

**Fourth Session - Thirty-Eighth Legislature**  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
and  
**PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

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authority of  
The Honourable George Hickes  
Speaker*

**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.
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.
Vacant	Fort Whyte	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, October 31, 2005

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

### PRAYERS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### PETITIONS

#### Coverage of Insulin Pumps

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Insulin pumps cost over \$6,500.

The cost of diabetes to the Manitoba government in 2005 will be approximately \$214.4 million. Each day 16 Manitobans are diagnosed with this disease compared to the national average of 11 new cases daily.

Good blood sugar reduces elimination of kidney failure by 50 percent, blindness by 76 percent, nerve damage by 60 percent, cardiac disease by 35 percent and even amputations.

Diabetes is an epidemic in our province and will become an unprecedented drain on our struggling health care system if we do not take action now.

The benefit of having an insulin pump is it allows the person living with this life-threatening disease to obtain sugar control and become a much healthier, complication-free individual.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Premier (Mr. Doer) of Manitoba to consider covering the cost of insulin pumps that are prescribed by an endocrinologist and a medical doctor under the Manitoba Health Insurance Program.

Submitted on behalf of Joyce Davidson, Raymond Davidson, Morna Cook and many, many others.

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

### Crocus Investment Fund

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The Manitoba Government was made aware of serious problems involving the Crocus Fund back in 2001.

As a direct result of the government ignoring the red flags back in 2001, over 33 000 Crocus investors lost over \$60 million.

Manitoba's provincial auditor stated "We believe the department was aware of the red flags at Crocus and failed to follow up on those in a timely way."

The relationship between some union leaders, the Premier (Mr. Doer) and the NDP seems to be the primary reason as for why the government ignored the red flags.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba to consider the need to seek clarification on why the government did not act on fixing the Crocus Fund back in 2001.

Signed by Larry Hauber, Cheryl Hauber and Denis Simard.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

#### Avian Influenza

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** Mr. Speaker, I have a statement for the House.

Earlier this afternoon, preliminary results were released from a cross-Canada avian flu survey of wild birds. In the early results from the survey, H5 avian influenza has been detected in samples from two provinces, Manitoba and Québec. Samples from other provinces are still being tested. In Manitoba, the H5 strain of avian influenza has been detected in five waterfowl birds, approximately 1 percent of all birds tested. Further testing will be required to determine the N type and pathogenicity of the influenza.

The findings are not surprising and there is no need for public alarm. Avian influenza is often present in such birds as waterfowl. Of course, there are virulent forms of the disease which can pose a threat to other birds. Even highly virulent forms of avian influenza did not necessarily pose a risk to human health. The results of the survey do not indicate a highly virulent form of the virus but do indicate that further testing is warranted. Additional tests will be carried out within the next one to two weeks.

As I said, this result is not unexpected. The purpose of this survey was to provide base line data so that the trends in influenza can be monitored in future years. A similar survey conducted in Minnesota also found the presence of H5 influenza in 1 percent of the samples, but no subsequent problems occurred. The government, the Chief Veterinarian officer and the CFIA will ensure that further tests are conducted in a timely manner and that the results are reported to the public. We will also continue to work closely with the poultry industry to ensure that these disease preventions remain a high priority.

\* (13:35)

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the update offered by this Minister of Agriculture on the state of a potential avian flu pandemic in our province. I think it is important that the Minister of Health (Mr. Sale), as well as the Minister of Agriculture, address this issue and that we are further prepared in this province than perhaps we are right now with the potential of this becoming a pandemic across Canada and in Manitoba.

I am pleased to hear at this point in time that there is no evidence yet to fear a flu pandemic in our province. I am, however, concerned about whether or not this provincial government is truly prepared in the event a flu pandemic outbreak occurs in our province. We have heard a lot from this government with respect to round table discussions, reviews, but no concrete plan in the event of an outbreak in our province, Mr. Speaker. That truly I am very concerned about and indeed Manitobans are very concerned about, so I think it is important that not only the Minister of Agriculture give updates on a regular basis in this House, but also the Minister of Health with respect to what their ongoing plan is to deal with a potential pandemic.

Again, we are very concerned about that, Mr. Speaker. We are happy that today we do not have to

be concerned about this as of yet, but certainly I would hope that this government would stop just having the round table discussions because actions speak louder than words, and I would hope that the Minister of Health will come up with some sort of a concrete plan so that we do not have to fear what could potentially happen in our province. Thank you very much.

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

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

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for providing this report and update. I would, however, have expected at least two additional pieces of information which would have been very valuable in interpreting these results.

One wonders, for example, have there been analyses in past years to tell us to what extent this strain of avian flu may or may not have been there, and, clearly, we do not know from the information that the minister has provided whether this is something which is totally new or whether this is something which, in fact, has been present before but just not detected.

The second piece of information that I would have expected from the minister is that there are certain species of waterfowl which nest in Asia and then migrate through Manitoba and, certainly, if this was specific to the species of waterfowl which one might expect to have been breeding in Asia and then migrating south through Manitoba, coming, as it were, across the Bering Strait and down through here, that it would have had more significance in suggesting a means of transmission or a means by which this particular avian flu virus may have come from Asia, and that it might have come more recently.

So I look forward to further reports from the minister and hope that the next time she gets up we have more complete information. Thank you.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### Bill 2—The Private Investigators and Security Guards Amendment Act

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that Bill 2, The Private Investigators and Security Guards Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les

détectives privés et les gardiens de sécurité, be now read a first time.

***Motion presented.***

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Mr. Speaker, this creates a new category known as the in-house security guard and requires that they be licensed to complete training and that employers of these guards become registered. In addition, the bill adds the requirement that businesses licensed to provide private investigators or security guards be insured.

***Motion agreed to.***

\* (13:40)

**Introduction of Guests**

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the loge to my left where we have with us Mr. Harry Enns, who is a former Member for the Lakeside. Also we have Don Orchard, who is a former Member for Pembina.

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

**ORAL QUESTIONS**

**Gang Activity  
Reduction Strategy**

**Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, Winnipeg is known as the murder capital of Canada. This is an appalling statistic. It is a travesty. Under the watch of this Premier and his NDP government we have seen the growth of violent crime and gang activity which is poisoning our communities.

Mr. Speaker, there are over 3000 gang members today under this Premier's watch. They are preying on our young people. They are terrorizing our neighbourhoods. The Hells Angels and the Bandidos have moved into this province under this Premier's watch. That shows how open this province is when it comes to gang activity.

I would like to ask this Premier why has he turned a blind eye to these violent and terrorizing crimes. Why is he doing nothing?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** I would like to point out to members opposite that, when they had an alternative to vote for safety in our communities last year, with the 54 additional police officers we were putting in place in Winnipeg and in rural Manitoba, when we were putting in place more Crown

prosecutors to deal with gang activity, they had their choice. They voted against more police officers in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Murray:** Well, Mr. Speaker, our police officers, frankly, are underresourced. They need help to deal with these violent and violent-related crimes. There are more offences per officer in Winnipeg than of similar sizes in cities throughout Canada. Our plan was introduced, *Enough is Enough!* safer communities proposed by our Progressive Conservative Party. We called for an additional 100 police officers in the province of Manitoba and 30 of those to be gang-related.

The City of Winnipeg has introduced their plan. We on this side have introduced a plan. Unfortunately, this Premier and the NDP government have failed to come up with a meaningful plan to keep our communities safer.

Mr. Speaker, I simply will ask this Premier why does he refuse to provide the Winnipeg Police Service with the required number of officers that are necessary to eliminate the kind of gang activity that we have seen under this Premier grow.

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite did have a plan and he brought it forward in the last election campaign. To fund some of his outrageous election promises he had to use duct tape and put together a fiscal plan that included zero percent for the Department of Justice for two years. I want to point out to the member opposite that zero percent for two years for the Justice Department, which was his plan before the Manitoba people, would have resulted in less RCMP officers, less police officers in Winnipeg and less Crown prosecutors. We, on the other hand, have put in funding to fund the RCMP up to the level that has never been funded before. We have added 95 real police officer positions in Manitoba since we were elected. Their promise is virtual press release promises, ours are real police officers on the street.

**Mr. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, the Premier makes reference to our plan, and I am glad he does because I would like to table our plan *Enough is Enough!*. I would very much like a copy of this to go directly to the Premier so perhaps he can read it.

Mr. Speaker, the plan we presented, *Enough is Enough!*, and I hope the Premier has a chance to look at it, it is designed to combat the proliferation of violence in our communities. It is time this Premier and his NDP government stopped putting the safety

of Manitobans at risk. We, the government, that is ready to take the steps necessary to combat the crime that we have seen in our province.

Will this Premier commit today to adopting our plan and working with us on *Enough is Enough!* to ensure that there is a plan that provides meaningful assistance to make our communities safer?

\* (13:45)

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, I will table before the end of the day the so-called plan that members opposite took to the people during a democratic process.

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

**Mr. Doer:** They can howl all they want. They can yell and scream all they want, but when they went forward to the people of Manitoba in 2003, they had zero percent for Justice in 2004 and zero percent for Justice in 2005. Unlike members opposite, we invested in real police officers, Crown prosecutors—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, we invested in real police officers. The 54 police officers that we funded last year was the largest increase—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** The 54 police officers that we announced and funded in last year's budget was the largest increase in police officers in the history of Manitoba in one budget. Members opposite who dart across the water like a little water bug, you know, darting from this issue and darting from that issue, two years ago they darted with zero percent for Justice which would have been layoffs of RCMP and Winnipeg city police officers. They have a record; we know what it is.

#### **Policing Services Additional Officers**

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Mr. Speaker, the Premier likes to talk about virtual police officers so let us talk about virtual police officers. Since last year's Throne Speech, the Minister of Justice has been telling Manitobans over and over again how they have put 28 more police officers into rural Manitoba to help on the highways and to help stop gangs from spreading into rural Manitoba. They may not want to clap too soon.

Can the minister today, a year later, indicate how many of those 28 officers are real officers on the streets and how many of them are virtual officers? I ask the Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I certainly can confirm that, in this year's budget, Mr. Speaker, we have funded 54 additional police officers over the next two years for all across Manitoba, but I just want to remind members opposite that on Friday I was pleased to confirm that on top of the 54 new officer positions, we have just added nine more.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I think the Minister of Justice will want to listen to this very carefully. Last week, in Ottawa, the commanding officer for the RCMP "D" Division here in Winnipeg was asked how many of the new 28 officers in Manitoba were active. His response said none were and that none would be active until at least April 1 of 2006. The commanding officer, in fact, said that they were 46 short.

The Minister of Justice and the Premier (Mr. Doer) now have misled Manitobans. He talked about virtual officers. He promised 28 officers last year, and the commanding officer here in Winnipeg says none of them are on the street, Mr. Speaker.,

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Mr. Speaker, that is what the members opposite did wrong when they were in office when they cut funding to the RCMP. When there are concerns about crime this side of the House increases funding for officer positions. That is why our commitment is over two years, because if you do not put the money in the budget they cannot seek the cadets from depot in Regina. On this side of the House we are working with the RCMP to ensure the delivery of cadets, not like members opposite, who want to dump the RCMP in Manitoba. I say shame.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Let us examine how closely the government is working with the RCMP. When asked in Ottawa last week why there had not been any new officers of the 28 put on the street in Manitoba the commanding officer for "D" Division said this, and I quote, "The Province sits down with me and establishes what our numbers are going to be for the future. If I don't get a commitment from the Province, which I didn't get last year, I can't go to depot and ask for more bodies." That is what the RCMP said. The RCMP said that this Minister of Justice never asked for officers last year and that is why we did not have the officers last year. He lied to Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. All members in this House should know by now that all members are honourable members, and the word "lied" or "liar" is not acceptable by any Speaker in any Commonwealth country. I ask the honourable Member for Steinbach to unequivocally withdraw that comment.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I withdraw that comment, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** That should take care of the matter.

\* (13:50)

**Mr. Mackintosh:** If they are looking at the transcript from Ottawa, I quote the commanding officer. He said, "The Province of Manitoba has infused new resources into the RCMP. This represents unprecedented growth in Manitoba and is a concrete example of the province's commitment to the safety of Manitobans." The challenge is to work with the federal government and the RCMP so that over the coming months the number of cadets from Regina is appropriate to fill the funded positions.

Mr. Speaker, the RCMP is one of the greatest police forces in this world. The FBI look to the RCMP as one of the most important commitments by Canadians to fight organized crime. They want to get rid of the RCMP. I say shame.

#### **Pediatric Dental Surgery Wait List Reduction**

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** Mr. Speaker, promises made, promises broken. That is all we ever see from this government. Manitobans are tired of the empty rhetoric.

