution of that, bearing in mind the time-honoured tradition that I think we should always make every effort when discussing matters of rules change to do so on a consensus basis. We certainly are eager to move this matter forward. Thank you.

\* (15:40)

**Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte):** Mr. Speaker, on this matter of privilege I would just like to indicate that the level of frustration on this side of the House is extremely high.

This is a committee that met twice in September and passed motions unanimously. There were motions that were amended by members of the committee on the government side. There were motions that were agreed to by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) that represents this government, a very senior official who sat at the table of this committee.

One of the biggest problems we have, as the Auditor General has stated, our committee is, in fact, outdated, archaic and ineffective. The members of this committee have recognized that. The members of the committee, in good faith, have put forward three motions: one for the Rules Committee to deal with; and, as is stipulated in our legislative rule book, two for the House to deal with. When that committee report is brought forward, we find that the government side simply wants to stonewall and not deal with the issues.

Mr. Speaker, your recommendation that we take this somehow back to the committee, is simply inoperable under these circumstances. The rule book itself says that one of the functions of the Public Accounts Committee is to provide recommendations to this House. Now, when the Public Accounts

Committee, in good faith, makes recommendations for this House to deal with, I would suggest that it is the government's responsibility to see that these motions are dealt with, that they are debated, and they are voted on, on the floor of this House. That is why the committee made recommendations to the House, to all 57 members in this Legislature. That is where the recommendations are to come. This is where those recommendations need to be dealt with.

We do not need any backroom dealing by the Government House Leader (Mr. Mackintosh). What we need is to step forward into this century, in terms of process, and to do what the current Minister of Health (Mr. Sale) requested be done in the nineties when this issue was first brought up, that is, to adopt the rules as recommended by the Auditor General, and to move this process forward. But, right now, we are in a catch-22. The committee cannot make rule changes on its own. It has to recommend them to the House to be debated. That is in our rule book. When it recommends them to the House by the form of unanimous motion, and there were two unanimous motions, what do we find? We find that the Government House Leader refuses to let the matter come to the House, come to the attention of the floor.

This is very, very serious breach of privilege, of not only members of this House, but of every member who sits on that committee. This issue needs to be dealt with once and for all. I believe the way to deal with it is for the Government House Leader to allow this matter to come to the—~~as~~ as a matter of fact, he can stand up and present it to the House, so that we can debate these motions. If the members of the governing party decide that they do not want to go forward with these reforms to the Public Accounts Committee, then they have the option to vote against them. But they are simply trying to send them off into an area where they will never get dealt with.

I think, Mr. Speaker, it is incumbent on all members of this House to ensure motions that are passed in good faith under the rules that we operate at the Public Accounts Committee, are, in fact, brought forward to this House, debated, voted on, and, where required, real changes are made. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** A matter of privilege is a very serious concern, so I am going to take this matter under advisement and consult with authorities, and I will bring back a ruling. Okay?

Now, we will go to members' statements.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Meals on Wheels

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, I arise today to applaud and bring attention to the tremendous work that is being done by the United Way agency, Meals On Wheels.

Meals On Wheels is a volunteer-driven organization that provides nutritious meals at a minimal cost to Winnipeg residents who face challenges in preparing their own meals. Currently, Meals On Wheels has 750 volunteers including student groups from five Winnipeg schools working out of 14 different facilities across the city who deliver meals to over 500 people each and every day.

Thanks to this organization and to the many volunteers, countless Winnipeg seniors and those living with disabilities, are able to live independently in their own homes. Furthermore, these volunteers not only provide Meals On Wheels' clients with some social interaction, they also give peace of mind to families who know their loved ones are receiving healthy, nutritious food on a regular basis.

Volunteers are paramount to the well-being of our province. They are an essential part of every neighbourhood and community. Without their hard work, dedication and willingness to donate their time and many talents, Meals On Wheels and countless other programs that help Manitobans in need would not be possible. I would like to thank the volunteers of Meals On Wheels for their dedication in providing this much needed service. I invite all the honourable members to join me in wishing all volunteers throughout our fine province much joy as they continue to serve.

### A Hard Night Out

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** On October 21 and 22, I had the good fortune to participate in A Hard Night Out. Hosted by the Manitoba Harm Reduction Network, A Hard Night Out was a 12-hour experience in poverty and homelessness. It brought together politicians, journalists and social advocates to spend a night on the streets of Winnipeg. It taught us how difficult it is for some members of our society to gain adequate shelter and nutritious food,

things many of us take for granted. Participants, such as myself and also the legislative assistant for the Minister of Family Services and Housing were not allowed to have money, identification or any means of communication besides meeting people on the street. We were paired with field guides, people who have direct experience with homelessness in their daily lives.

Thus I came to meet James and Merle [*phonetic*], my field guides, and our safety spotter, Art. In a way that I will long remember, they shared their experiences of homelessness and poverty. Our evening started in the back alleys of downtown. Under James's direction, we set out on foot to go dumpster diving. We searched every recycling bin and garbage container from here to Donald Street, and in the eastern half of Osborne Village, all within sight of the Legislative Building.

In three hours of hard work, we earned less than \$10 in bottle returns. That \$10 had to feed the three of us for the night, and it did not go too far. At 2 a.m. we bedded down for the night at the Salvation Army. Three hours later, at the 5 a.m. check-out time, it was back on the streets. A week later, at the debriefing session, I was impressed to learn how central a role the street guides had played in creating this event. It is clear this community was energized by the success of A Hard Night Out, and is eager to work with governments and agencies to improve access to appropriate services for homeless people.

Mr. Speaker, A Hard Night Out was a valuable lesson, one I recommend to all my colleagues in this Chamber. I commend the Manitoba Harm Reduction Network for organizing it, and I thank the field guides for their honesty and trust in sharing their lives with us. I strongly urge our government and all members of this House to continue their efforts to alleviate the effects of poverty and homelessness throughout Manitoba. Thank you.

### Mr. Ryan Rach

**Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina):** I am very pleased to rise today to congratulate a very distinguished man, Mr. Ryan Rach. Mr. Rach is Morden's newest police officer. On November 5, he graduated from the Winnipeg Police Training Academy at the top of his class of 26 recruits. Because of Mr. Rach's hard work and dedication, he was awarded the General Proficiency Award for the highest academic achievement in the recruit class No. 138.

This marks the first time in the history of the Winnipeg Police Force that the award has gone to a non-Winnipeg resident. In order to achieve this award, Mr. Rach underwent nine months of rigorous training, including classroom, practical, and on-duty experience. Mr. Rach's achievement exemplifies the high quality individuals that make up the police forces that protect our neighbourhoods and communities in Winnipeg, Morden, and all rural areas. All Manitobans are indebted to these fine individuals who put themselves at risk on a daily basis and go to great lengths in ensuring the safety of the individuals of our province.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to this welcome addition to the Morden police force, and wish him continued success in his future endeavours.

### **Winnipeg Central Mosque**

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** Mr. Speaker, as the new member of this Legislature for Minto, I am proud to represent a diverse and multicultural part of the City of Winnipeg. I enjoy my chance to learn more about the language, the culture, the religion of all of my constituents.

I am pleased to announce that recently the Muslim community opened the new Winnipeg Central Mosque located at 715 Ellice Avenue. I was privileged enough to visit the mosque. I am pleased to congratulate everyone involved with making this endeavour a reality. The mosque opened its doors on October 14 and can accommodate 600 worshippers. Previously, the only place of worship for Muslims was in south Winnipeg, a location not easily accessible to the many Muslims who call the downtown area home.

\* (15:50)

For many Muslims, new Canadians in particular, this new mosque is more than a place of worship. It is also a second home where close relationships are built and a sense of community can be developed. The community at the mosque is itself diverse, as people have come from many countries and speak many languages. I was impressed with the generosity and the hospitality of the community and by their wish for peace and prosperity for all of us in this great province.

Mr. Speaker, the opening of the mosque was in time for Ramadan, which is the ninth month of the Muslim year. Ramadan commemorates the revelation of the Koran through Mohammed, and I am advised it is the holiest time in the Islamic calendar. It is a time when, through fasting and prayer, Muslims renew their commitment to lead lives of honesty, integrity and compassion.

The Muslim community makes a valuable contribution to the diversity of our province, and I hope all Muslims in Manitoba enjoyed a happy and peaceful Ramadan.

### **Irvin Goodon Industries Ltd.**

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today and congratulate Irvin Goodon Industries Ltd. as the recipient of the 2004 Manitoba Outstanding Small Business award, which is presented by the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce for entrepreneurial success.

A pioneer post-frame construction company, Irvin Goodon Industries of Boissevain has experienced impressive growth from the three cattle shelters it built in 1963 to a forecasted 1000 buildings in 2004. The Canadian leader in its field, its portfolio now includes commercial structures, equestrian centres and a full line of agricultural buildings, among other applications.

Mr. Irvin Goodon began his business in his home region of the Turtle Mountains of southwest Manitoba by selectively cutting and trimming trees into fence posts by hand and selling them to local farmers for the livestock industry. As demand for more wood products evolved, Mr. Goodon met the challenge and commitment to expand his business. Goodon Industries' sales in 2003 grew to \$37 million, mainly on construction throughout western Canada and the midwestern United States.

Mr. Goodon has been a pioneer in this industry, but he has always recognized the need to surround himself with partners who brought complementary talents and skills to his company. Today's partners deliver the same ethics of hard work and devotion to their families and to each other and to their staff. Irvin Goodon Industries has 25 full-time employees, but with construction crew sub-contractors it is responsible for over 200 jobs in our province. Small businesses like Irvin Goodon Industries Ltd. are the

backbone of Manitoba's economic well-being and continued prosperity.

Again, I would like to congratulate all the partners and staff at Irvin Goodon Industries Ltd. on their outstanding accomplishments and wish them continued success in all their future business ventures.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

#### Consideration of the Speech of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor (First Day of Debate)

**Mr. Harry Schellenberg (Rossmere):** I move, seconded by the Member for Fort Garry (Ms. Irvin-Ross), that the following address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, thank Your Honour for the gracious speech addressed to us at this Third Session of the Thirty-Eighth Legislature of Manitoba.

#### *Motion presented.*

**Mr. Schellenberg:** Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to have moved the 2004 Throne Speech and speak in support of it. It is a Throne Speech that meets today's challenges and builds on a long-term plan. This Throne Speech continues the same vision and strategy this government has had for the last five years.

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

Since we got elected in 1999, we have been supporting families and building communities. This Throne Speech has a human focus just as all the throne speeches in previous years. Before I continue on the Throne Speech, I would like to digress for a moment to make some introductory remarks.

I would first like to welcome the new interns who are all university graduates and had been honour students in their academic studies. I would encourage all MLAs to read their résumés which are just outstanding. These interns are a welcome addition to the Legislature and will be of great assistance to work in the Legislature. We all look forward to working with them.

I would also like to welcome our new pages who will be assisting with the work in this Chamber. We hope your work here will be a great experience. We wish you the very best, and maybe someday you will take your place in this Legislature.

Also, we welcome back the Clerks and Sergeants-at-Arms, and we thank them for their work in this Legislature.

I must also recognize our newest MLAs in this Chamber. I realize it has already been done. We have the Member for Minto (Mr. Swan). We all welcome him, and wish him many good years in this Legislature. He will be an excellent servant for the residents of Minto. We are looking forward to working with him.

We also have the MLA for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen) who is a new member of this Chamber. We welcome him, and I am sure he will be a good servant for the residents of his constituency. We wish him many good years in the Legislature. I grew up in southwestern Manitoba, and I am quite familiar with that area. We will maybe have a discussion on that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of this Chamber to the CBC program, *The Greatest Canadian*. I would like to point out that Tommy Douglas is one of the 10 finalists that have been running in first place. The work of Tommy Douglas is appreciated by Canadians across Canada. His recognition in the CBC program is a result of his vision for all Canadians. He fought hard for all Canadians; his achievements are legendary. He made a difference in the lives of people. Universal public medicare and public auto insurance and balancing every budget are some examples of his many achievements.

Some MLAs in this Chamber might think that I am not addressing the 2004 Throne Speech. The point I want to make is that this Throne Speech has the same vision that Tommy Douglas had as he was Premier of Saskatchewan. The work of Tommy Douglas runs parallel to our work in Manitoba. This Throne Speech continues the vision of Tommy Douglas. We are on the same journey as Tommy Douglas. I am proud to be associated with the work of the greatest Canadian who wanted to build a better society and who made a difference to our country. As I read the list of the 50 greatest Canadians given out by this program, I did not see too many Tories on

the list. I saw a few Liberals, but they had just taken some of the Tommy Douglas ideas and repackaged them. This is my observation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to put some comments on the record about the revitalization of downtown Winnipeg. Our government has focussed on revitalizing the downtown of Winnipeg since we were elected in 1999. The 1990s were years when the downtown was neglected, and business and people were moving out of downtown. All our budgets, throne speeches, including the Throne Speech we heard yesterday, have focussed on rebuilding downtown. In 1999 we had a new vision and a plan to rebuild the downtown. If you read the *Winnipeg Free Press* recently, you will see the headlines such as "Downtown reborn," or "Downtown BIZ beat," or "Downtown excitement wonderful." This tells us that progress has been made since we took office five years ago. This Throne Speech continues with the same vision as we set out in 1999.

The new MTS building is an excellent example of what is happening downtown. This is an example of three levels of government working with the community and the private sector. When you have this kind of co-operation the community can move ahead and do great things. I can remember in April 1995 when the building of the Manitoba entertainment complex failed, and as a result we lost an NHL franchise. The headlines in our newspapers were quite different. I am reluctant to give you some of those headlines because today we have moved on to a new vision. Today we have hope, and we believe that we can do things. We are a can-do government and not a do-nothing government. We are not the mothball party of this Legislature.

\* (16:00)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the completion of the MTS Centre proves that we can put the puck in the net and the failure of a new complex in 1995 proves that some people do not know how to put the puck in the net, but I will leave the topic and move on.

I would like to point out some more success stories of what has happened, as well as what will be happening, in the downtown of Winnipeg, or how often we have put the puck in the net. I see some development projects on the horizon of the downtown: Manitoba Hydro office tower at Portage

Avenue between Edmonton and Carlton Street to open in 2007; the \$20-million Millennium Library at Graham should be open by 2005; a five-storey, \$15-million office for Credit Union Central of Manitoba is coming downtown. It should be complete by the fall of 2005. The Lakeview Group of Companies has announced it is building a six-storey, 150-unit all-suite hotel beside the Convention Centre, which is worth \$12 million. It should be open next spring. CTV is moving into the powerhouse building adjacent to the MTS Centre next summer. A \$20-million, 11-storey office residential tower is planned for the west end of Portage Place Shopping Centre. Four condo developments worth almost \$50 million will be built along the Waterfront Drive starting next year. We have built the already completed the Red River College, worth \$35 million, on Princess Street Campus. Those are just some of the things we have done. There are many more things around the province that we have done. The floodway is one example, the Brandon Hospital, and so forth. The building cranes are back. They were once a dying species. We are glad that Manitoba is on the move again.

The business community has confidence in the government's strategy for the downtown. It is a government that has shown leadership and the business community is supporting our strategy with its heavy financial investment. That proves they have confidence in downtown Winnipeg. It is no wonder that the *Winnipeg Free Press* has recently stated that the most popular First Minister in the land is the Premier of Manitoba (Mr. Doer). Not only is the business community supportive, but the people of Manitoba are quite satisfied with the government's performance. We are building communities; we are building a better Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, another great program we have to build the downtown is the Neighbourhoods Alive! program. This program has a strategy to revitalize neighbourhoods, that promotes training, employment, recreation and safety. This program has had great success, and communities such as Brandon and Thompson have asked for it. I am quite certain that other communities in rural Manitoba would like to see it extended to their towns.

I would like to speak on the economy for a moment. Most governments are rated by the performance of the economy because it is a centrepiece on which many things depend. I would

like to point out that a recent headline in the *Winnipeg Free Press* which says Manitoba's economy is looking good. Economic forecasters are predicting economic growth for this province between 2.9 and 3.5 percent. Manufacturing for exports are up 12.4 percent this year. Home building and home sales are very high. Investments are expected to increase 5.4 percent while the national average is 3.1 percent. Our bond rating has gone up. Our economic strategy is working. All the indicators are positive and pointing to many more good years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to turn to education for a moment. Education is fundamental to a good economy. Our government has committed itself to lifelong learning. Since 1999, there are 13 000 more students enrolled in our colleges and universities. Affordability and improved access are at the root of this expansion. Tuition was reduced 10 percent in 1999 and has been maintained ever since. In five years, funding for scholarships and bursaries increased 170 percent. Over \$100 million was committed to upgrade and expand Manitoba campuses.

Capital projects are now under way or completed at the University of Winnipeg, University of Brandon, St. Boniface College, and Red River community college. At the University of Manitoba, a 50-million capital commitment from the province, I think, leverage private-sector donations totalling over \$200 million and supports a building program that includes a new engineering and information technology centre, and a new centre for food and research.

Our government has also focussed on skilled trades, and is working in partnership with the industry to provide the largest expansion of skills training in our history. In 1999, industry training partnerships were providing certified courses to 7300 participants, and today this has increased by one third.