Mr. Speaker, children continue to wait in pain for dental surgery as a result of this government's inaction despite announcement after announcement after announcement. Promises were made by this government nearly a year ago to complete an additional 600 pediatric dental surgeries in this province. Those targets have not been met and those promises have not been fulfilled for the children in our province.

Will this minister admit today that he is not on track to complete 600 additional pediatric dental surgeries by this year's end?

**Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased at the work that has been done at Misericordia hospital. There were challenges in implementing the plan that we presented to them. It

was a challenging target. I am confident that by the end of the year they will come very close to meeting the 600. They are currently running at about 80 a month now which is much better than they were running. We expect that the news at the end of the year will be very good. Thank you.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Mr. Speaker, this Minister of Health just admitted that he is not on track to complete a promise that he made to children in our province. That is unacceptable. More than 1000 children are still waiting in pain for pediatric dental surgery. This government received a proposal from a private clinic more than a year ago which would have already eliminated the wait-list for pediatric surgeries in this province, dental surgeries, yet this government refused to even consider it.

If this government truly wants to reduce wait-lists in our province, public-private partnerships for health care delivery would have been a part of their five-point plan that they announced today. Why will this government not put its ideology aside and do what is right for the children in our province?

**Mr. Sale:** Mr. Speaker, recently four general practitioners, anesthesiologists were employed to help bring the volume up in Winnipeg. As the member may know, in spite of her screaming and roaring, there is a shortage of anesthesiologists everywhere in Manitoba and in Canada. That has been the major challenge. Nevertheless, Thompson is on target to do 400 dental surgeries. That means that children coming to Thompson do not have to leave northern Manitoba to get their surgery. They are close to returning to home, it is better care and it is sooner, closer to where they live. So I am confident that by the end of the year Misericordia will have a very good record, and we will come close or we will meet the target.

\* (13:55)

**Mrs. Stefanson:** What this Minister of Health and this Premier of this province have to understand is when they make promises to the people and to the children of our province that those promises should be fulfilled. Manitobans are counting on them to do that. The fact that this minister stands up today and says that he cannot or he may not complete those surgeries is absolutely unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. When Manitobans obviously cannot trust this Premier why should they believe him now?

**Mr. Sale:** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased with the work that has been done towards our various targets.

I am rather surprised that the member did not ask about hips and knee replacement. I suppose that would be because we are 33 percent ahead of last year's target at this point. I am surprised she did not ask about access to cancer care because it is one to two weeks in Manitoba, not four weeks like the national target. I am surprised she did not ask about cardiac surgery because we beat the national target there too. We promise and we deliver.

### **Manitoba Economy Growth Strategy**

**Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, under this Doer NDP government, Manitoba is going to be the last have-not province in western Canada. This Premier is more content to get federal government handouts than he is to try to build an economy. Hardworking Manitobans are now the highest taxed in Canada. This province under this Premier has the last job growth in terms of numbers, no private sector job growth. The debt every day under this Premier goes up \$1.5 million. The total debt in Manitoba now is \$20 billion.

When is this Premier going to wake up and realize it is time to make Manitoba competitive?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I would just like to remind all honourable members that when addressing other members, it is by their constituency or ministers by their titles, not by party affiliations.

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, asking a similar question to last Friday, raises issues about the Manitoba economy. The Manitoba economy has been growing in terms of full-time employment at two to three times the rate of the 1990s. It has been growing.

Just recently, the average incomes in Manitoba exceeded the national average in 2004 and, we believe, are on track in 2005. You know when you look at the wind farms that are taking place in St. Leon, Manitoba, when you look at the new ethanol plant in Minnedosa, when you look at the new Simplot potato plant in Portage la Prairie, when you look at the new hydro-electric developments that will be precipitated by the new sales that we have, when you look at us returning the endangered species of the building crane back to downtown Winnipeg, Manitobans have figured it out. The member opposite has not.

**Mr. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, the next thing, the political rhetoric or the political spin, we are going to

hear from this Premier is that somehow the Hells Angels and the Bandidos are job creation. That is the kind of thing that we are going to hear from this Premier. Under this Premier's watch we have a \$20 billion debt and climbing. The interest payments on that \$20 billion represent \$767 million every year, \$767 million. What does that mean to the average Manitoba family? Well, it means that, at the beginning of the year, this Premier is going into a family of four and taking \$3,000 out of their pockets simply to control the debt that this Premier is vetting. We have the highest taxes in western Canada. We are at an all-time high with respect to debt. We have the lowest job creation in the private sector in all of Canada. Why is this Premier insisting on mortgaging our children's future?

\* (14:00)

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, we have followed the balanced budget legislation and have been in compliance with it since we have been elected. Point No. 2, on page 53 of the summary financial statement, you will note the net debt in Manitoba went down \$450 million with the record surplus we ran in the '04-05 fiscal year. Those are audited statements. Thirdly, you will note in Hansard that former Premier Roblin stated that having debt in Hydro is an investment in Manitoba's future. I would suggest to members opposite to look at the wisdom of Duff Roblin rather than their kind of rhetoric today. Lastly, members opposite voted against the new entertainment centre in downtown Winnipeg which had two thirds private sector investment. They voted against an optimistic future. One million Manitobans just went through the door on the weekend, something they opposed.

**Mr. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, this Premier likes to talk about a lot of political rhetoric. Let us stick to facts. The facts are that middle-income Manitobans are the highest taxed in Canada. The fact of life is that Manitoba's debt is at an all-time high, \$20 billion and growing every day. We are the last have-not province in western Canada under this NDP Premier. We have no private sector job creation in Canada. We have the lowest in Manitoba. This Premier likes to refer to the business community, as he has done in the media, and calls them water bugs. Well, I would give some advice to this Premier. Instead of mortgaging our children's future, why does he not listen to the business community that is desperately looking for a long-term economic vision to make Manitoba competitive? Listen to them and take some advice.



**Mr. Doer:** The corporate tax in Manitoba was 17 percent. It is on the way down to 14.5 percent in Manitoba. The small business tax when we came into office was 9 percent. It is going to 4.5 percent on January 1, 2006. When we came into office the middle-income tax bracket was 16.6 percent. It is heading down to 13.5 percent, a 19 percent reduction in the middle-income tax bracket and members opposite voted against our children's future. They voted against the private sector development of the True North complex. Two thirds of the money were risks with the private sector. They had a choice. They could vote for a pessimistic, boarded-up Eaton's building or they could build for an optimistic future. We chose optimism. They chose pessimism.

#### **Maple Leaf Distillers Government Loan**

**Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet):** Mr. Speaker, in 2001 the Doer government provided a favourable \$1.5-million loan to Maple Leaf with no personal guarantees and took security by way of a third mortgage. The Premier then remarks that he feels very secure about this loan.

I ask the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) why would the Premier feel very secure by a third mortgage not personally guaranteed and ranking behind loans totalling \$2.7 million. Is this simply because the Premier has no business experience or is he withholding information from Manitobans, in which case we need an independent public inquiry?

**Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Industry, Economic Development and Mines):** Mr. Speaker, I wish the member opposite would get his facts straight. First, the loan was not for \$1.5 million. It was for \$1.2 million. Secondly, the loan has been paid on a regular basis. When it was originally taken out it was \$1.2 million. I would like to inform the entire House that it is now \$715,000. The principal and interest payments have been made on time regularly as per the agreement. Third, it is now, yes, it is secured as a third part to the building. It is a part of the mortgage, but it also has a guarantee from Protos International which is the parent company of Salisbury House. It is well secured, it makes sense and the MIOP program under this government made money. Under your government it lost almost \$40 million.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Mr. Speaker, the minister should get his facts straight. That mortgage is registered for \$1.5 million, not \$1.2 million. Why did the Doer government provide, as the president of Maple Leaf

put it, unprecedented support and assistance from the Province and the Premier?

I ask the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) was it because he received assurances from his union friends at Crocus that it was a good investment, or was it because his union friends were trying to support Crocus's \$1-million investment by having the province throw money at Maple Leaf. Which is it I ask him?

**Mr. Rondeau:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring all members attention to our record on MIOP loans versus the opposition's when they were in government. Our record is the following; we have given secured loans that have made money to many firms. In fact, under our watch, the MIOP program has earned \$183,000 which includes the \$640,000 that we just got from the New Flyer loan. Under your watch the cost and the write-offs totalled \$40 million almost.

When you talk about business you gave loans below Crown rates. You wrote off companies. You wrote off Isobord, Winnport, Westsun. We have made money under the program; you lost it. I wonder about your business acumen.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Mr. Speaker, more than 33 000 Manitobans lost more than \$60 million under this minister.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

\* (14:10)

**Mr. Hawranik:** Mr. Speaker, more than 33 000 Manitobans lost more than \$60 million under the watch of this government. This Doer government and this Premier gave unprecedented support and assistance to Maple Leaf. Clearly, taxpayers' money is being used to support Crocus investments and the Premier's fingerprints are all over it. The only way to get to the truth is to call an independent public inquiry. I ask the Finance Minister to advise the Premier to call an independent public inquiry.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister just reported to the House that the loan payments are continuing on schedule. I would point out, the members opposite, in spite of the fact that there were three separate MIOP loans to CalWest Textiles, which has now had its principals

charged with fraud under the Tory regime and lost \$3.2 million, there has been no call for an independent inquiry. There has been no call for an independent public inquiry over the loss of \$7 million under the Tory regime and allegations on Shamray. There has been no call for the \$7 million of Isobord.

#### **Engineer and Architect Organizations Co-operative Agreement**

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield):** Mr. Speaker, the longstanding dispute between the engineers and architects in Manitoba has reached a breaking point. Last week we were told that this government has established a co-operative agreement. Has this minister shared the agreement with both sides and have they signed off on it?

**Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Labour and Immigration):** Everyone in this Chamber is very familiar with the longstanding dispute between the professional organizations, the architects and the engineers. My department has been working fastidiously with both professional organizations as well as the professional organization of the interior designers. We are also in dialogue, Mr. Speaker, with the authorities having jurisdiction over the Manitoba Building Code, the City of Winnipeg and the Association of Manitoba Municipalities. We are looking for practical solutions. Those solutions will be reflected in the legislation that I will be introducing shortly.

**Mr. Schuler:** Mr. Speaker, we have two professional organizations that are trying to conduct business in Manitoba. Unfortunately, in the process this Doer government has given one more reason for businesses to look elsewhere for opportunity.

Why will this minister not be open with Manitobans and table the agreement referenced in last week's speech, or has an agreement even been reached? Will she table it?

**Ms. Allan:** Mr. Speaker, the scope-of-practice concern has been in Manitoba for a very long time. In fact, the opposition had 12 long years to settle this dispute and did not do it. We will be more than happy to clean up their mess.

**Mr. Schuler:** Mr. Speaker, this minister is once again failing Manitobans in her inability to provide a solution to a problem that is crippling our construction industry today. I am going to ask again. When will this minister table the agreement that her

government allegedly reached with both sides of the issue? Will she table it now?

**Ms. Allan:** We have had a respectful process with both professional organizations, and we are looking to implement legislation that will reflect practical solutions that will be in the best interests of the public, Mr. Speaker. We are working with the authorities having jurisdiction to enforce the Manitoba Building Code. We will be bringing in legislation that will resolve this longstanding dispute that will be in the best interests of the Manitoba economy.

#### **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Diagnosis and Treatment**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Justice. Last Friday I asked the minister a straightforward question about the connection between fetal alcohol spectrum disorders and the criminal justice system. It was clear the minister either did not have a clue what I was talking about or he chose to pretend he did not so he had to be rescued then by the Minister of Health (Mr. Sale).

Today I will make it easier for the Minister of Justice tabling an abstract of a 1999 British Columbia study demonstrating that youth with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders are disproportionately represented in the juvenile criminal system, 23 percent of such youth in this study.

My question to the minister again. Is this government screening high-risk offenders to identify those with FASD—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Time for the question has expired.

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, yes, the honourable member was at an announcement setting out our blueprint for safety initiatives. I am pleased that the member acknowledges that, indeed, there has to be not just suppression strategies, but prevention strategies as well. I was pleased that the commitment by this government is not one-dimensional, but recognizes there must be a balanced approach if we are going to make our communities safer.

Mr. Speaker, I can assure the honourable member that Manitoba Justice in partnership with Manitoba Health, in partnership with Children's Hospital, Provincial Court, the Manitoba Adolescent

Treatment Centre, in partnership with Justice Canada put together innovative strategies—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Gerrard:** But, I asked the Minister of Justice how many youth have been screened. The information in the study that I tabled was available, widely available in 1999 before this Minister of Justice came to his current position. Mr. Speaker, this is a major preventable cause of criminal behaviour and the Minister of Justice has done virtually nothing about it in the six years that he has been minister.

I ask the minister when will he stop stonewalling, get his head out of the sand and immediately screen all high-risk offenders in Manitoba so that we know whether they have FASD, so that steps can be taken appropriate to their medical diagnosis that will prevent them from re-offending and reduce crime in this province.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Before the member yells he should perhaps ask some inquiries of people who have been working in partnership, Mr. Speaker, because under the watch of this government I am pleased that a number of initiatives have taken place.

First of all, the special needs program in partnership with Child and Family Services and Health was put in place, Mr. Speaker. That was a program that also involved Manitoba Housing. It is a multi-system response to dealing with FAS special needs. As well, the FASD youth justice pilot project was ushered in under the leadership of the Provincial Court but involving the many partners that I listed earlier. That is to ensure that there is indeed an adequate analysis to determine what is behind and what is the diagnosis and, as well, to make sure that there is appropriate intervention.

#### **Electoral Reform Government Support**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to table my party's report on electoral reform in Manitoba, and along with tabling that document I would like to table the ethics and accountability in government, a Seven Point Ethics Package that Ed Broadbent tabled.

I would like to cite, Mr. Speaker, Ed Broadbent says that our present system does not reflect Canadian voters' intentions. Fairness means we need a mixed electoral system that combines individual

constituency-based M.P.s with proportional representation.

My question to the Premier is will the Leader of the New Democratic Party, the Premier, join me, the leader of the federal NDP Jack Layton, better known as wacky Jack, possibly, and the NDP icon Ed Broadbent and acknowledge that we need reform, electoral reform.

This is a press release that was issued October of this year. It is an important issue. Will the Premier be in sync with his federal cousins, and I would suggest, too, your own membership, Mr. Premier, and support electoral reform in this province today?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I recall the day the member was re-elected in this Chamber a few years ago, and I remember that the member opposite was more worried about where he was sitting than he was about every BSE cattle rancher that was in the Chamber in this House.

Mr. Speaker, the first principle of democracy is listening to the people, especially those who need you. The member opposite only cared about where he sat, not what was happening to cattle producers in Manitoba. I suggest that the first principle of democracy is representing all Manitobans, not just yourself.

\* (14:20)

#### **Workplace Safety Reduction Strategy**

**Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert):** Mr. Speaker, over the last two years we have seen the Department of Labour embark on a more proactive approach to workplace safety and health in this province. Could the Minister of Labour inform the House what the latest statistics are for workplace injuries.

**Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Labour and Immigration):** We have been working very hard to reduce workplace injuries, Mr. Speaker. In partnership with the WCB, we launched the SAFE Work campaign, Spot the Hazard, Assess the Risk, Find a Safer Way, Every Day. That SAFE Work campaign, I am proud to say, has been a key component in our strategy to reduce workplace injuries. Today we released a report, the Workplace Injury and Illness Statistics Report, that has seen a 21 percent reduction in injuries since 2000 to 2004. We will continue to work to reduce injuries because it saves the WCB money, employers money and

keeps assessment rates down. That is our commitment.

### **Election Financing Donations to Political Parties**

**Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose):** Mr. Speaker, the Premier is not interested in electoral reform. We know where he sits but no one knows where he stands. Perhaps we could ask a question of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh). Does the Minister of Justice support only individual persons making donations to political parties?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** You know, Mr. Speaker, the Chief Electoral Officer is responsible for all issues dealing with donations, filing of returns. Members opposite would know there have been occasions, people, individuals convicted under the elections law that may even actually hold the same portfolio on a former basis as the existing Minister of Justice. That is why it is removed from the Legislature. Members opposite should know that better than anybody.

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Speaker, we know full well it was this government that introduced the last amendments to The Elections Act. I want to know does the Minister of Justice support all in-kind donations being reported and accounted for?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, last year at the committee I and the Chief Electoral Officer raised a couple of concerns that did not have to do with the legality of the law and the filings, but of some of what he called to be grey areas. A year ago I promised that we would amend those. We will be amending sections dealing with bundling. We will be amending sections dealing with borrowing up to \$100,000 from an individual. There are a couple of those issues that I have concerns about and have already promised a year ago we would change it.

### **Legal Sanctions**

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Speaker, the Premier is quick to leap into answering questions on behalf of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh). This question is to the Minister of Justice. What does he believe the consequences for breaking the laws as currently written should be?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, I would refer members opposite to Hansard last year where the Chief Electoral Officer answered this question on the law, on the legality. There are no charges but we will

change it, and all political parties have a record—  
*[interjection]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, we will be making the amendments in this session in the Legislature.

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

## **MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

### **SMART Program**

**Ms. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Fort Garry):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the House to recognize the important contribution made every day to this province by our seniors and elders. So it is with this in mind that I take particular pleasure in recognizing the good work done by the SMART program both in my constituency and in the province as a whole.

SMART stands for Seniors Maintaining Active Roles Together and is a province wide community-based program designed for adults who are over the age of 55. Recognizing that seniors are one of the fastest growing age groups in Canada must include proper attention to their well being, the goal of the program.

The program itself emphasizes prevention through such exercises as walking, strength training and taking one's own pulse. The benefits of SMART are legion: more social interaction, a chance to form friendships with like-minded seniors and, most importantly, an improved level of energy and overall fitness level. Ultimately, SMART helps seniors take control of their own health and remain independent members of their communities.

Led by certified instructors who volunteer their time and are seniors, this program in my constituency alone provides a service to over 75 seniors a week at two different locations, the Victoria Community Club and the Adamar apartment block.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time to recognize the excellent work done by the dedicated volunteers who make this program a reality for our seniors and would like to thank, most particularly, Mr. Raul Paragas, the co-ordinator of the SMART Program, who works to ensure that seniors have access to a community-level fitness program that suits their needs. His and all the other volunteers' hard work are to be commended. Thank you.

### Election Financing

**Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose):** Mr. Speaker, as was just referenced a few moments ago, The Elections Act was amended in this province and it was introduced to provide, I think the intent was to provide for fairness, equity in the manner in which political parties receive funding. Yet we still see significant concerns about how particularly the government party in this province receives funds. In the collection of monies and how they are forwarded, there is a significant concern that has been brought forward.

The concern, Mr. Speaker, is that we have a Premier (Mr. Doer), we have a government that bragged and bragged about how they were changing The Elections Act and now, of course, they believe that through a quick flip of the wrist they can undo what may have been some significant oversights in the writing of that law. I want to make one point for anybody who would read this Hansard some point in the future. There is a difference between the letter of the law, the intent of the law and the spirit of the law and how it is administered and how it is handled by the parties that are involved with complying with the law. That, to me, can be best capsulated when I talk about the fact that a grandmother who brings pumpkin pie to a fall supper for a fundraiser and has to be held accountable for what kind of monies she is generating by doing that and that will be quickly precipitated into properly accounted donations that must be designated and properly tracked.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage the governing party in this province to take a serious look at how they intervene in the upcoming amendments that they propose to this law.

### John Pullen

**Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona):** Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon to pay tribute to John Pullen who passed away October 2, 2005, after a lengthy battle with cancer. Mr. Pullen, or Johnny, as he was affectionately known was committed to the trade union movement. He was a social democrat, he was a veteran and he was a much-beloved family man.

Throughout his life, John was dedicated to improving the lives of working people. This commitment started at an early age. John was born in North London, England, in 1926, on the eve of the Great Depression. Before joining the Royal Armoured Corp and serving in the Second World War, John worked as an engineer. During this time,

he was moved by the stories that his co-workers told him of the Great Depression. As a young man, John got involved in the trade union movement. After the war, John and his wife Winnie, left England and immigrated to Manitoba. Upon arrival in Manitoba, he worked as an electrician, but was soon elected to be the first business manager and financial secretary of a new branch of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 2085.

In the 1970s, he joined the provincial Department of Labour as an electrical inspector and, in 1976, he became the executive director of the Manitoba Government Employees' Association, now the MGEU. John later served as the vice-president and later president of the Manitoba Federation of Labour. As president of the MFL, John brought together 70 000 workers from bakers to bureaucrats. John's commitment to working Manitobans was tireless. Throughout his career he served on several boards and upon his retirement he continued to work as the president of the government retired employees' union.

John was an ally to those involved in the social justice movement. He was a recipient of several honours and awards, including the Order of the Buffalo Hunt.

\* (14:30)

On behalf of the members of the Legislature, Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my condolences to Winnie, John's wife of 54 years, to his son David, to daughters Joan, Carol and Diane and his grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. I know in visiting John in the hospital when he was ill that John expressed great pride in his family, and we are proud of John's accomplishments and contributions to life in Manitoba. Thank you.

### Policing Services

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Mr. Speaker, today we learned the lesson of virtual officers versus real officers that the Premier (Mr. Doer) puts forward. You know, we heard in the Throne Speech last year about these new officers that were going to be coming to Manitoba. We heard in the budget about these new officers that were going to be coming to Winnipeg and to rural Manitoba. The promise was there. We heard news releases throughout the year, "The officers are there, things are better. The officers are there, things are better."

Now the curtain has been pulled back and we see it for what it is, and in truth those 28 officers that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) has announced and announced and re-announced are not there on the street. They are simply virtual officers that the Premier has made up and tried to sell. That I think is the reason why Manitobans are losing trust in this Premier and losing trust in this Minister of Justice when it comes to issues around justice.

So now we have a Throne Speech and announcement on Friday about new initiatives, apparently new initiatives, Mr. Speaker, but you only have to look at the track record when the RCMP has to go to Ottawa to clarify what is truly happening with RCMP numbers in the province because the Minister of Justice will not come forth and tell Manitobans what is happening, because the Premier will not come forth and be clear about what is happening. When he uses catch phrases like virtual officers and phantom officers when, in fact, 28 officers that he promised, 28 officers that he said were on the street, were, in fact, phantom officers.

The Premier can rant and he can rave and he can go out and say that these officers are there, but the record has been set straight. It was not set straight by the Premier. It was not set straight by the Minister of Justice. The commander of the RCMP had to come forward and say, "Not only do we not have the officers, the reason we do not is because this government never even asked for the officers last year." Shame on this Premier, and if he wants to get up and refute the commanding officer for "D" Division, then he should get up and refute that.

### **Women's History Month**

**Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert):** Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of attending the Congress of Black Women's Annual Unity Dinner this past October 8. At this event, over \$2,500 in scholarships was given out to deserving young black women from Manitoba. The dinner served as a celebration of past achievements and future promise. It was also especially significant given the recent passing of noted civil rights activist Rosa Parks, whose quiet strength captivated and transformed more than one nation.

Mr. Speaker, this dinner was also important because it marked the beginning of Women's History Month. An annual commemoration, it gives all Canadians the chance to learn more about women's history and their significant contributions to Manitoba and Canada. For far too long, the

achievements and accomplishments of women were belittled or ignored, yet this discrimination belied the considerable and lasting contributions that women made in building this country. Their efforts, while not always recognized, benefited all citizens.

It is with the spirit of recognition in mind that the theme of this year's Women's History Month concentrated on black women. Black women faced discrimination on two fronts; for being women and for being black. Yet these women persevered and with endless determination and courage forged their lives in this province. In this manner they became the next generation's role models.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Kathleen Huggins, president of the Congress of Black Women, as well the executive directors of the organization, the guest speaker that day, Ms. Rita Shelton Deverell, and all the volunteers. Their hard work in building recognition of a strong community of black women will help ensure that women everywhere will receive the opportunities that are their due. For this they are to be commended. Thank you, Mr. Speaker

### **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

#### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

#### **ADJOURNED DEBATE**

##### **(Second Day of Debate)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Member for The Maples (Mr. Aglugub), that the following address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, standing in the name of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Murray), who has unlimited time.

**Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in making a reply to the Speech from the Throne, and I always think it is important to put in context what a Throne Speech should be. Manitobans expect their government, when they bring in a Throne Speech, it is an opportunity, really, to have a vision, to have a blank canvas to sort of paint a picture to Manitobans that we can be the best province in Canada on a whole host of ideas, that if Manitoba wants to we can succeed and compete with the best anywhere in Canada.

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

Indeed, why not North America? That is the kind of thing a Throne Speech should be about, raising the bar, something that the late Izzy Asper, I think,

challenged all of us when he talked about the Museum for Human Rights. At that time, at the announcement what he did and his daughter, Gail Asper, who has done a tremendous job carrying on his vision, by saying we should reach for the stars. We should dream big. We should not set our bar low. We should set it high. So what they did at that time was they gave out stars for people to wear on their lapels as a reminder that each of us, if we reach for the stars and if we do it collectively, then we have succeeded in achieving, perhaps, a dream.