Skilled tradesmen have become very important, and we have, therefore, committed 4.5 million over three years to modernize vocation education programs in our high schools. Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government believes that a good education is important to support a strong economy, and, that is happening in Manitoba. A good education and a good economy go hand in hand.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to explain the importance of our population growth to our economy. Throughout the history of Canada, and especially the West, immigration has played an important role in its development. People from all over the world have come to make a home here. They came and helped build the country. They built the railroads, broke the land, built the farms, towns and cities. Their labour was most important to the founding and building of Canada, and they were the most important to the economic development of Canada.

Free immigration was important for the same reasons. Since 1999, our government has worked to increase international immigration to Manitoba setting a target of 10 000 newcomers annually. A prominent businessman in North Kildonan pointed out to me, if you increase your population by 1 percent or 10 000 immigrants a year, you will have a strong economy. You will have the labour force and the immigrants' buying power will help the economy. I think he is right, and that is the policy we are following.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this year 7500 immigrants came to the province, and our target is 10 000. There is no doubt that immigration has fuelled our economy, and they have helped build Manitoba into a great province just like in the past.

Another part of our economic plan is the development of energy. Wind farms are being built at St. Leon and Hydro dam projects are about to begin. I could say more on this, but, I leave this for other people on our side of the House to talk on that, and I will go on to another topic, but the business community is really waiting for the construction of these Hydro dams.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to turn to another topic, health care. Ever since Tommy Douglas brought universal public medicare to Saskatchewan, the NDP is known as a party that stands up for health care. We are the health care party of Manitoba and Canada. The NDP not only pioneered universal public medicare, but pioneered Pharmacare, homecare and eliminated health care premiums. Ralph Klein of Alberta still has health care premiums, and recently, Ontario returned to health care premiums. Tommy Douglas was 60 years ahead of many of these people. All you hear from the opposition is privatization. That is their answer to health care.

\* (16:10)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I hear the Health critic in this Chamber talking about learning from other countries on health care. I think the Health critic went to France to get some ideas.

We have the best health care plan right here in Manitoba, or right here in Canada. Why run all over the world? Tommy Douglas gave us this plan. Let us use it. Let us focus on it.

In the 1990s, the Tories brought Connie Curran from the U.S.A. to fix our health care, and she did fix it. She wanted to close the ERs, close entire hospitals and privatize everything. Connie Curran set us back 10 years.

Again, we have the plan of Tommy Douglas right here in Canada, so let us use it.

I would like to give you just a brief overview of what has been happening in health care in Manitoba: Almost 900 more nurses and 139 more doctors practise in Manitoba now than in 1999; an 80% reduction in the number of patients in ER hallways; Health Sciences Centre redevelopment; Brandon Regional Health Centre expansion; MRIs in the Pan Am Clinic and also in Brandon and at the Health Sciences; 15 new CT scanners across the province; almost triple the number of MRIs being performed and more than double the number of CT scans since '99; access centres, one-stop shops for a range of health care and social services in River East and downtown Brandon; cancer treatment waiting times cut in half.

These are just some of the things that we have done, but there are many more. We have the same vision as Tommy Douglas. We will continue to build and keep focus on this very important matter.

I would like to comment on what has happened in northeast Winnipeg. We are twinning the Perimeter Highway at 59. We have the River East Access Centre, the one-stop shop for a range of health care and social services. At Concordia Hospital we have two state-of-the-art operating rooms for hip and knee replacements. There is a cancer care unit at Concordia.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have done well in northeast Winnipeg. Those are just a few things. These show that we really care.

I will end on a different note. I attended the November 11 Remembrance Day service at the Legion 215, and I brought greetings on behalf of this Legislature. I told them that, all sides of the House, we do remember our fallen heroes and all those who served. I pointed out that the veterans' licence plate was introduced, and it had support of all sides of the House, and that the education property tax on legions was eliminated. This was very much appreciated by the veterans.

I would commend the Minister of Transportation and Government Services (Mr. Lemieux) and his staff for having the veterans' licence plates ready for November 11. They had prepared a very informative brochure along with an application form on how to get the veterans' licence plate. It states who qualifies for this, and these brochures can be picked up at your MPI agent. Any MPI agents or claims centres will have these. It is a job well done.

I have spoken on many issues in the Throne Speech, but I will leave that to my colleagues here who will continue. I know the opposition will have things to say about the Throne Speech, but Manitoba is on the right track and doing very well.

**Ms. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Fort Garry):** I am honoured today to second the motion made by the honourable Member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg). It is a pleasure to listen to him so eloquently and thoughtfully open the debate on the 2004 Throne Speech.

I would like to extend my gratitude to my colleagues on both sides of the House for their ongoing support and encouragement since my election in 2003. You each have contributed to my growth in the Legislative Assembly, and for that I am very thankful.

It would be an oversight if I did not thank the Speaker, the Clerk, table officers, Sergeant-at-Arms, pages and interns who assist in the functioning of this magnificent institution. It is a privilege and honour to be a member of the Legislative Assembly representing the fabulous community of Fort Garry. I continually pinch myself to ensure that I am not dreaming. I feel honoured to represent this constituency and often tell people I am living a dream.

It truly is a pleasure to serve this government, a government that believes in partnerships and

inclusion and works to craft workable economic and social strategies for all our communities.

The Speech from the Throne to open the Third Session of the Thirty-Eighth Legislature reflects a number of our accomplishments toward our economic vision, our health strategy, our plans for education, and, most importantly, addresses the diverse needs of all Manitobans.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of our economic vision, I would like to note that our government believes in working collectively with stakeholders to develop comprehensive strategies for Manitoba. In 2001, the Premier's Economic Advisory Council was established with members from labour, business, education, and Aboriginal communities. They have defined a seven-point economic plan for Manitoba, a plan that focuses on placing education first, creating more opportunities for youth, and expanding the scales of the workforce.

They recently sponsored the Aboriginal economic summit, called Bridging Opportunities: A Summit on Aboriginal Business Development and Increasing the Aboriginal Workforce. This was an opportunity for over 200 individuals to come together, gather information, and seek solutions that will enhance Aboriginal economic development and improve Aboriginal representation in the workforce. It also served as a venue to highlight many Aboriginal businesses that have contributed to their communities and to this province. I was fortunate to have participated in the summit, and found the experience exciting and worthwhile.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of our education vision, I would like to note that on the southernmost boundary of the Fort Garry constituency lies the University of Manitoba. I would also like to add that I have developed a very positive working relationship with the staff and students at this facility, a facility that has prospered and flourished under our watch.

In 1999, our government reduced undergraduate tuition fees by 10 percent. They have been frozen ever since. Our approach to education affordability helps ensure that post-secondary education is accessible for more and more Manitobans. Indeed, we have witnessed an enrolment increase of 13 000 students, many of whom reside in my constituency and have benefited from our forward-looking approach to learning and education.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, post-secondary institutions have seen funding for provincial bursaries and scholarships rise 170 percent. This helps attract students to Manitoba institutions to further their research in education. Manitobans and the world benefit from the research and discoveries that are made in the many educational facilities across this province.

The provincial government has invested in capital projects to help expand and upgrade our university campuses. For example, at the University of Manitoba the province invested \$50 million that was used to leverage over \$200 million in private-sector contributions. After years of stagnation in the nineties, it sure was refreshing to see the number of building cranes rising on our campuses.

At the University of Manitoba we get to witness the construction of the Faculty of Engineering building and the beginning of the most recent addition to the campus, the Richardson Centre for Functional Foods and Nutraceuticals. One cannot help feel inspired watching the ongoing development and investment in our educational institutions.

One of our goals in education is to give more Manitobans the opportunity to access post-secondary education in their own communities. Through investments in rural and northern campuses and the Campus Manitoba program, individuals can take university and college courses without leaving their communities. This is yet another strategy to ensure accessible training for a future workforce.

Welcoming immigration to our province is yet another strategy that has been very successful. We have identified a target of 10 000 immigrants per year. This year alone, 7500 immigrants have settled in rural and urban Manitoba. New Canadians bring a wealth of knowledge, skills, and abilities to our province, as well as they add to our cultural mosaic.

\* (16:20)

We have been very fortunate to have a number of new Canadians settle in Fort Garry. They contribute to our economy and community in a number of ways. To ease their transition, the Fort Garry network, in partnership with the Department of Labour and Immigration, provides services to help ease the settlement process. They include English as

a Second Language classes and a resource person to provide individual support.

Our health care system has experienced growth and development and many overall improvements since 1999. The building blocks for these improvements have included the increased training of doctors, nurses and technicians, significant capital investment in hospitals and equipment, and a stronger focus on public health, prevention and innovations and services to improve access to health care and essential procedures. Significant progress has been made in all of these areas. These improvements are witnessed throughout the province as our government makes strategic investments to improve health care.

Since 1999, more doctors and nurses have graduated from our post-secondary institutions, and most remained to practise in Manitoba. Since 1999, new capital investments have gone to rural and northern facilities, such as the Brandon Regional Health Centre. We have also invested in a dialysis treatment unit in Island Lakes. The people of Fort Garry in south Winnipeg will benefit from our capital investment of \$5.5 million in the Victoria General Hospital. This provincial investment has helped leverage additional private-sector funding, totalling \$11 million. These funds will be utilized to expand the hospital's emergency and oncology departments, as well as provide additional services such as a library and meditation garden. These improvements will enhance the services already provided by the very able staff at the Victoria General Hospital.

Waiting lists for lifesaving procedures have shortened due to the training of more technicians, the purchasing of diagnostic equipment, and our making better use of rural and northern hospitals. Since 1999, cardiac wait lists have been reduced by two thirds, and waits for radiation therapy have gone from an average of six weeks to just one week. Manitoba has been recognized for having the shortest waiting lists in the country in these crucial areas.

As I watched the First Ministers' summit on the future of health care, I felt proud to be a member of this Premier's (Mr. Doer) caucus. These negotiations—[interjection] Yes, we should. There was a pause for applause, but you guys missed it. These negotiations, and his role in them, clearly displayed why he is the most popular Premier in

Canada. He successfully led the charge to negotiate an increase in federal health funding and brought back with him an increase of 2.5 percent to Manitoba.

Prevention is another important health strategy our government has invested in. I would like to congratulate the new Minister of Healthy Living (Ms. Oswald) and wish her much success in her new role. Our investment in healthy living promotion, child nutrition and vaccination programs are models for the rest of the country. Our latest initiative, Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures, will gather information from youth and other community stakeholders to identify possible strategies to address the lifestyle choices made by some youth. All Manitobans eagerly await their findings and recommendations for a healthier future.

The Throne Speech announced a new diabetes prevention strategy. This program will develop prevention programs for First Nations and regional health authorities. The strategy will address the effects of diabetes and develop preventative strategies to decrease the incidence of diabetes in our communities.

Seniors are a growing segment of the population in our province and their contributions are immeasurable to our society. As such our government continues to work to ensure that they spend their final years in comfort and dignity. For example, we have invested in specific programs and initiatives such as Safety Aid, a program that provides free basic safety devices and safety audits for low-income seniors. We have also set up a toll-free seniors abuse line to combat financial, physical and emotional abuse. We have increased investments in home care by more than 50 percent and boosted the range of palliative care services that we offer. The Seniors Directorate has expanded their services to include community resource councils which will assist seniors to live independently in their own homes as long as possible. The directorate is also currently working on a Seniors Advocate Program to train seniors to share information with other seniors around safety, financial and legal concerns.

The community building strategies that our government has defined include the development of infrastructure and the investment in human resources. Each strategy is driven by community development principles that include local ownership, community empowerment, inclusion, and, Mr.

Deputy Speaker, partnerships. I am proud to be part of a can-do government that sees their role as builders.

Through our affordable housing initiative, 2100 housing units have been built or refurbished in Winnipeg, Thompson and Brandon. We have invested massively in water management projects such as the floodway expansion. Because highway development is so crucial to our vast province, we are putting \$600 million into our five-year highway program.

I am very proud of my government's role in downtown revitalization. One only has to refer to the rise of the MTS Centre, the new Red River College campus and the Millennium Library in downtown Winnipeg. We are also supporting the redevelopment of the Keystone Centre in Brandon and are integrating hydro expansion into our northern development strategy. At the same time we are fully aware of our environmental responsibilities. This can be seen in our nomination of the boreal forests on the east side of Lake Winnipeg as a UNESCO world heritage site.

We have undertaken a multi-faceted approach to community building. As such, we have initiated a number of programs to assist communities in developing the necessary tools to create capacity and identify community solutions to address concerns. These programs invest in people. One such program is known as Neighbourhoods Alive! Designated communities across the province are given funding to address social and economic needs. Solutions are defined by the individual community, and they may address such issues as safety, housing, employment, family supports, business development and coalition building such as the creation of resident groups. In short, this program recognizes that each community is distinctive and unique.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

Another program we are proud of is Healthy Child Manitoba. It is headed by an inter-departmental committee that looks across department strategies to support early childhood development. Currently, there are 26 parent-child centres within the province that provide family support, child development information and social and recreational activities. It should be noted these initiatives have proven successful for all who participate in the program. Our Lighthouses programs are operated as

a partnership with community stakeholders and ensure that youth have access to recreational, social and educational events in their local communities. We will be opening eight more sites in Manitoba.

Speaking locally, Mr. Speaker, Fort Garry has a very successful program that is operated out of General Byng School. The youth participate in structured recreational events, computer labs and other social activities. There have been up to 90 youth in attendance on one evening. This program provides youth with alternative activities in the evenings that are supervised and structured.

In addition to these many successful programs, our government has also worked to modernize community services by maintaining the single-tier social assistance plan that ensures accessibility and equality for all Manitobans. Mr. Speaker, it should also be noted there has been a reduction in the number of individuals on social assistance in our province thanks to our training and employment strategies and to the various child supports we provide for Manitobans. To summarize, our government's focus on our people strengths and assets has identified meaningful ways to engage individuals in the economy and society and help improve their standard of living.

Rural Manitoba continues to be a struggle due to the closure of the American border and the unpredictable weather that contributed to a late seeding and to the late harvest this year, but our government is committed to supporting our agricultural producers by introducing support programs and lobbying the federal and American governments and providing support for the Rancher's Choice initiative. In addition to these supports, the Throne Speech has announced a reduction in education taxes on farmland by 33 percent in the current year and 50 percent in 2005. Our government recognizes the importance of the rural economy in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of serving as the legislative assistant to the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism (Mr. Robinson). This has given me an opportunity to learn from a knowledgeable teacher and friend, the honourable Member for Rupertsland. I would like to thank him for his support.

We have increased our funding to the arts since 1999. This funding ensures that arts groups continue

to delight and enrich the lives of all Manitobans. Our government recognizes the value of the arts to our economy and to our social well-being. The Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism has worked diligently to expand services to specifically include Aboriginal strategies to ensure their culture is maintained and cultural awareness is enhanced.

\* (16:30)

This has resulted in two specific initiatives, the Aboriginal round table and the Aboriginal tourism strategy. Although each focuses on a different sector, both strategies are promoting the socio-economic development and the advancement of Aboriginal people from across Manitoba. An elder told me that, for too long, Aboriginal people have only been passive participants, and it is now their time to be the leaders in directing their future. Mr. Speaker, I am sure that our government's initiatives will assist in this process.

The exhibits of the Métis and First Nation communities of St. Laurent and Hollow Water at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C., demonstrate the wealth of culture and heritage that Aboriginal communities have to offer Manitoba and, indeed, the entire country. As a government, we share with them their excitement and dreams for the future.

The Junos are coming in March, 2005. The theme is "The Flatter the Land, the Harder the Rock!" This will be a highlight for our music industry, and will also highlight our many Aboriginal artists, as well as contribute to our growing economy.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to conclude by noting that this Throne Speech continues to build upon the core values of Tommy Douglas, our greatest Canadian. Our government continues to build upon our early initiatives in health care, education, economic development, community building, and affordable living. I know that the initiatives outlined in the Throne Speech will encourage the participation of all Manitobans in our communities and in our economy. It is for this and the many other reasons that I support the Speech from the Throne.

**Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I want to make some comments on the Throne Speech and introduce a

motion, but I will do that at the conclusion of my throne speech.

I want to start off by saying that yesterday was a day where, I believe, any government has the opportunity, in a Throne Speech, to bring forward ideas, bring forward a vision, bring forward a sense of how they see the province unfolding in the years to come. I think that that is one thing that is always important and I think it is always an opportunity for any government to speak to Manitobans through this Legislature to say, "We have a vision for Manitoba. We know where this great province can go." Manitoba is a great province, Mr. Speaker, but clearly it can be so much greater.

I think that the disappointment that so many Manitobans have with the Doer government is that they are big on putting out press releases, big on sort of that political spin, perhaps garnering a headline or two, but the unfortunate part for Manitobans is that they do not see any delivery. So what you end up with is a government that loves to message to Manitobans, but when it comes time to making a difference, to try to sort of ease the burden on hardworking Manitoba families, to respect the fact that there are people in Manitoba who are struggling, the issue of child poverty, there are a lot of the issues around families, Mr. Speaker, we do not hear from the Doer government. I think that is unfortunate for all hardworking Manitobans.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that in this Throne Speech, it seemed to me to quote a great Yankee baseball player and great Yankee coach, that once the Throne Speech had been completed—and I would say, in fairness, it was extremely well read by the Lieutenant-Governor. That was his first Speech from the Throne in this Legislature, I would like to acknowledge that I think he did a very, very good job, and I think he proved himself well under the circumstances, I think he will go on to be an excellent Lieutenant-Governor in the province of Manitoba. But it seemed to me that ultimately what this was, as I was saying, that Yogi Berra always said this is déjà vu all over again.