A Throne Speech is all about how can we as Manitobans dream to be the best we can be. And yet, Mr. Speaker, what we hear in this seventh Throne Speech from this NDP government is how mediocre can we be in Manitoba, how can we lower the bar. If we lower the bar and we just get there, then somehow we have achieved the expectations set by this NDP government, and we have seen that over the six years that this NDP government has been in office. It is always lower expectations, make sure that we do not expect Manitobans to achieve any level other than low expectations because those are easy to meet. But low expectations do absolutely nothing to provide hope and opportunity to our young people. Lowering expectations does nothing to say to our young people "Stay in Manitoba. Your opportunity is in Manitoba. Your future is in Manitoba. We are going to ensure that we train you, we are going to educate you, you are going to be the best and the brightest. Your opportunity is not in Alberta, it is not in Ontario, but it is right here in Manitoba."

Mr. Speaker, we just do not hear that from this NDP government. For some reason they seem to be opposed to thinking big. They are opposed to being dreamers. They are opposed to being visionaries. What they are more content with and, again, it was confirmed in this last Throne Speech that they are satisfied with managing the status quo and making sure that they do not ruffle any feathers, because if you ruffle some feathers, it might mean that you are actually thinking outside the box and looking at doing things differently.

Mr. Speaker, I said that what happened is this NDP government woke up to give this Throne Speech and then reached over and hit the snooze button.

**An Honourable Member:** That is an old one.

**Mr. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, well, you know, the Premier says that is an old one. Well, if he goes back

and reads the last six Throne Speeches, it is all regurgitation. That is old. That is old thinking. So I am delighted to have the Premier—I hope the Premier does keep chirping as I talk, because there is a lot to be said about his lack of vision for the province of Manitoba.

\* (14:40)

Mr. Speaker, during this Throne Speech, we heard the words "since 1999" 17 times. Seventeen times we heard the words "since 1999." Well, is it not interesting that not once during the times, those 17 times when he said "since 1999," did this Premier mention, "I have added over \$3.5 billion to the debt of Manitobans." Not once did we hear from this Premier that since 1999 this Premier has increased the debt of Manitoba up to \$20 billion.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

Mr. Speaker, not once did we hear from this Premier that since 1999 the Hells Angels have set up shop in Manitoba and now the Bandidos are here, the Mad Cowz are here.

Mr. Speaker, we never heard any of that in this Throne Speech. Why? Because this Premier is so concerned about lowering the expectations that he wants to make sure there is every opportunity to meet those low expectations. So where are these low expectations leading Manitobans? Well, when you talk about finance, economic opportunity in the province of Manitoba, we wanted to see and we were hoping that this Premier would do the right thing and eliminate the education tax off of residential property and farmland. It is the right thing to do, but, unfortunately, we heard precious little or nothing other than again this nibbly, nibbly, nibbly at the edges. I mean, this government is famous for one thing and that is nibbling around the edges. Well, that works well if you are a mouse nibbling at cheese, but it does nothing to provide a long-term economic vision for the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, we had hoped that this Premier might realize that being the highest taxed province in Canada cannot be a good thing. It cannot be a good thing to know that we have the highest taxes, that we are overregulated in our economy, no private-sector jobs being produced. We would have thought that this Premier might have said, "You know, I have to reflect on this a little. This cannot be a good thing. I go to all of these premier meetings, these First Ministers' meetings, and they are all sitting around the table looking at Manitoba's Premier and saying,

"Well, Mr. Premier, you have the highest taxes in Canada." You have the Premier of Manitoba having the lowest private-sector job creation in the country. So those premiers would be looking at this Premier, saying, "How does it feel to be the Premier of an uncompetitive province?" By the way, for the other nine, they love it because all Manitobans are going to their provinces. We educate them and we educate them to be their workforce.

Mr. Speaker, I would have expected in this Throne Speech that we might have heard something about a real job strategy. Now, we know that this Premier's economic growth strategy is more VLTs, longer VLT hours, but I know that the Premier always ridicules the business community. He ridicules them by calling them one-trick ponies or water bugs swimming across the water, whatever it may be.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that may be this Premier's position. Certainly he will never, I do not think, I may be wrong, but I do not think this Premier will ever refer to the union bosses as one-trick ponies. No, I do not think we will ever hear that coming from this Premier, but certainly when it comes time to speak fun or poke fun at the business community, he has no problem.

The only problem for Manitobans is that it is the business community that understands that to have a strong economy, to have a strong job strategy, we need to be competitive. But what does it mean to be competitive? The Premier will tell us that when it comes to corporate tax, they have dropped corporate taxes in Manitoba. When he talks about middle-income taxes, he talks about how they have dropped in Manitoba. Well, Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if the Premier is aware of newspapers, radio or the Internet, but I can tell you that Manitobans understand that when he says he has reduced taxes in Manitoba, every other jurisdiction, every other province is reducing them faster. So Manitoba is simply being left in the dust when it comes to being competitive. Manitobans deserve better.

Mr. Speaker, we have people in the province of Manitoba who, through no fault of their own, are struggling to get through day by day. There are things that we can do to help those people. Certainly what we could do is raise the threshold so that a lot of those low-income earners are not forced by this NDP government to pay taxes. No, those low-income earners can take that money and put it into their pockets as they need the kind of tax relief to make

sure that they, hardworking Manitobans, are not being penalized by this NDP government but in fact are being rewarded. Hard work, being able to put the money into their own pockets.

Mr. Speaker, we understand that if you are going to create jobs like other provinces you need to have a strong economy. The private sector has to understand that if they are going to invest money, if they are going to invest money in capital, in training and in jobs, that there is going to be a return on that investment. That is what business understands. Business understands very clearly that an investment is a sound investment if there is going to be a positive opportunity. Even though they are prepared to take the risk, they want that positive opportunity, that return, to come back so they then can re-invest in their business. That would be my vision for the province of Manitoba.

The current vision under this NDP government is to make sure that if businesses make money, grab that money and bring it into the provincial Treasury. Take that money away from those hardworking Manitobans and put it into the Treasury. Why? Well, the reason is simple. The NDP government under this Premier (Mr. Doer) think that they know how to spend hard-earned money, taxpayers' money. The government feels very strongly that they know how to spend hard-earned taxpayers' money better than those people that are earning it. Well, Mr. Speaker, I disagree with that.

If there was an opportunity for hardworking Manitobans, business people, to keep more of their money, that would stimulate the economy, that would grow the economy. But, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that on this side, we understand that. We think hardworking Manitobans should be rewarded. On that side of the House, they believe that they should be punished. They want higher taxes, they want more of their money. Bring it on, we want more of the money. Why? They believe, the NDP government believes, that they can spend hard-earned taxpayers' money better than those people that make it.

I say that is unfortunate, and I think when you look at the fact that in this province under this NDP government led by this Premier, that the debt of Manitoba is at an all-time high, \$20 billion and climbing, Mr. Speaker, \$20 billion and climbing.

Mr. Speaker, every single day in the province of Manitoba, our debt goes up by \$1.5 million a day. Every single day under this NDP government, the



debt goes up by \$1.5 million a day. Well, that cannot possibly be a good thing for the future of Manitoba. It cannot possibly be good when you have the highest debt of \$20 billion. This Premier is simply mortgaging the debt of Manitoba's children.

Mr. Speaker, I do not understand. I do not understand why. Well, we understand that the Premier says we are going to build the floodway. We are delighted. We have said very much on this side. Of course, unfortunately, he is happy they are building the floodway. Why? Not necessarily because it is going to save Manitobans. No, but it is going to force non-unionized companies to pay union dues. That is why he is happy that they are building the floodway. Non-unionized companies are going to be forced to pay union dues simply because of this floodway. He should be happy to build the floodway simply because it is the right thing, not because it is forcing non-unionized companies to pay union dues.

\* (14:50)

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting when you talk about the fact that they are building the floodway, and I do not know what the final number is. My understanding is it is around some \$800 million. I do not know if the Premier (Mr. Doer) will agree with that number or not, but I think it is close to some \$800 million to build the floodway.

Well, if you think about \$800 million to build the floodway, and I am not sure if that is the final number, but every single year with the debt at \$20 billion under this NDP government, every single year the interest rate to carry that is some \$767 million. So, to put it into perspective, we could build a floodway every single year with the debt that this province is experiencing under this NDP government. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we would not have to borrow it; we could pay for it in cash. We could pay for it in cash. That is what we could do because of the debt load that this Premier is putting under this province.

Mr. Speaker, we know that on an ongoing basis we in this province under the NDP are either last or close to dead last in job creation. Now, I do not know if it is this Premier's idea to hire everybody into the public service to say, "Look at all the jobs we have created." But everybody knows that the measure of a strong economy, the benchmark of a strong economy is how many private-sector jobs are being created. Private-sector jobs in the province of Manitoba are almost extinct, and they are almost extinct under this NDP government.

In six years this NDP government has taken private-sector jobs and flushed them down the toilet. Why would they do that? Why would any premier want to stand before Manitobans with the lowest private-sector job creation in the country? How could that possibly be something that a premier, regardless of what party they are, currently it is the NDP, but regardless of what party, what premier would be proud to go in front of Canadians, in front of the other fellow premiers knowing full well that they have the lowest private-sector job creation in their jurisdiction? Well, that is what it is with this Premier and this NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, on the issue of justice, well, there is no justice in Manitoba, and it is unfortunate because there are very serious issues facing our communities, very serious issues that are facing the safety of all of our communities in the province of Manitoba.

We have listened to Manitobans. We have listened to the concerns of Manitobans. We have listened to issues around justice. We have listened to issues that are involving parents, parents and their families. When it comes to safety in our communities, what we heard was loud and clear, that under this NDP government enough is enough. Mr. Speaker, enough is enough is what resonated in those community halls and resonated in those basements, all of those meetings that took place when we talked and listened to people about their concerns with respect to justice.

**An Honourable Member:** What did they say?

**Mr. Murray:** They said that enough is enough, Mr. Speaker. That is why this caucus, working with the Justice critic from Steinbach, unveiled our plan, *Enough Is Enough! Standing Up for Safe Communities*.

Mr. Speaker, it is an action plan, and I would ask the Premier (Mr. Doer) and I would ask the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh), I do not know, maybe all of the members opposite should have a read of this document because it is a good document. It addresses serious issues and it brings serious solutions to some of the challenges that Manitobans are facing.

Mr. Speaker, we went as far as to cost out what it was or what it would cost Manitobans to put this in place. Now, I know that members opposite want to go back to pre-1999. It is always so easy and convenient, but they want to blame everything on

somebody else. Blame the feds; blame the last government.

Well, after six years, after six years you would think and you would hope that somewhere along the line this NDP government would start to come up with solutions, serious solutions to affect the challenges Manitobans are facing.

Our communities are not safe. Our communities are not safer since this NDP government has come in. I know, and the Premier (Mr. Doer) likes to stand and crow about the MTS Centre. They did have their millionth visitor and that is a great thing, but what does it say when an innocent bystander is killed in crossfire in downtown Winnipeg?

What does it say to our citizens that, yes, come down and watch a concert or a hockey game, but that there is a possibility that innocently your life may be taken? That is why Manitobans have said to us enough is enough. They want to ensure that there are more police on the streets. They want to ensure that there are more police that are involved in gang activity. They want to make sure that our schools are not vulnerable. Our children that are learning are not being lured away by the gang activity that is growing under the watch of this NDP government.

We believe that putting police officers, whether they are retired or current, into our schools is an opportunity to ensure that those gangs do not proliferate and go in and start taking our youngest and our vulnerable. We listen, because Manitobans were telling us that, when it comes to the justice system here in Manitoba, enough is enough.

We know that this government loves to make a lot of announcements and spin press releases around crystal meth, but the irony is that when it comes to crystal meth and trying to get information, our Justice critic, the member from Steinbach, tried to get information for Manitoba and could not. He had to go to Minneapolis to get information on crystal meth and some of the issues. After six years, knowing that this problem, this epidemic, was facing Manitobans, this government has simply whiffed at the plate. They have no plan. They have no idea how to combat a very serious issue that is attacking the youth in Manitoba.