When you start looking at some of the interesting things that came out of this Throne Speech, a lot of it we have heard before and so there was nothing new. There was nothing to say acknowledging that the Doer government is now getting on toward their sixth year of governing, or

even their second mandate. Clearly, this is in their sixth year, and I only put that on the record because so often when this government has to be called to task because of, again, their inability to deliver on the promises that they made, when the public, or when we question them on promises that they made, their first knee-jerk reaction is to always go back and blame the previous government. Or they go back and they blame the federal Liberal government.

Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, and I say perhaps, a government that is brand spanking new, perhaps they have the ability for the first couple of weeks, couple of months, to blame the previous government for things that have happened. But we are now getting into the sixth year, we are over half, almost half of a decade of Doer government. It is interesting in America whenever there is a presidential election they always talk about the first 100 days as what they are going to do with that 100 days.

Six years, Mr. Speaker. It strikes me that after six years you would hope that the government would have found a direction, would have found a sense of where they want to go, a sense that they want to be able to make Manitobans' lives better, that they want to reach out and they want to listen to all Manitobans, because we hear Premier Doer, the First Minister say, "Well, we want to be a government for all Manitobans." But, unfortunately, it is not, and that, I think, is what we continually hear. I think it is unfortunate that Manitobans do not have a Premier that respects all of their rights.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the Doer government tried to convince Manitobans, maybe first of all they tried to convince their own caucus, that they were going to come out with some kind of, or some sort of, economic strategy. I find it fascinating that there is nothing in what they spoke on yesterday in the Throne Speech that would be deemed to be a real economic strategy. I will speak to some specifics on it. I think that if you are going to have an economic strategy, the first thing that you have to understand is that by adding debt to the province means that if there is less money for rural programs, there is less money for education, there is less money for health care.

Mr. Speaker, as the debt load increases, it means that the government has to take dollars away to ensure that debt gets paid. I just think that the missed opportunities that we have seen in the last six years by this Doer government, that they have ramped up

spending. It is to the point frankly where spending is so out of control that, of course, we know historically they have gone in and they have raided Crown corporations, and they have raided the rainy day fund, simply to try to convince Manitobans.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the theme of what I am talking about is major press announcements, but what is below it. So they try to say that they have balanced the budget. But, the Attorney General, I apologize, the Auditor General for Manitoba, has said on numerous occasions, that for three years running, the Doer government has not been able to live inside their means, and therefore they have not balanced the budget. That is unfortunate, because it sends that message to all of the capital that wants to invest in Manitoba. Why would they risk coming to the province of Manitoba when the government of the day cannot manage their own resources, they cannot manage properly? The debt load continues to go up. Why would somebody come in here with capital?

One of the things, I think, that the Doer government does not understand is that capital is very mobile. It can travel all across North America, travel across Canada, and people will invest, and businesses will invest where they see a strong economic climate, where they see a strong opportunity for return on their investment, and where they see an opportunity for businesses to grow.

\*(16:40)

Mr. Speaker, that, I think, is one of the major downfalls and black eyes, frankly, of the Doer government. There have been some businesses by the previous government that they have talked about and they have brought to the great province of Manitoba. Why? Because the previous government, although the NDP, the Doer government, loves to point fingers and blame the previous government, that previous Progressive Conservative government, they understood that we had to diversify our agriculture in Manitoba. So what did they do, Mr. Speaker? They brought in things like McCains. They brought in Simplot. Those are the kinds of things that the previous government did because they knew that we had to expand the rural opportunities in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I know that it pains members opposite whenever they are speaking. It does not

matter where they are speaking in the province of Manitoba, it pains them to even consider speaking about what it is that the previous government did in a positive way because that is not part of their make up. It is not part of their character over there. They would much rather blame and heap scorn on the previous administration because it suits their political fancy. That is the major difference between the New Democratic Party and the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba. We have no problem acknowledging if there is anything that has happened in Manitoba that was good under the previous government, or under this particular government.

I will make a comment on immigration because the Doer government continually talks about how important immigration is, and they are right. It is important, but again, Mr. Speaker, they do not have the ability to recognize that it was the previous administration that started the immigration program.

Mr. Speaker, those are the kinds of things that have made Manitoba a great province. We all acknowledge that the immigration program is a good thing to do, but never once do you hear from the government benches a sense of pride in the province of Manitoba about not being political, but about standing up, and saying what a great program this is, look at how we are welcoming people into the province of Manitoba, look at how they are attracted to the province of Manitoba.

No, they want to just talk about their own program, Mr. Speaker. I think it is unfortunate because the reality is, if you start looking at where some of those wonderful immigrants that are coming into the province of Manitoba are settling in our province, where the jobs are being created, where there is hope and opportunity, where there is a sense of growth, well, let us list them. I do not have the full list in front of me, but I suspect that Altona, Morden, Winkler, Niverville, Steinbach, I think there is a bit of a pattern. Heaven be that most of these constituencies, in fact, I think that all of those constituencies are held by Progressive Conservative MLAs who have done an outstanding job on behalf of the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I want to pay a special tribute to my colleague from Russell who has also been very aggressive in part of this, but again, it speaks to the issue that immigrants are coming into Manitoba, being specific about where they want to be. They are

wanting to settle in ridings, constituencies that the Progressive Conservative Party is very involved in because that is where the hope and opportunity is.

Mr. Speaker, I will tell you that when you listen and you talk about an economic strategy—well, again, I do not want to break the bad news to the government benches—but I can tell you that when the Chamber of Commerce did a survey, and I know that from time to time the Premier has criticized—I do not know why—but he has criticized the Chamber of Commerce, I just find it is interesting that their survey was very, very high on the mayor of Winnipeg, very high on the fact that the new mayor of Winnipeg is doing some things to promote economic opportunities, promote business in the city of Winnipeg. When simply asked the question, what kind of leadership on an economic or what kind of economic vision do you see coming from the Premier of Manitoba, three out of four of them said it was dismal, that there is nothing happening. They do not say that they are somewhat encouraged; they say that it is dismal, that there is nothing happening.

Mr. Speaker, three out of four business leaders in the province of Manitoba say when it comes to an economic strategy out of this government, it is zip, it is nada, it is nothing. Nothing is happening. That is coming directly from the business community. I am sure there are comments from the benches, the members on the opposite side that somehow they are going to start criticizing three out of four business leaders. That is part and parcel of what makes this party different between their party and our party.

Maybe, Mr. Speaker, if I just spoke a little quieter for a second, we might hear one of the government members criticize the business community. Maybe if they read their in-baskets, the memo says, "Please, whatever you do, whenever the Leader of the Opposition stands up and talks about business, do not heckle him because we think they are actually going to support us. We think the business community actually is going to believe we are going to be a province that drives business into Manitoba." But they know this government has not brought one new industry to this province in six years. Not one.

When you simply talk to the business leaders of Manitoba, and I think it is fair enough, when you ask those business leaders, "Can you name"—and this is not a true or false; it is simply an opportunity for the

business community to engage in a conversation—"one thing the Doer government has done to make your business life easier?" I asked that question some three years ago to the Chamber. I am still waiting for an answer. The fact of life is, Mr. Speaker, that they know they have done nothing. They have done nothing. The reason is it comes back down to the premise of what is an economic strategy. If you have an economic strategy, businesses know they can drive to ensure they can create growth. They can create opportunities. They can create jobs.

What happens when you are able to do that? That means there is growth and hope in the province and education can be funded properly. You can fund health care properly. You can look at recognizing hardworking Manitobans and start lowering their taxes, Mr. Speaker. That is something members opposite do not understand. We end up with a situation, and this is the part I believe Manitobans are really starting to doubt about the Doer government. The fact is Manitoba, under the Doer government, is now headed to be the only have-not province in western Canada.

Now, of course, the members opposite will start saying, "Well, Alberta has oil and B.C. does not have an NDP government. They have another type of government in B.C., but maybe they have salmon." That is all good and fine and dandy, but what about Saskatchewan? Why is it Manitoba, the proud province of Manitoba, under the Doer government, is going to watch Saskatchewan pass it in terms of being a have province? That is shameful. I am sure members opposite on the other side are going to say, "Well, that is not fair. Saskatchewan has something that we don't." Whatever that is, Mr. Speaker, this government should wake up and realize they have to get their act together. That is all Manitobans want. We do not want to be the last have-not province in western Canada. What kind of a signal does that send to the rest of Canada?