I know that the Premier will get up, and at some point he will make a big issue about the fact that we are voting against the Throne Speech. Well, Mr. Speaker, we are going to vote against the Throne Speech. Why? Because this government has failed to

deliver the kinds of safety measures that Manitobans want. The Premier already, watch him start to spin. The last time he tried to spin the fact that somehow we voted against 45 police officers. Yes, we did because this side will never vote to particularly underfund our police officers. We will never do that. That is where we are on this issue.

We simply are asking the Premier and all of his caucus colleagues to work with us on our strategy to try to make our community safer. We need more police on the streets. We need more police on the streets. We need more communities that have a strategy to work together so that when those communities know there are issues, they know where to bring them, and that people can bring serious solutions to these challenges. That is what Manitobans expect of their government. This is not a partisan issue. This is an issue about safety in our communities.

\* (15:00)

I will tell again and ask the Premier, the minute he wants to sit down and work through some of the suggestions that we have brought forward in our document, *Enough Is Enough! Standing Up for Safer Communities*. We will be happy to do so because this issue transcends politics, at least we believe it does. We believe, on this side, this is not a partisan issue. We believe this is simply an issue of trying to make our communities safer, and there are some very, very good issues that we need to have to make this issue one that all Manitobans understand, that all members of the Legislature are working forward to ensuring that we get something done.

So, Mr. Speaker, I thought it was interesting that we on this side of the House, some two weeks ago, brought forward our strategy to deal with making our communities safer. It was a very good strategy. It is a strategy that makes sense, sensible solutions to challenges. Following that, of course, we know that the City of Winnipeg, they unveiled their strategy. Well, you now have members on this side with a strategy, the City of Winnipeg with a strategy, and the government? Nothing. Zero. Zip. Nada. Nothing coming from the government with respect to justice. Why is that? Is it because, as people say, this NDP government is soft on crime?

Mr. Speaker, is it because, as people are saying, that this NDP has a revolving door of justice? Is it that this government basically has adopted a hug-a-thug approach? Is that why this government has not been able to come up with a proper gang strategy?

Well, I submit to you, and the Premier (Mr. Doer) may be surprised at this, but that is another reason that we will have difficulty supporting a Throne Speech that does nothing to deal with the gang issue here in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that, under this NDP government, under this Premier, the Hells Angels have moved in and set up shop. The Bandidos have moved into the province of Manitoba under this Premier. The Mad Cowz have set up shop. We have seen the number of gang members grow to 3000 under this NDP government. That in itself, clearly, is a message that this NDP government is soft on crime. Manitoba is open for business, but it is business of the wrong kind. It is businesses that are being run by gangs, grow ops, sex trade workers, more drugs, gang recruitment, violence on the street. That is the kind of activity that those gangs start and they are doing it all under the watch of this Premier.

Mr. Speaker, I would have thought that this Premier and this Justice Minister would do everything they can to try to control the gang activity in the province of Manitoba, but we do not hear anything about it. Sure, they make an announcement, and we know that there are lots of balloons and parades and cakes and cookies that are given out at these announcements, but this is a very serious issue, a very serious issue that deserves serious solutions. The NDP government has failed Manitobans to make our communities safer.

Mr. Speaker, in our document *Enough Is Enough!*, we asked for five more police officers in Brandon. Why? Simply because, if you go to Brandon and listen, if you listen to the people in Brandon, the crystal meth issue that is rampant here under this NDP government in Winnipeg is flourishing in the city of Brandon. Gang activity, vandalism, violence is starting to grow in the city of Brandon. We simply say, "Let us get out in front of it. Let us deal with it now. Let us put something in place so we can deal with this issue before it gets out of hand." But I can tell you that this NDP government, they seem to just turn their back on it and talk about the fact, "Well, we have got more prosecutors. So, you know, that is a good thing. We have more prosecutors." And I can just hear the Premier saying "You are going to vote against more prosecutors? You are going to vote against more prosecutors?" Well, what we want is more police on the street. We want more police on the street so that the bad guys can get taken off the street. That is what we support.

Mr. Speaker, I would have hoped that we might have heard something from this Premier in the Throne Speech about electronic monitoring, about putting bracelets on those people who are harmful to our communities, so we can monitor where they are. Well, what is interesting, apparently, is that they have problems with the batteries, we have been told by the Justice Minister. Somehow the batteries do not seem to line up or there is a problem. Well, they seem to work quite well on the elk here in Manitoba. We seem to be able to track them where they go, but on criminals and bad people somehow, according to this Justice Minister, they do not work.

Well, Mr. Speaker, again, is it because this government is soft on crime? Is it because this government does not have a plan to deal with those criminals who would go out and start to attack our innocent victims in our society? Or is it simply because they have no vision and no understanding that unless you set a benchmark, and it is what I said earlier, at the beginning, it is about whether you set the bar high or whether you set the bar low, and this government, when it comes to being tough on crime, has set the bar low.

That is unfortunate for Manitoba communities because when they set the bar low, it means that our communities are not safe. It means that our communities feel that they cannot go out into their communities. It means that there are people out there who can harm our innocent, our children and those people who are left vulnerable to those criminals.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House believe that if you are going to get tough on crime, you have to not only talk about it, but you need some action. That is why, again, we put out *Enough Is Enough!*. That is why we put out a document, and we costed it out, and we put programs in place that will make our communities safer.

Mr. Speaker, in the Throne Speech we had hoped that we would have seen a plan, not heard the rhetoric, about more timely access to quality health care. We had hoped that what we would have heard was a plan of how they were going to deliver that. Of course, we all know that it was this Premier (Mr. Doer) that said to Manitobans—well, then, funny, it is interesting, he did not say anything in the Throne Speech: Since 1999 when I said I was going to end hallway medicine in six months with \$15 million, that has failed. That has been a big blowup. That has not worked. We tried it but it did not work. So, as we were going through it, we came up with a solution,

though. You know, instead of leading into the hallways, let us just take down some of those walls so that they then become corridors.

Hallway medicine, I did not realize that it was this Premier's vision to get rid of hallway medicine simply by taking out the walls. I sort of thought he might try to give patients more timely access to care. I would have thought that would have been part of his plan, to try to see how he could help Manitobans who are suffering, because, surely, Mr. Speaker, I do not think hollow rhetoric, I do not think this Premier would have said, "Maybe I am wrong," but I do not think this Premier would have simply told Manitobans that he was going to eliminate hallway medicine in six months with \$15 million unless he had a plan. But, as I say, maybe I am wrong. Maybe he went before Manitobans and tried to say something, sort of hocus-pocus, trying to convince Manitobans without a plan.

I am not sure, but I do know that what we were hoping to see in this Throne Speech was a real plan to eliminate waiting lists. Now, again, I want to make reference to what I said at the beginning, because with this NDP government, if you lower expectations and say, "I know that the waiting list is three years. Oh, I know it is long, somehow blame it on 1999, abracadabra, 1999, long, long, waiting list, three years, but we are going to work really hard to see if we can reduce that waiting list from three years, well, maybe to two years and six months so we can say that we have reduced waiting lists by six months in the province of Manitoba." Well, Mr. Speaker, that is simply setting the bar too low.

There are places in the world where there is no waiting list, zero. You want to go somewhere and get an operation, you come in tomorrow at one o'clock if that is convenient for you. Mr. Speaker, this NDP government would not have the ability to figure that one out. They do not know how to say, "You know, our goal is to eliminate waiting lists completely." That would be setting the bar high, having a vision and looking at innovation.

\* (15:10)

I know that the Premier (Mr. Doer) loves, again, to get into the political spin and the political rhetoric and talks about American style this, American style that, American style over here, American style that. You would think that he was watching, I do not know, that TV show, "Love American Style," or whatever it was. Maybe that was one of his favourites.

But, I tell you, there is a model of health care that, we on this side support, and it is a model that has been presented by a Liberal senator, a Liberal, Senator Michael Kirby. I think Senator Michael Kirby has come forward with some very innovative ideas to challenge the status quo that we see that is being supported by this NDP government. All I would ask is that this NDP government would get their ideological heads out of the sand and look at some innovation.

Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House have no difficulty at all talking about working with the private sector if it means, under a publicly funded system, that there is more timely access to care for patients. Why would this government, this NDP ideological government, just say, "No, not going to even consider that?" They are much more interested in having children languish on waiting lists, suffering, so that this Premier can just simply stand up and talk about a one-trick pony. That frames the debate. That frames the debate right there. This Premier, knowing that there is opportunity outside to help Manitobans, to reduce waiting lists, to reduce suffering, to create a quality of life that Manitobans deserve simply by working with the private sector in a publicly funded system, this Premier wants to talk about a one-trick pony.

So, Mr. Speaker, that is what Manitobans should understand about this debate: ideology on one side, head in the sand, and on this side of the House, innovation, opportunities with the mandate, with the No. 1 goal always as how, under the publicly funded system, can we provide better, more timely access to quality health care in Manitoba. That, simply, is what should be right. But, unfortunately, under this NDP government all they care about is ideology, ideology this, ideology that, and people suffer, and the bar remains low in terms of what we can get at. That is the hallmark of this NDP government: how mediocre can we be. That is where they want to be. Let us be mediocre because at some point they just look at the fact that being mediocre is kind of in the middle of the pack. That is kind of where they want to be.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I challenge them. There are other opportunities out there. I know that this Premier latched onto the Romanow report like Velcro. When the Romanow report came out, boom, that was it. Why? Because it said more money, more money for health care. That is where we want to go. We want to support this report, but there are other reports out there like the Kirby-Keon report. We do not want that because we have looked through this,

we have flipped, and we do not see where it just says more money. There is a challenge to the system. There is a challenge to say be innovative because, again, should not the debate be framed around the question how do we provide more timely access to quality health care, how do we make sure that those people that are suffering, their quality of life, get better access? If that frames the debate, then I defy this Premier to stand in his place and say that what Mr. Kirby, Senator Kirby, and what we are talking about, being innovative, will not produce those sorts of results. That is a major difference between that NDP government's vision and our vision for the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I was amazed when I read the Throne Speech to see that the NDP used a couple of headings: better care, sooner and closer-to-home treatment. I do not know if that was sort of the comedy section of the Throne Speech or the light and levity part. But that is a very serious issue, and the fact of life is that under this NDP government there is no such thing as closer-to-home medicine. It is quite the opposite. Closer to home for those people who are in Brandon simply means, well, jump into this ambulance, we are going to send you down the highway to Winnipeg so you can get the kind of treatment that the NDP government has failed to deliver for people in west Manitoba. Ashern, Deloraine, Boissevain, Gimli, all of these communities that are supposed to have care closer to home. Their ERs are getting closed. I do not know. Maybe their solution to closer-to-home medicine is simply to get more ambulances throughout the province to take them from their homes into Winnipeg. Maybe that is their idea of closer to home. It is not our idea of closer to home.

We know that this Premier (Mr. Doer) promised Manitobans, that in 1999 he said that if you elect me, I will eliminate hallway medicine in six months with \$15 million. Hallway medicine, Mr. Speaker. Well, unfortunately for Manitobans and their quality of life, hallway medicine has now become highway medicine. Highway medicine is the hallmark of this Premier because people are forced to go by ambulance from their community into Winnipeg to get the kind of treatment they should get in their communities, and you would think from a point of dignity that that in itself would be hard to swallow.

But wait, Mr. Speaker, there is more. There is more. If you have to travel by ambulance from your community under this so-called closer-to-home strategy that this NDP government has put on, if you

have to travel by ambulance from your community to Winnipeg to get treatment because the NDP has failed to deliver it in your community, if you have to travel by ambulance from your community to Winnipeg to get the kind of treatment you deserve in your community, well, surprise. You have to pay for it. You get a bill. You get a bill in the mail saying you have to pay for the ambulance transfer from this facility to the other.

So that is the kind of vision that we see under this NDP government. Closer-to-home medicine simply means longer drives in an ambulance and, by the way, you have to pay for it. Well, again, if you set the bar low, expectations low, Mr. Speaker, yes, this Premier can stand up and say that we met those low expectations, but it does nothing to help the quality of life for Manitobans, particularly in our rural areas, who are being punished by this NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the fact of life is that all of this stems from the fact that this NDP government does not understand rural Manitobans. They have simply turned their backs on rural Manitoba. When you have a government that basically is satisfied to say to people, well, if you want to live in that community and if you get sick in that community, well, then, doggone it, you are going to have to suffer the indignity of taking an ambulance into Winnipeg. Then we are going to make sure that we really rub it into you and we are going to send you a bill to pay for it.

Well, Mr. Speaker, again, low expectations perhaps are met, but why is it that this NDP government refuses to try to create the kind of quality of life that Manitobans deserve? Why is it that this NDP government refuses to ensure that those people that choose to live in those rural communities, those people that are producers of great food for Manitobans, those people that understand that the quality of life in rural Manitoba is a good quality of life, is being stripped away simply because they are forcing those people to travel distances to experience health care?