Again, to those immigrants who want to come into our province and feel proud about being a Manitoban, how do you feel proud about being a Manitoban when the government of the day cannot even keep up with Saskatchewan? I think it speaks to the fact that this government is going to try and convince their own benches that they have an economic strategy. But there is no way, and the proof is in the pudding. When you ask three out of four business leaders in Manitoba what they think of the

Doer government, they think they have failed miserably to provide any kind of economic strategy.

\* (16:50)

I would say to members in the House that I have heard the First Minister from time to time, I think I even heard him outside in the hall today when he was asked the question about balanced budgets. Balanced budgets to members opposite, again, I understand why it is a millstone around your neck. I understand why you do not like it. I understand why it is tough to actually stand up in front of Manitobans and try to be accountable, try to be transparent, try to understand how it is that Manitobans want a sense of when they pay their taxes where is it being spent, how is it being spent, what is it being spent on.

Do not get me started on Hydra House, Mr. Speaker. I have a chance to get back to Hydra House in a minute, but the point is that that balanced-budget legislation that was brought in by the previous government, that we on this side of the House believe in and want to improve because we think it is important that Manitobans do understand where their tax dollars are being spent, that has been a millstone around this government's neck. They do not like it. They do not like it one bit because it makes and holds them accountable.

I think about some of the members on the government benches who were in the previous Pawley government. That was the government that racked up deficit after deficit after deficit. That government, those ministers that were in there, I am sure they are just really disappointed that they have to somehow live within this balanced-budget legislation because it is not natural to them. It is not natural to something that they believe, in terms of how their party operates. If it was something that they believed in, then clearly the previous Progressive Conservative government would not have had to ratchet down the spending to understand the importance of how governments must live within their means. We saw none of that from the previous NDP government, and frankly we are not seeing it from the government members on the benches opposite. They simply do not believe in being accountable.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that one of the economic strategies that we have, if you could call it that, under this Doer government is—let me just think. I

think the so-called economic strategy from the Doer government is more VLTs and more hours, more hours to play those VLTs. Boy, that is really going to ratchet up the old revenue. The fact of life is, it does not. It goes quite the other way.

Again, I would have thought members on the opposite side would have understood that. I thought that all of those members sitting over there, when it came to a caucus discussion or when it came to the Cabinet table where somebody said, "You know what? We better introduce a few more VLTs and, you know what, let us make sure that we kind of expand those gambling hours," I would have thought that somebody on the other side, the government side, would have said this, "Just a minute, hang on now. We opposed that when we were in opposition. We never liked it when we were in opposition, and now that we are in government, that we have the control to be able to deal with the number of VLTs, to be able to deal with the hours that the VLTs are open for gambling, acknowledging that there is a price to be paid by those families that go into those institutions," I would have thought members opposite would have gladly stood up and said, "No, we do not believe in that. We are not going to proceed down that road. We have a better idea of how to bring in an economic strategy to the province of Manitoba."

Mr. Speaker, sadly, and I say sadly, members on the government benches absolutely did not say no to that. They embraced it with both arms and said, "Let her rip. Let us go for it. How many VLTs could we put in? How many hours can we have Manitobans gambling?" Now, what we see is in unprecedented levels the message going out to hardworking Manitoba families: "Get up off your couch, folks. Do not stay at home. Do not spend time with the family. Get up off your couch and come on down to the casinos and have some fun." That is the kind of economic strategy that we see from the Doer government.

The problem is they had a chance to say no. They had a chance on the other side to put a stop to it. They had a chance to say this: "When we were in opposition, we did not like it, and we spoke out about it. Now that we are in government, we are going to do what we believe, and that is say no." But, Mr. Speaker, they cannot do it. They cannot do it because they do not know what they believe in. They do not know what their principles are. They only know that if it moves, tax it. If it moves again, give

her another tax. Do anything we can to try to get more money out of hardworking families in Manitoba, rather than recognize the issues and the seriousness that this has caused our families in Manitoba. That is the difference between the New Democratic Party and the Progressive Conservative Party. We have principles. There are issues that we stand on and that we believe.

I would also like to say, Mr. Speaker, that when you look at an economic strategy, can you tell me what other province, what other province would stand before the business community and say, "Now it is the democratic right of any work environment for the workers to decide if they should be part of the union or not"? That is fair enough. That is absolutely the way it should be. It should be the democratic right of the workers to choose. They have that ability and we respect it, but that is not good enough for the current government. They do not like it. They do not like the fact that workers should be able to choose and decide exactly where they go by having a secret ballot. No, they do not like that. They like that big, heavy hand of government that comes in and intimidates people, intimidates them to the point where they are not sure what they are doing, but if they just sign this card everything will be rosy and it will be fine.

You can imagine some hardworking Manitoban at home and the doorbell rings late at night. They answer the door and there before you are two members, two burly folks and there they are and what they are saying is, "You know, Fred or Joan, if you do not sign this card, you will be the only person in the workforce. How are you going to get along with your friends?" Well, what do they expect? All they are trying to do is they are trying to do a job, so they sign the card, and then the folks walk away from the door and say, "We got the first one. Now we got the first one. Now we are going to get the rest of them."

Mr. Speaker, if you want to create an economic environment in a province that has a chance to grow and prosper and be better for those hard workers, you give them the right to a secret ballot. You let them decide for themselves whether they want to be part of a union, not forced upon them, a fair choice. That, simply, is freedom of choice and democracy. Again, I think that there is a tremendous difference between the way the members opposite on the government benches see the workforce and the way that our party understands how to grow and create jobs.

The fact, Mr. Speaker, is that we know that Gamble Electric, a business that had been in Winnipeg for some three decades, three generations of a business, and you know the interesting part about them is they worked with electricians that, yes, they paid at a rate that was affordable by who? It was affordable by the seniors that they worked for. That is what their target market was. They wanted to work with seniors, respecting that those seniors were on a fixed income.

Well, Mr. Speaker, under the Doer government's so-called economic growth strategy, in come the boys. They get them all signed up in the union. What happens? Gamble Electric is out of business. Out of business. Why? Because they were not prepared to charge the kind of rates to the seniors on a fixed income that the Doer government, through their labour legislation, was going to force these electricians to charge the seniors. Well, that is a huge difference between the way government benches operate and how they see business operating in Manitoba and how we do.

\* (17:00)

Clearly, had they been given the secret ballot opportunity, everybody would have respected their decision, but they did not have it. It was snatched away from them, because this Doer government does not believe in allowing workers the democratic right to choose.

Mr. Speaker, we are seeing the same discussion in this Chamber when you talk about building the floodway in Manitoba. Imagine the signal that it sends throughout Canada, throughout North America, that if you want to have work on the floodway, one of the biggest single projects that Manitoba is going to see for years to come, guess what, you have got to be part of a union. Well, where would that come from? Why is it? I mean, who sits around the Cabinet table of the Doer government and says, "Hang on for a second, you are telling me, I want to make sure I understand this, so most of the companies that would be working on this out of Manitoba are non-unionized"? "Yes, that is correct" would be the answer.

So, just again so I understand this, the Doer government is going to suggest that those companies who have chosen to be non-union are going to be forced to join a union. Yes, Mr. Speaker, that was the

response that would have been happening around the Cabinet table. Well, how can you possibly send a message that we are prepared to be open for business in the province of Manitoba, when not only have they taken away the secret ballot, they have taken away the secret ballot so that everybody that signs cards has to be part of the union when they get to 65 percent, no secret vote?

But, you know what, Mr. Speaker, that is not enough. I think what we are going to do, and this is the Premier (Mr. Doer) and his Cabinet ministers sitting around, I think what we had better do, just to make sure because what if these are non-unionized companies, what if 65 percent do not sign up, then they cannot be part of the union. I got a better idea, why do we not just force them to pay union dues if they get work?

Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely amazed that that would be the kind of economic forecast that this government would seek and sit back and say, "Well, you know what, I know that we got a few of our union buddies to pay off, but just think about what a great thing that is going to be for the province of Manitoba." How can it be so great? How can it send a message that this government is even giving people a chance? They are going to force them. What kind of a message does that send to Manitobans?

Yet this Premier and this government will try and stand up in front of Manitobans and say this: "Do not worry. We have an economic strategy; we have got an economic strategy to grow this province." They do not. They have nothing, Mr. Speaker, in fact it goes against any principle that anybody has run a business. It goes against the principles of freedom and opportunity. It goes against the principles of entrepreneurship. It goes against the principles of trying to grow capital and trying to reach out to people and say this: "Come and work in my shop; come and work for me. We have a great thing going here; we respect the rights of workers; and we are not going to force anybody to join a union. We are not going to force anybody to be part of a union."

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that they are making notes. I will be happy to pass my speech over to the minister so perhaps he can sit back and listen.

I will tell you that, as we have been travelling around the province and I have been listening to a lot

of Manitobans, one of the things that they were saying very, very loud and clear is there are enough serious issues going on in Manitoba that we should be in the Legislature debating them.

Mr. Speaker, I sent a letter to Premier Doer asking him particularly, talking about the BSE crisis, knowing that it was going on and on. I saw families that were suffering. I say that on the basis that I sat at their kitchen tables. I looked them in the eyes. I met with them with my colleague from Emerson. We met with them in La Broquerie. I met with them in Russell with my colleague from Russell. I met with them in Ste. Rose with my colleague from Ste. Rose. Those families, those incredible entrepreneurs out there who were put in a position that, really, I am not sure that all of Manitobans truly, truly understand, that May 20, 2003, was a dark day in Manitoba, across Canada, but I was amazed that we would stand up and talk to Manitobans in La Broquerie. There was a good gathering of people there; they were all cattle producers, very frustrated. I remember one in particular who was a man I would have to say would be in his mid-40s. He was addressing the group and he was almost in tears, because he was frustrated that he had a family and he had a farm and he knew how to produce the best beef in Canada, but he was stopped from doing so. It was not because he was a bad operator, but because of the border being shut down on May 20, 2003.

So we listened, you could hear a pin drop. Here was a man that admitted openly that he was on medication, that he just did not know how he could provide food for his family. So we asked the question: "Surely, with all the government programs that we hear from this Doer government, surely you are getting tremendous support and tremendous help to get you through this crisis." Well, Mr. Speaker, without missing a beat, he said, "I am paying more on education tax than I am getting from government programs."

Again, I am sure members opposite will say, "Well, we dealt with that; we fixed that." Mr. Speaker, they did not. Instead of throwing a small token to the farmers who are in dire straits, another \$47 million would have taken care of all of the farming community.

This Premier (Mr. Doer) said he had the money. He said very clearly, "We have the money; we know that our farming community is suffering." Why

would he do as he did? Why would he go down to 33 percent and then some hope that maybe next year it might be 50 percent? Well, Mr. Speaker, I will tell you this, and I have heard the comments from KAP and I have heard the comments from AMM. I understand that. Their comments were basically this; they said, "Sure, we are happy that the government has made a commitment." But clearly if a man was dehydrated beyond belief and somebody came up to him with a glass of water, of course they are going to say, "Thank you. I am going to take it," but not when the guy is sitting with a 500-gallon tank of water behind him. Do the right thing. Eliminate the special levy today. Take the 48 million bucks and get rid of it.

Mr. Speaker, in Ste. Rose, I can tell you that a lot of producers were saying that, if there is financial trouble in the agriculture community, then that means that there is trouble in the towns nearby; and, when there is trouble in the towns nearby, it is trouble for all of Manitoba. Those are the kinds of people that are out there asking the Doer government to please help them. I thought it was fascinating that our colleagues on this side of the House, reaching out to cattle producers, we did something about it. We came up with a five-point BSE strategy. The fact of life is what we did is we looked at what the Doer government had said and what they delivered on. They said that they were going to put \$180 million into helping our cattle producers. By their own admission, they flowed through, adding more debt to the cattle producers, they flowed about \$90 million. Well, we said there is 90 million still on the table. I say this to members opposite, and everybody on this side of the House sends a message to the government of the day—

**An Honourable Member:** Not us.

\* (17:10)

**Mr. Murray:** Well, you know, not us. Is it not interesting? All we have is a solution that we want to put forward, not because we did it. Mr. Speaker, it is not because it was the Progressive Conservative Party that reached out and tried to come up with a plan. We were simply saying this is a crisis. It is a crisis if you have actually taken time to travel and listen to Manitobans.

It is quite a different story, by the way, if you ask those hard-pressed Manitobans to come into your

nice big office here in this Legislature. There is a difference, because this place potentially can intimidate. Whereas you go out to their homes, you go out to their farms and you sit with them, you realize the pain and suffering.

These are proud people. These are proud producers in Manitoba. They do not suffer for lack of being proud. They suffer because the Doer government turns their back on them. That is why they suffer, Mr. Speaker.

Simply put, we said we have a five-point BSE plan that we would put down. I will gladly provide the honourable member over there who is taking notes with the five-point BSE plan. They have probably never heard of it. Probably arrived somewhere in the caucus door and they probably figured they better shred it. They wanted to shred it, why, you know, it came from the opposition so we better just toss this out.

To their peril, Mr. Speaker, because our five-point BSE plan was not perfect, but it dealt with the issue that Manitobans were saying they wanted more slaughter capacity and they wanted it now. They do not want another meeting, Mr. Speaker.

They wanted to have the ability to have our slaughterhouses, our packing houses federally inspected here in Manitoba. We wanted to ensure that we were going to be able to take the product that was not available throughout Canada, and give them the opportunity to come and sell their product to Manitobans, to Ontarians, to Saskatchewan. I mean, that is exactly what we were trying to do. That was what our plan was all about, Mr. Speaker.

We also felt that we should put \$2 million into a feasibility study. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because we on this side of the House realize that we do not have all the answers, but we know there are experts out there that do. That is why with McCains, with Simplot, that is why the previous government engaged the experts to go out and bring those industries into Manitoba. They did it because they knew that Manitoba had to diversify their economy of rural Manitoba. That is what they did.

The other thing we talked about is that we wanted to make sure that there would be a cash advance to those producers who need it, Mr. Speaker. I am delighted to see the First Minister (Mr.

Doer) supposing and making all sorts of allegations from his seat. Again, and I say this, and I am delighted. Perhaps this is the first time in this fashion that he and I can absolutely have an opportunity. As I said publicly, I have said it through the media, I did not get a response from him. That is fine. That is his prerogative.

But simply, Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House were saying, if you believe there is a crisis. We do in the BSE issue. Perhaps they do not. Perhaps it is because they do not go out and visit producers in Manitoba. But I can tell you, our five-point BSE plan, I said very clearly, I would meet with the premier. I would meet with the Premier at any time, and I would be happy to work with the Premier to solve this crisis.

It is not, Mr. Speaker, and maybe on the government benches they see the politics of something. Again, as I started my comments in the speech, it is always about what kind of a press release can we give, but let us not worry about the follow-up, but if we can get a front-page headline, we have done our job and then we can go windsurfing.

I do not believe that that is what Manitobans want. Manitobans want, and I think it would be interesting, Mr. Speaker, if Manitoba families in crisis throughout rural Manitoba said, you know what, look at the Legislature, look at our elected officials. They are working together to try to solve a problem. I think that would have sent a tremendous message out, not only to our producers, but all of Manitobans.

Absolutely, Mr. Speaker, a five-point BSE plan that would have worked to help solve a problem here in Manitoba. But what did we hear from the government benches? Not a thing. All we heard when I asked if there was any interest on the government benches of coming back into the House to debate this issue, they talked about will you sign something.

Really? You know what. I believe that a crisis trumps any kind of a signed agreement if you believe there is a crisis. I understand people on the other side are struggling as to whether this is a crisis or not. We do not on this side because we have met with those producers. We have met with those people who are struggling, and they are looking for some help from a

government not just more pat answers, not just more press releases, not just more spin doctoring. That is what we are looking for, Mr. Speaker.

The other thing I heard when I travelled around the province of Manitoba is that a lot of very interested taxpayers in Manitoba, a lot of hardworking Manitoba families, were saying, "What is the Doer government doing with this Hydra House issue?" Why is it, Mr. Speaker, that \$1.4 million has been spent on Sea-Doos and hot tubs instead of putting it on those clients, those people who needed it? Why is it the Doer government has spent \$1.4 million on those sorts of items rather than where it should be, where it should be on the young adults that need it so much?

I believe Manitobans want to hear the answer and all we hear—I am delighted that the Premier (Mr. Doer) is in his seat because here we go. Right. Oh, yeah. I called for the public inquiry. Why do you not do this? Why do you not do that? In '92 this happened and all that sort of finger pointing. All we have to do very simply, and the Premier can do this very clearly, is call for an independent public inquiry so that Manitobans can get to the bottom of it. Do the right thing. There is your opportunity. Stand up for Manitobans. That is the right thing.