\* (15:20)

Mr. Speaker, that is not what I call vision for the province of Manitoba. In education, we had hoped that this Premier would do the right thing and completely eliminate the education tax off residential property and farmland. Why? Because every group, AMM, KAP, all the groups that we talked to, agriculture producers, they want it gone. They want

it eliminated because they do not see the relationship between owning land and having to pay taxes to fund education, particularly when they are already paying some of the highest taxes in Canada. So you are paying the highest taxes in Canada and then, because of this government's inability to fund education properly, they then start punishing property owners by saying, "Well, we are going to underfund education to the tune of about 56 percent." So we are going to let the other school trustees punish you more because you own land, and we are going to let them fill in the gap, and, by the way, those school trustees, if you cannot add more tax to the property owners because, as a provincial government, they are failing, then those school trustees have to make the tough decisions about what programs they might have to cut, what decisions they are going to have to make. This NDP government is simply not doing its job when it comes to funding education. They are failing Manitobans.

Now, I know again, Mr. Speaker, and I can see it once again that when it comes time to vote on the Throne Speech, the Premier (Mr. Doer) is going to start tooting the horn and saying "Wait a minute, the Tories are going to vote against the 10 percent reduction off farmland. Holy smokes, the Tories are against that." Well, yes, we are, because if this Premier was committed to doing the right thing, he would eliminate it completely, not 10 percent, he would eliminate it completely. That would be the right thing to do. That would be the right thing to do. That is exactly what this Premier should be doing, but he cannot. He comes back to that nibbling around the edges, that mouse in the cheese, nibbling around the edges.

Mr. Speaker, it was very clear that this Premier has failed Manitobans when it comes to education tax. He has failed Manitobans when it comes to education taxes. I can tell you—

**An Honourable Member:** This minister has lowered taxes 60 percent; you did nothing.

**Mr. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, there he goes. There he goes, all of a sudden it is back over the past six years. What we keep hearing is the fact that this Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) apparently has done so much to lower taxes, they have done so much to lower taxes, but this Premier does not seem to understand that there is no way that, simply by lowering taxes—

**Some Honourable Members:** What did you do?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Murray:** Every other single province is lowering taxes faster than this NDP government. Now, the reason this NDP government cannot make our province competitive and lower taxes is because they are spending, spending, spending. The more money you keep spending, the more taxes you need. This government's response is simply to say "If we can get more taxes, then we can spend more." Mr. Speaker, that is unfortunate for hardworking Manitobans, but it is what we see from this government.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question that Manitobans need to have an education system that, if this government, this NDP government was prepared to set the bar high, they would simply say, "We want to ensure that every child in Manitoba has an opportunity to learn and have the same education whether it is in Thompson or whether it is in Teulon." That is where we would like to be. But, no, we hear none of that from this NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that our children and our parents and the teachers should have the opportunity to know that their children are going into a school system where they are safe. They want to feel safe in that constituency, safe in school. That is nothing wrong and that is what it should be, raising the bar, raising the standard, making sure that every child, every parent, every teacher feels safe in their schools.

Mr. Speaker, we, on this side of the House, simply asked about a zero tolerance when it came to bullying. So, instead of talking about why it is important to have no bullying in our schools for our children and our teachers, all we heard from that side as they leaned on the horn was, "Oh, they are going to call in the police. Zero tolerance means calling in the police. Well, we are not going to call in the police on everything."

Mr. Speaker, that is not the issue. Why is it, when we are talking about a very serious issue to deal with students, to deal with the safety, to ensure that there is an opportunity to have a safe learning environment for all of those people involved, that the political rhetoric has to get ratcheted up from the other side, torqued up to talk about the fact that we are going to call in the police? Nobody on this side was talking about calling the police. We simply were saying that because of the ineptness of this NDP government we had to ensure that there was something that would make sure that there was a

program in place to have safety for our children in our schools.

Mr. Speaker, safety also translates to those teachers to make sure that they themselves feel comfortable teaching because when teachers have the kind of environment that they deserve to have, they will ensure that our children are learning at the best rate possible. That is the kind of confidence that I have in our teachers in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, on advanced education, well, again, what is interesting is that we hear from some of the student union leaders that the backdoor fees that are being forced on universities are higher than any increase that the previous government ever put on in terms of tuition. So, once again, it is all this quiet, quiet political rhetoric about a tuition freeze, but then watch the backdoor fees get ramped up, ramped up on those students unsuspectingly, because those students do not have any cost certainty. They go forward wanting to learn in a post-secondary institution. There is no cost certainty. All they know is that there is a supposed tuition freeze, but, holy Toledo, all of a sudden the parking fees, the number of the costs of books, textbooks, the cost of using a computer, the cost of using the gymnasium, all of a sudden those costs get ramped up. Why? Because the NDP government is starving our universities.

There is no long-term funding put in for our post-secondary institutions. There is no plan to ensure that all of our post-secondary institutions are funded properly. Oh no, no that is not going to happen because there is more political rhetoric in talking about a tuition freeze rather than understanding how we should properly be funding our universities, because all of us, I believe all of us, regardless of party, want to ensure that our young boys and girls, our young men and women, that they get the best education, K to 12, and whether they decide to go to one of our outstanding technical colleges or they want to go to university, the fact of life is they should be given the best post-secondary education.

We should again, Mr. Speaker, and I ask the Premier to think outside the box, I know it is uncomfortable, but he should try to raise the bar for those post-secondary institutions rather than lowing it, rather than keeping those low expectations, because we all know what we have heard from this NDP government. They talk about the fact that enrolment is up in the province of Manitoba. Well, again, I am not sure if the Premier or the Minister of

Advanced Education reads the newspaper. I am not sure if they read *Maclean's* magazine, but enrolment is up everywhere in Canada. It is not just here in Manitoba. It is not just something that is happening here. It is happening across the country. It is happening in every single province, but I can tell you that this Premier would love to believe that only in Manitoba are we seeing an enrolment increase. Well, that is just, again, I am not sure if the expression is hitting the goal post, half-loaf, I am not sure what it is, but what it is, is misleading Manitobans because it is not being accountable and transparent and telling the truth about what is happening across Canada. Yes, Manitoba is going up, but when every other province is going up you have got to know that you are not out there only on your own.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that we need a strategy in the province of Manitoba, a vision of how we want to ensure that our Manitobans can get access to a post-secondary education, that we make sure that those young men and women, when they graduate, that there are jobs here in Manitoba.

\* (15:30)

Mr. Speaker, again, the bar being lower from this Premier is let us talk about the fact that tuitions of enrolment are up, but let us not talk about for a minute the fact that our Manitoba students that are being trained here in Manitoba, educated, are going out to Alberta and Ontario to find jobs—[interjection]

Well, Mr. Speaker, I knew that at some point they were going to wake up. I knew that at some point they were going to wake up. I knew at some point they would get their heads out of the sand. But that is a serious issue. It is a serious issue when Manitobans, taxpayers, are paying for the education of Alberta's workforce. Mr. Klein may buy the Premier of our province, he may be the first one up to the bar to buy him a drink to celebrate. Thanks a lot, Premier of Manitoba, for paying for and educating our workforce. Bring them on over. We have opportunities here. Bring them on over to Alberta. Glad that you are out there training them. We have lots of opportunities here in Alberta.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I just think, again, if this Premier (Mr. Doer) were to try to raise the bar, try to make things a little bit better, try to improve on some of those issues, try to think outside the box, try to challenge his Minister of Advanced Education (Ms. McGifford), try to challenge his other ministers, then we would find that those men and women, when they graduate, they would graduate into jobs here in

Manitoba, good paying jobs here in Manitoba and, dare I say it, good paying private-sector jobs in Manitoba.

Now, I know that is a word, Mr. Speaker, and I see all the members opposite racing to the dictionary. They are all running to the dictionary to see "private sector," What is that? What exactly is that private-sector job? We all know public sector because, boy, we have hired most of them, but private sector, we are not sure what that is. So I am not sure whether the Premier is going to talk to those so-called water bugs, the business community, to get a sense of where the actual private-sector jobs can be created, but I think it would be a good thing.

**An Honourable Member:** What is your position on balanced budget legislation?

**Mr. Murray:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I know how easy it is for the Premier to revert to the good old days in opposition. Oh, he loves that. He loves that ability to ask those questions, because we know when we ask questions of this Premier we do not get any answers. We do not get any answers whatsoever.

I thought it was very interesting in the Throne Speech that basically we heard nothing about transportation and infrastructure. Now, I believe and I understand, and I am sure the Premier will tell me if I am not correct on this, but I think that Manitoba is the last province, Manitoba is the very last province in Canada to agree to some kind of a gas tax arrangement with the federal government. *[interjection]* "Oh, no, we are not," he says. Well, I hope—because I did not see it in the Throne Speech. I did not see an announcement.

Now, maybe the spin doctors are out there creating something to ensure that there is some kind of mention about this issue. But we know the fact that this NDP government's track record on transportation and highways in Manitoba is abysmal. It is a failure. Manitobans know that we need good roads, safe roads, to get all of our goods to market, to get our kids to school, to make sure that those ambulances that have to transport people from their so-called closer-to-home health care get to Winnipeg. Those roads have to be in great shape. But, Mr. Speaker, the failure, when it comes to transportation and highways with this Doer government, is unfortunate, and we all have to suffer.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that members on the other side are wondering why it is that I am speaking at length about this Throne Speech. Well, I am

speaking at length about it because it is a failure of vision for the province of Manitoba. When it comes to agriculture, again one of the great headings they had was "Farm it in Manitoba; finish it in Manitoba."

Well, Mr. Speaker, yes, they might say farm it in Manitoba, but what is happening with agriculture under this NDP government is our agriculture communities are being finished in the province of Manitoba. That is a shame. That is an absolute shame that this NDP government totally ignored our rural ag producers.

Mr. Speaker, everybody knows that there was a BSE crisis in the province of Manitoba. We came out with a strategy, much like our *Enough Is Enough!*, in making communities safer. We came out with a strategy, and we said, "Let us work together. Let us work together to make sure we have slaughter capacity, to make sure that we have the ability for some of our slaughter facilities to ensure that they can sell product within Canada. Let us get them federally inspected." We came up with a program, but all the NDP government did was sit back and talk about "Well, we have Rancher's Choice. We are working hard with Rancher's Choice."

Well, Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear from the other side. How is Rancher's Choice doing? Is it still sitting in dust collecting rust? Is that what we hear with Rancher's Choice? We on this side of the House, I can tell you, would have had slaughter capacity. We would have had a plant built and it would have been up and running today. That much I can tell you. We would have had the plant running today. Had that side over there listened to our program, there would have been slaughter capacity, a plant built today, in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, members opposite on the government side continually rely when it comes to our ag producers on the CAIS program and crop insurance. Why is it that, when a program like the CAIS program clearly does not work, this NDP government will not sit and listen to the producers who are being affected? Why would they not listen to those producers and say, "Look, we have designed a program, the program, again, was to help producers who are suffering, if it is not working, then we will sit with you and make sure it does work"? There is no point in having a program simply so they can stand up and crow about it and the fact of life is that it does nothing to ag producers in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, we know full well that this summer there was excess moisture in parts of Manitoba.



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

**Mr. Murray:** I heard some "ohs" from the other side. Maybe they did not know that. Well, again, rather than sitting around as we saw with this NDP government, we went out and listened to producers who came up again with a program, a six-point program, and one of the things that we heard loud and clear, that people wanted, was the JERI program, the Jobs Economic Recovery Initiative, something that worked because that is what people in rural Manitoba understand. If a program worked and was successful, then why reinvent the wheel? Why sit back and say, "Well, we are going to rejig this because apparently that was a program that worked for the Tories and we are the NDP and we want to make sure we do something different, that we do not care if it does not work—that is not the issue, whether it works or not is irrelevant—we just want to make sure that it is not the same program that those Tories put in"? Well, people in rural Manitoba were saying, "But it works. We understood it. It made sense. It addressed the issues. It addressed the problems." Well, clearly, that should signal this NDP government that, rather than reinvent the wheel, let us work together. Let us try and figure out how we can make life better in our quality of life in rural Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of life is that this Throne Speech had the opportunity to create a vision for Manitoba. It failed. It failed to deliver something that Manitobans were hoping would come from this government. I would not want to quote from a newspaper but I will, only because it is in front of me. It says very clearly in here that the fire is out. Well, as he knows, the fire is out. As it says very clearly, after six years in office, this government has no fire in its belly and no evident governing purpose. The Manitoba that the Premier (Mr. Doer) sees, I will editorialize today, is about as good as it gets. That is the vision for the province of Manitoba under this NDP government.

\* (15:40)

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it is most unfortunate that that is the best, because Manitobans deserve better. They deserve a vision that allows us to search for the stars, to reach high, to set a goal, not one that is so low that if you fall down you fall over it. No, we deserve better.

For that reason, I would move, seconded by the Member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson),

*THAT the Motion be amended by adding at the end of the sentence the following words:*

But this House regrets

- (a) the government's failure to acknowledge the escalating debt of our province, now in excess of \$20 billion, and its failure to commit to a comprehensive debt reduction strategy; and
- (b) the government's failure to stem its insatiable spending habit; and
- (c) the government's failure to present a plan to address the fact that Manitoba is the highest taxed province throughout all of Canada; and
- (d) the government's failure to commit to the complete elimination of all education tax off of residential property and farmland; and
- (e) the government's failure to address the fact that since 1999 gangs have flourished in Manitoba, including the establishment of Hells Angels, Bandidos, Mad Cowz and African Mafia; and
- (f) the government's failure to address the escalating levels of gang activity, violent crime and property crime, including the fact that Manitoba has been the scene of numerous biker related murders and attempted murders and the murder of an innocent bystander; and
- (g) the government's failure to implement the additional complement of police officers as promised in the 2005-2006 budget; and
- (h) the government's failure to commit to not closing or converting rural hospitals; and
- (i) the government's failure to address the doctor shortages, emergency room closures and downgraded health care services throughout rural Manitoba; and
- (j) the government's failure to commit to addressing the doctor shortage in Brandon; and
- (k) the government's failure to provide any meaningful and effective strategy to address growing wait lists throughout Manitoba; and
- (l) the government's failure to consider, within a publicly funded, single-payer health care system, the development of public-private partnerships for the delivery of health care services; and
- (m) the government's failure to have an effective plan in place to deal with the threat of a pandemic flu outbreak; and

(n) the government's failure to initiate a review of health care regionalization; and

(o) the government's failure to provide any strategy and support to Manitobans who are forced to travel by ambulance to access health care services not available in their communities and who are assessed enormous bills for these transfers; and

(p) the government's failure to develop a plan to address the crumbling infrastructure within the City of Winnipeg and throughout the Province of Manitoba; and

(q) the government's failure to support the desperate plight of agriculture producers, given the flood conditions and the inability to grow a crop during this current growing season; and

(r) the government's failure to move ahead in the development of slaughter capacity after two and a half years of the BSE crisis; and

(s) the government's failure to call an independent public inquiry into the Crocus Fund scandal, and

(t) the government's failure to address the Seven Oaks School Division scandal and its failure to admit to its mishandling of the Morris MacDonald School Division Adult Learning Program; and

(u) the government's failure to resolve the retired teacher's COLA issue; and

(v) the government's failure to develop a long-term economic strategy to address stagnant job growth and make Manitoba a "have" province; and

(w) the government's failure to develop a long-term strategy addressing the out-migration of our best and brightest; and

(x) the government's failure to commit to strengthening the role and function of the Public Accounts Committee; and

(y) the government's failure to implement a strategy for predictable, long term and sustainable funding for post-secondary education; and

(z) the government's failure to provide a strategy for the protection of clean water throughout the Province of Manitoba.

AND HAS THEREBY lost the trust and confidence of the people of Manitoba and this House.

**Mr. Speaker:** The amendment is in order.

It has been moved by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, seconded by the member for Tuxedo—dispense?

*THAT the Motion be amended by adding at the end of the sentence, the following words:*

But this House regrets

(a) the government's failure to acknowledge the escalating debt of our province—

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

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

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Water Stewardship):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to stand today and once again address the Throne Speech. It is with great excitement I stand here today because I have the opportunity to talk about what is really going on in this province, following, as I did, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray), by the way, and I promise I am not going to reference certain internal matters that are ongoing within the Conservative Party, as much as I would like to. I respect that.

But I realize that the members opposite have figured out a brilliant way of distracting attention from their conventions because if I remember correctly, Mr. Speaker, last year the big issue of contention in the Conservative caucus, the No. 1 driving issue that they brought forth for discussion as part of the public agenda here in Manitoba was the need for more private health care.

Have they ever found a way this year to make sure that their ideological agenda does not get too much coverage, so I give them some credit.

Mr. Speaker, I am also tempted to comment on the fact that they thought they should bring in an amendment to the Throne Speech that went from A to Z. I think it was sort of the A to Z *Sesame Street* approach of members opposite because I really believe that they have a lot in common with that long-running TV show. I can tell you, if they keep bringing in the same kind of negative, negative, negative comments that we just heard from the Leader of the Opposition, I think their run in opposition will probably challenge the run of *Sesame Street* on television.

I am also struck by the degree to which we have a real contrast in this province. First of all, by the way, Mr. Speaker, let us note that the Leader of the Opposition went—I was not keeping track of it—for

too long. *[interjection]* Some members on our side are saying that the Leader of the Opposition went for too long. I think some members on the opposite side are saying the same thing.

I promised not to talk about that, but, you know, what is interesting is the complete absence of reference, seeing the province in its entirety. I am going to go through Hansard, and I want to see if there is any reference to northern Manitoba. You know that vast expanse of this province, Mr. Speaker, that many of us represent on this side, that members opposite once in a while visit. I think since the last election, quite frankly, if it was not for all-party committees—they certainly in my area did show up once, and I did remark in Question Period that this was actually a rarer sighting than the sightings of the Sasquatch in northern Manitoba.

But, you know, Mr. Speaker, did you hear any reference to Aboriginal people? Did you hear any reference to whole regions of this province? Because I realize that members opposite have got a great way—we know they do not care about northern Manitoba, but year after year their idea of the North has come down to pretty well north of Highway 1. Quite frankly, thanks to the Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Lemieux), I think they are going to have to draw their dividing line further and further south every year, because, quite frankly, they are a party that does not have a vision for the entire province.

Now, I know they do represent some interests, and it really struck me today, the degree to which members opposite really represent the millionaire perspective, and I want to say we represent the million people perspective because that is how many people there are in the province of Manitoba, a million and growing.

I look at how narrow that perspective really is on the part of members opposite. If you were to hear the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray)—just imagine if aliens kind of landed in the Legislature. At times I think they would probably find this place—even aliens would find it rather puzzling. But, Mr. Speaker, they would have heard an hour-plus of a speech from the Leader of the Opposition, and I want to just add a bit of a reality check just in case aliens came down and landed in the Manitoba Legislature in 2005 and heard this speech and had not seen anything else in Manitoba. I want to take the Leader of the Opposition and members opposite, the virtual

opposition party, I want to take them on a bit of a virtual tour.

If they cannot come up to northern Manitoba, for example, I want to take them on a little bit of a tour. Then we are going to take a little bit of a tour around rural Manitoba. Then we are going to take a tour right here in our urban centres. We will bring it right down to Brandon, right to downtown Winnipeg, and wind up back at the Legislature.

\* (15:50)

I want to start with northern Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, because I am proud of the fact that we have unprecedented construction in the city of Thompson, in the heart of the constituency of Thompson, a personal care home being built by the New Democratic Party, something that we have seen as an aspiration of our community for many years.

We have major work being done on our highway right through Thompson, one of the largest projects. We have both public and private construction taking place. An aircraft maintenance hangar being built next to our school. We have new businesses springing up. I have not seen the kind of growth we have seen in the Thompson economy since the early 1970s. As Thompson enters its 50th anniversary, I am proud to say that we as a government are working with the City of Thompson and the community of Thompson, and we are seeing the results. I was just at the celebration of the fifth anniversary of Neighbourhoods Alive!, a program that identifies and has put in place \$2.3 million over the last five years to invest in our communities in Thompson. By the way, we are renewing it for another five years.

I could take members opposite on this virtual tour of Thompson, but I do not want to just stop in Thompson. I want to look at what is happening elsewhere, because I also am fortunate enough to represent eight communities, and I am proud that, within a matter of months, the ATEC Centre in Nelson House Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation will be open, providing training to tens and hundreds of residents of that community as they look ahead to the possible participation in Wuskwatim.

Mr. Speaker, I could take the members opposite to visit the communities of Pikwitonei and they could see the new airport terminals. I could take them to the community of Wabowden to see the new health centre. I could take them to community after community after community throughout northern

Manitoba. We are seeing this government working with northern communities to make a difference.

Let us take a bit of a trip further north, Mr. Speaker. We can go to South Indian Lake, ably represented by the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), who just happens to be listening very intently. We inherited agreements signed by the previous government in 1992. Two things: they promised a road. We built it. They did nothing about the conversion to reserve status, and I am proud to say that we are almost at the point now, once the federal government can get the approvals, that we will see OPCN, the newest First Nation in the province of Manitoba, established thanks to the work of the First Nation and the different levels of government.

Mr. Speaker, I could go to Cross Lake. Let us go to Cross Lake, because on that virtual trip into Cross Lake, this time of year, over the next period of time, you could not be guaranteed of getting into the community. Why? Because there was a ferry service that stopped operating for certain times of the year. Now, thanks to the fact that the NDP provincial government working with Cross Lake First Nation has fulfilled the dream of that community, there is now a bridge, a beautiful bridge that crosses into Cross Lake that ensures year-round access.

Mr. Speaker, the ferries are still running into York Landing and, I will tell you, they are running twice a day, they are running six days a week. When the members opposite were in power, if you wanted to get into York Landing, forget about getting in and out on a weekend. It ran three times a week. We have extended it.

I could take you throughout northern Manitoba, and you will see those kind of improvements. The airport terminals we put in place, I mentioned my own constituency, but in Island Lake. Where is the largest degree of traffic outside of Winnipeg? In terms of air traffic, next is Thompson. The third is the Island Lake area, and we have put in place new commitments. We have extended air strips. We have improved navigation. We are even working, and I commend the Minister of Transportation for doing this, on route selection about the vision of an all-weather road and, in fact, short of an all-weather road, certainly a winter road to Nunavut. That is what is happening in northern Manitoba.

We see, Mr. Speaker, that developments in the port of Churchill, where we are partnering with

OmniTRAX, or we are partnering with the federal government, we see the maintenance of rail traffic, and I really want to commend the First Nations initiative on the Sherridon line, continue to provide investment and the operation of that line.

So, when I look around northern Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, on that virtual tour, I do not see the kind of approach that the members opposite have. I see a lot of things happening, and, yes, there needs to be a lot more, because we still have many communities that have inadequate housing, inadequate health care and inadequate education. I want to put out as a challenge here today, in the year 2005, I want to put out a challenge, particularly to the federal government with its fiduciary responsibility to First Nations, to work with us, because we have invested in transportation, we have invested in terms of health care and, with the University College of the North, we are investing in education. It is time for partnership to end the kind of Third World conditions that still exist in northern communities that are relying on the complete lack of a federal presence.

But, you know, Mr. Speaker, that is the virtual tour of northern Manitoba. Let us move now to rural Manitoba. When you get into rural Manitoba, the members opposite, I forget where agriculture was on their list. It was not A. It was not B. It was not C. I think it was down around R or S or T. I will tell you why. There is a kind of an approach that members opposite often have. When it comes to rural Manitoba, for years they ran around expecting that they can pay a little bit of lip service every so often, and the people of rural Manitoba say, oh, yeah, you are the party for rural Manitoba. I think they should wake up to the reality that this side does represent many rural constituencies.

But I want to put on the record, because, you know, they did talk about transportation. Well, let us compare the record, Mr. Speaker. When the Conservatives were in office, how concerned were they for rural Manitoba? I remember one time they had as little as \$92 million invested in the highways capital. On an equivalent basis, we are now \$130 million plus. This is the NDP. Who benefits the most? Obviously rural Manitobans, northern Manitobans, and, yes, we put more money into the North. It was pretty hard not to put anything other than more money, given the lack of attention, but you can go throughout rural Manitoba and you will see investments in rural Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, it is not just in terms of transportation. I would like to take the members on a tour of the Portage la Prairie water facilities, the Lac du Bonnet facilities. You know, the last I heard, they represent these constituencies in the Legislature, but they have not woken up to the fact that we are re-investing in rural infrastructure. We make significant investments year after year in sewer and in terms of water facilities.