Mr. Speaker, we keep getting roadblocks. We keep getting all sorts of things. By the way, just because I think it is important to read on the record, I was delighted the members opposite felt somehow that my chief of staff was left out of the mix. He was left out. There is something going on on the other side benches because all this roster of people were called, but they left out their current chief of staff. That is incredible. There must be some kind of sinister plot because the current chief of staff is not part of it. I understand members opposite are a little bit sensitive on this issue, but the fact of life is Manitobans want to know why under the Doer government \$1.4 million went to toys and not to proper care. That is what they want to know. All we have to do is call the independent, public inquiry and the Minister of Family Services (Ms. Melnick). I do not know. Maybe I am missing an opportunity. Maybe she is saying, "Yes, I will call it." Is that what the Minister for Family Services—are you saying you are going to call the independent, public inquiry? Is that what you were saying when you were pointing at me? I just need to know because if you are, this would be great news to Manitobans who want to

know exactly where all of this mismanagement and this money was spent. Where did it go? That is what Manitobans want to know.

Mr. Speaker, there are other issues we heard and were the reasons that we wanted to come back into the Legislature. There are a lot of Manitobans who are not understanding why it is the Doer government would raid \$203 million out of Manitoba Hydro and then go in and gerrymander the Public Utilities Board. Actually, when Hydro comes forward and asks for an increase, the Public Utilities Board says, "No, we are not giving you what you are asking for. We are going to double it. We are going to make it twice as much as what you asked for." So now we know in the province of Manitoba that Hydro rates are going to go up at least 10 percent, at least 10 percent. That is a backdoor tax that is basically there because the Doer government raided \$203 million out of a Crown corporation at a time when they did not have the money.

Let us go back to talking about a long-term economic strategy. What kind of long-term economic strategy is it when you go in and force a Crown corporation to give you money, money they do not have that they have to go and borrow? Who suffers? Ultimately, we are finding out who suffers. It is the people of Manitoba because they get their rates jacked up simply because this government cannot manage.

\* (17:20)

Mr. Speaker, I think it is very interesting that yesterday in Alberta there was an election. I am not sure who on the other side won the pool of how many seats or who was going to win the election, but I know that Ralph Klein has come back for another term, another Conservative victory in Alberta. I know that the members on the government bench opposite are delighted that Mr. Klein is back. I know that, somehow, the Doer government struggles.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, I always find it fascinating when you talk about an economic strategy, when you look at western Canada, which province is always looked upon as that beacon of economic strategy, which province always answers the bell when they talk about growth, when they talk about revenues, when they talk about taxes, which province is it? It is Alberta.

When you compare Alberta between Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia, there is an interesting thread, Mr. Speaker. When you look at Alberta and you compare it to Saskatchewan, Manitoba and British Columbia there is one interesting thread and that thread is very simply this: Alberta has never elected, nor will they ever elect, a New Democratic Party government.

How is the economy in Alberta, Mr. Speaker? I am sure at some point we are going to hear from the Premier (Mr. Doer) that somehow, I am not sure how it is going to be, but he will come up with numbers and say that we are way ahead of Alberta. That is what we hear from this Premier. There is going to be some kind of notion, some kind of sense that, really, Alberta's numbers are not accurate, but really Manitoba is doing so much better.

**An Honourable Member:** He wants to share their revenue.

**Mr. Murray:** Let us talk about that. The fact of life is Ralph Klein, the Premier of Alberta, is going to stand up in their centennial of 2005 with a sign. That sign, for all of Manitobans and, frankly, it is a sign for all of Canada. I hope that this Premier pays attention to it. Mr. Speaker, that sign simply says that our province is now debt free. If this Premier were to do the same thing in front of Manitobans, he would say, if you go to his own financial statements, "My sign says that under my watch, under my premiership, I have added one billion dollars of tax-supported debt on the back of Manitobans." That is a thousand dollars for every man, woman and child. That is what he would have to do if he wanted to try and emulate what the Premier of Alberta has done.

**An Honourable Member:** What has his revenue been?

**Mr. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, that is always the question. That is always a good answer. We all know that this Premier does not have a revenue problem. Boy, every time he turns around, the millions of dollars just keep flowing in.

**An Honourable Member:** He has got a spending habit.

**Mr. Murray:** He has got a spending habit. That is exactly right, and because of that Manitobans unfortunately suffer the consequence. For every

dollar of revenue that comes into this province, he is spending a dollar thirty.

Mr. Speaker, that does not look like an economic strategy for the province of Manitoba. It does not make sense. That is not the kind of province that we want. As a matter of fact, I can share this with the Premier, I was at the Manitoba Home Builders' Association's annual meeting, and they were all basically very, very buoyed up. They have been working hard. They have been building homes, absolutely. Now, you are not taking credit for that, are you? Maybe they are. I do not know.

Anyway, the Manitoba home builders will not give them credit for it because the Manitoba home builders were saying very, very clearly, were coming up to me and saying, "Can you tell me, when for the last two years the Manitoba home builders have had great growing years and all this prosperity, from their perception, why is it that the Doer government has to raid the rainy day fund to balance their budget?"

Why, Mr. Speaker, if the prosperity is there, why is it that there is this opportunity, but yet the Doer government cannot manage and therefore they have to ensure that they take money out of the rainy day fund just to balance their budget? Those are the kinds of issues that Manitobans are very curious to get an answer on.

I know that when the Premier gets a chance at rebuttal, and I know when I get a chance to sit in this chair and he gets a chance to rebut, I know he is going to let it go. I know he is going to let it rip, and that is fine. But, as you are letting it rip, Mr. Premier, could you possibly tell the House and all Manitobans when you had a \$380-million rainy day fund when you came into government, not like any other premiers, by the way—most premiers when they came in—of course, we go back to Campbell in B.C. The NDP had devastated that province. Campbell is trying to do the best he can, but not many premiers have inherited the kind of economy, the balanced budget, the kind of revenues this Premier inherited. Why has he taken the rainy day fund down to \$79 million?

I hope in his rant, when he gets a chance to make a response to what I have said, he answers one question. What is his strategy to live under the balanced-budget legislation by taking the Fiscal

Stabilization Fund up to that 5 percent of revenues that it should be around, \$300 million, \$350 million?

What is the strategy? If there is an economic strategy, if they have one, if he has one, then clearly he would be able to say to Manitobans, "Here is my plan to replace the money I have taken out of the rainy day fund. Here is what I am going to do to make sure that when there is a crisis in Manitoba, the money is going to be there so that Manitobans have that assurance." Where is that going to come from? That is what we want to hear from this Premier, but we hear none of it. Why? Because this Premier has a spending habit. He has a spending habit. As the song says, "Old habits die hard."

That is what we are hearing from this Premier, no sense of how to rebuild the economy. A lot of sense on how to spend. A lot of sense of how we can spend taxpayers' money, and not one sense of how to replace the rainy day fund. That is the essence of what a long-term economic strategy surely must be. We hear nothing of it from this Premier because their strategy is not to grow the economy. Their strategy is how do we spend? How do we make sure that does not happen? Mr. Speaker, the point I make simply is this: What we have is a Premier who has taken Manitoba in a direction that, prior to him being Premier, when Mr. Filmon was the Premier of Manitoba, there was a sense as we got toward the end of the nineties, that we were on our way, we were an inch away from becoming a have province. That was the kind of message Manitobans had. What have we seen in the past six years? I simply have to go back to Saskatchewan which is really tough for me. That is where I was born. I left there because I thought Manitoba is the place to be. Now, all of a sudden, Saskatchewan is passing Manitoba.

I simply say that a family of four, prior to this Premier being the Premier of Manitoba, was paying about \$200 less tax than the family in Saskatchewan. That was how it sort of worked out because the Filmon government was on our way to making Manitoba a competitive, have province. As a lot of

my colleagues are asking, quite rightly so, "How are we doing? How are we doing under the leadership here?" Mr. Speaker, that family of four in Saskatchewan is now paying some \$700 less than the family in Manitoba so you have a change of almost \$1000. That is what has happened under the Doer government. That is the kind of leadership, that is the kind of economic strategy we see under this government. Manitobans understand that. That is why Manitobans will not be fooled when the Doer government stands up and says, "Here is our seven-point plan. Here is our economic strategy. Oh, we have got a plan to grow Manitoba, all right."

Mr. Speaker, Manitobans know, and I know the First Minister knows full well, that three out of four business leaders in the community of Manitoba believe he is doing a terrible job when it comes to ensuring our economy is growing. He knows that because that is what an independent survey said. That is unfortunate for Manitoba, because it is those businesspeople that will make the difference, but this Premier does not understand that. He believes that by spending and spending somehow there is going to be that magic fairy dust that everything is going to be better. Everything is going to grow.

That is the difference between the New Democratic Party and the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba. We understand that a long-term economic strategy means how do we compete with other provinces. How do we make our province more competitive on the taxation side? How do we ensure we are not falling behind provinces like Saskatchewan? That we are not going to be the only have-not province in western Canada?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. When this matter is again before the House the honourable member will have unlimited time.

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

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 23, 2004

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