Now let us talk about one of the obvious things about this year, the lack of a summer for some of us, Mr. Speaker. The bottom line is we had excess rainfall, 100 percent, 200 percent, 300 percent and 400 percent. Where was the NDP government? We were out there working with the municipalities. Ralls Island in Kelsey, we built a 13-kilometre dike in a week to protect the people in that community. We are still calling for federal action, and I want to say publicly today they should come forward to cost-share to protect the people of Ralls Island. We have been looking at options in terms of Deloraine, another community that was impacted by, in this particular case, 1-in-200-year rains this year.

How about Lake Winnipeg where, Mr. Speaker, in August, by working with the municipalities, we committed to \$8 million of protection for the residents in the many R.M.s around Lake Winnipeg? We committed to it; we built it. If anyone looked at that windstorm in early October, and I know that the Member for Gimli (Mr. Bjornson) will know it well, we took the action, and we still say to the federal government that they should be part of it.

I could talk about Amphibex, and I really want to put on the record that the Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) and the Member for Gimli have been very active in putting forward the fact that we need ice breaking in the spring, Mr. Speaker. It is going to be a few more months, and again we will be into the ice jams that are a feature of Manitoba, but this government took the initiative.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we put in place already \$25 million of provincial investment in flood protection, working with about \$15 million certainly from our municipalities, \$6 million in terms of First Nations, and I can tell you we have a Disaster Financial Assistance program. The claims that are going to come in will probably rival 1997, not in amount but certainly in terms of number. So we are there, working with communities, working with people in rural Manitoba.

One of the things I am particularly proud of, because, you know, I get almost a bit of a kick out of listening to Conservatives talk about health care. They were in government for 11 years, and what happened in rural Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, in that 11 years? We were talking earlier about ambulances. Well, we started, by the way, by renewing our ambulance suite in this province. Number two, the Brandon General Hospital. How many times did they announce they were going to retrofit? Seven times? I think probably they had the entire alphabet waiting to announce it, brought it back down to No. 26.

It took an NDP government to rebuild the Brandon General Hospital. We are putting MRIs outside of the city of Winnipeg, an NDP government.

\*(16:00)

But, you know, Mr. Speaker, once again, I forget how far down the list agriculture was. They should be ashamed of their record when it came to agriculture, because we have dealt with every single crisis, and it has been an NDP government that has provided more assistance to the agricultural community year after year after year. Compare the nineties. Compare '99 to 2005. It is the NDP who stood there with producers.

You know, they do not like to talk about this, again, but even property taxes. Mr. Speaker, I do not know if this is unparliamentary, but what a joke, Conservatives talking about property taxes and farmers and property owners generally. In the 1990s, you know, we have this great thing in Manitoba. It is called portioning. When you get the assessment, you can either proportion up or proportion down to buffer the impact. What did these so-called friends of the farmers, self-proclaimed, the Tories, do? They jacked up the portioning for agriculture. They increased the net impact of property taxes. What we have done is we have consistently said we would reduce the burden on farmers and we have done it, as we have done for all Manitobans. So we do not take any lectures from members opposite when it comes to property taxes.

I want to kind of bring this virtual tour to the city of Winnipeg, and remembering again that we could end up back in this Chamber, you know, sort of right after the Leader of the Opposition's speech, but, as you are driving in, pick whichever direction. Okay, let us pick, in my case, driving in on No. 6 and driving in through this city. I want to take you through the North End of the city, by the way,

because, you know what, and members opposite, in northern Manitoba we say they ignore northern Manitoba, they ignore the North End of Winnipeg too. They are consistent. If it has got north attached to it, they are not there. They do not care, Mr. Speaker.

You know, I want to take you on some of the streets in the city of Winnipeg that were boarded up, where housing prices were at non-existent levels and to see the renewal that is taking place in our neighbourhoods and our communities, because, you know what, you can get up and lecture all you want about any of the issues facing us, social or economic, any of the justice issues, but until you have thriving communities you will never get a cure to any of the social and economic and justice issues that you put forth. The North End of Winnipeg, moving into the core area, we are seeing neighbourhood renewal, and I am, again, proud that, here in the city of Winnipeg, Neighbourhoods Alive! is a key part of renewing our North End and our core area communities.

You know, Mr. Speaker, as we drive in now, we take a bit of a detour maybe through the North End and we arrive on Portage Avenue. I am most proud of this. I am from Thompson, okay, but you know what? I love driving up and down Portage Avenue right now, because what do you see? The MTS Centre celebrated the fact that it has got its millionth attendee this past weekend. That was the vision of the NDP. They voted against it. The Manitoba Hydro building, which is coming up, again, a huge investment. Red River College, a state-of-the-art facility right in downtown Winnipeg, and what is surrounding Red River?

All these boarded-up buildings, all these buildings which were in decline, you now see condos coming up. You see new businesses. You see people enjoying the fact that the downtown of Winnipeg is alive again and, as the Premier (Mr. Doer) pointed out following our Throne Speech, we have a million square feet of office space under construction. The private sector as well, and I commend the Aspers and others for seeing the future, we have gone from six years ago where downtown Winnipeg was the plywood capital of Canada to the point now where we are the building capital of Canada. The building capital.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am not going to end there. I am going to take a little bit of a detour out toward the east end of the city because you also see something else happening. Now, for the newest of members

opposite, the floodway expansion is under construction thanks to the NDP, and I wonder at what point in time members opposite are going to wake up to the fact that, you know, at the announcement we had Herb Gray, very appropriate with his involvement in the IJC, because they drafted the report. We certainly had representatives for all levels of government. I was particularly proud when I saw Premier Duff Roblin—I want to call him that because I think we, as an honour, should continue that—and our current Premier (Mr. Doer), the Premier of this province. You know, it reminded me of the fact that the Premier of the 1960s had the foresight to build the floodway against a lot of opposition, and we saw again today, all they could talk about was the same tired old rhetoric. Not one word about the fact we are going to protect 460 000 Manitobans against 1-in-700-year floods. That is what government is all about.

But, Mr. Speaker, I daresay, as we are coming back in toward the Manitoba Legislature, let us take a drive through some of the suburbs as well, because, you know, I want you to drive through, let us take a drive through Fort Garry, let us take a drive through St. Norbert, let us take a drive through Seine River. You know, it was not that long ago I remember Tories used to take those seats for granted. How about Assiniboine? I look around. They used to have the same attitude toward suburban seats in Winnipeg they do with rural Manitoba. It is like, hey, you know every election we have it wrapped up.

**An Honourable Member:** Brandon West.

**Mr. Ashton:** Brandon West, indeed.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I want you to drive along and check out the real estate listings, okay? You know, go visit some of the people that maybe just sold their house, you know those for sale signs, because what you will find, what are property values in the city of Winnipeg nowadays? They have shot up. I have to tell you, I used to remember going to Chamber of Commerce meetings in the 1990s. If you wanted to start a discussion where everybody agreed on one thing, you would say, "How low are the housing prices in Winnipeg? How tough is it to sell a house?" It did not matter whether it was Linden Woods or Windsor Park. That was the common element in the city. You will talk to a lot of people living in our suburban communities who are seeing hope, economic certainty represented by that they have some value back in their houses. But, more importantly, you talk to them, and you will see that

they are seeing the difference we are making with our education systems and our health care, because they, like all Manitobans, expect governments to be there when they are needed, and they expect us to make a difference for their lives.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I am going to bring you back to the Manitoba Legislature, by the way, and you could probably sort of see the Golden Boy shining on the top of the roof, still standing there, still shining, again, something that we had something to do with. They should pull up to the parking lot. I think you have to understand one thing as you walk in and maybe come up in the gallery in this virtual tour, if this was an hour ago, you would be wondering which planet the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray) is from. When you really look at it, we have challenges ahead of us in this province, but the reality is that most Manitobans are saying pretty well what we are saying. We are not perfect in this province, but we have construction again, we have re-investment in key public services, health care and education and transportation and infrastructure. You know what they are saying? They are saying that they do not want the kind of ideological quick fixes the members opposite like to come up with. They do not want the millionaire's party; they want the party of the million-plus people of Manitoba. I have to correct, they are actually the million-plus party because our population, under the NDP, is growing.

So I want to say this to members opposite. They can come up with their A-Z list of amendments. They can continue, as I am sure they will in Throne Speech, to give their negative comments. My suggestion, Mr. Speaker, is if the virtual tour has not worked, maybe they would like to come and join us on this side and we will take them around to see the reality of what is happening in Manitoba because I see hope, I see optimism, and I see a shared vision with Manitobans and it is very simply put, that we are a province that will only prosper when all million-plus of our citizens are truly part of this great province.

I can tell you, without a doubt, that we believe, as a government, that our collective vision is achieving that and, indeed, that is why there is so much hope and optimism in this province. Let the members opposite bring forward their vision of pessimism, but as our Premier (Mr. Doer) has pointed out, ours is a government of optimism, and this is a province that is on the move.

\* (16:10)

**Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to take this opportunity to debate the Speech from the Throne on behalf of the constituents of Lac du Bonnet.

Mr. Speaker, this is the seventh Throne Speech introduced by this government, and the fourth one that I have heard. But of all four, I can tell you, that I have heard, I can tell you they have almost been recycled and recycled and recycled all over again. All we have heard is recycled promises and feel-good rhetoric. All we have heard from members opposite, in fact, I should ask the member from Carman to bring one of those wind generators in this Chamber when members opposite are talking. We certainly could have some use of what they were saying. We could generate some electricity for all Manitobans. There is empty rhetoric. There are broken promises. There is unprecedented debt. This is the legacy of this NDP government. This Throne Speech, as pointed out by the leader of our party, he has indicated that "since 1999" was used on 17 occasions during the Throne Speech. They indicate what they thought happened since 1999. Let me remind them what did happen since '99. We have had the Hells Angels move into Winnipeg in the year 2000. It is well documented. The *Free Press* agrees with us. The media agree with us.

The only thing that we hear from members opposite is denial, denial, denial but what they ought to do is have a reality check because the Hells Angels moved in under the watch of this Justice Minister. We have River City Choppers move in just down the street from his constituency office, a retail store operated by the Hells Angels. We have had the Bandidos move into Manitoba under the watch of this Justice Minister.

I heard members opposite indicate a little while earlier that we are the building capital of Canada. Well, I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that, obviously, whoever says that in this Chamber has not left the province of Manitoba to check out what happens in other provinces. They do not realize what is really happening out there. We are not the building capital of Canada. We are far from it.

In fact, if we are talking about being the capital of Canada, let us talk about what we are noted for in this province. We have the highest murder rate in Canada. We are the murder capital of Canada. We have had the highest number of murders in history in the city of Winnipeg last year. They seem to deny that, Mr. Speaker. There is no denial. The numbers

speak for themselves. We had the most murders in Winnipeg of any time in history last year. We have 3000 new gang members in the city of Winnipeg, in the province of Manitoba, 3000 gang members. That is more than our police officers.

We are the debt capital of Canada. Without a doubt, we are absolutely the debt capital of Canada. This government has added almost \$3.5 billion more to the total debt of the province of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, almost \$3.5 billion more, and we have nothing to show for it. We did not have a mega project in this province since 1999. We did not have the flood of the century like we experienced in 1997.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, I did a comparison of debt, total debt in the province of Manitoba before 1999, the five and a half years before 1999, and the previous PC administration, even though it went through the flood of the century in 1997, during that period of time we actually paid down the total debt of the province of Manitoba by some \$6 million. Conversely, five and a half years after 1999, this NDP government has added almost \$3.5 billion to our total debt in this province.

We are also the tax capital of Canada, Mr. Speaker. There is absolutely no doubt, and I will go further with that later on in my response to the Throne Speech and tell you exactly why.

But that is what we are noted for in Manitoba. We are No. 1 in terms of the murder rate. We are No. 1 in terms of the debt, and we are No. 1 in terms of the tax capital of Canada. There is no denying it and members opposite ought to listen to what Manitobans are saying, to what others are saying about this province and take that to heart and look for solutions for the problems that we have here in this province.

This is a tired government, Mr. Speaker. It has no vision, no new ideas for this province, and the Throne Speech for 2005 certainly bears this out. I will not vote for the Throne Speech. We will not vote for this Throne Speech on this side of the House. We will vote for our amendment, but we will not vote for the Throne Speech. There has been no strategy to deal with the growing debt problem in the province of Manitoba. There is no strategy for economic growth.

We will not vote for a Throne Speech that under-resources our police, Mr. Speaker. We heard today, in fact, that the Justice Minister has indicated that they put more resources into police, and more police

are on the streets. But what we heard today is that Darrell Madill, the head of "D" Division, absolutely disagrees with him.

He would like to see more police on the street, Mr. Speaker. It is not just about talk. It is about action and this minister has not sat down with the head of "D" Division in Manitoba and asked for more police. I think that is the first step you have to take as a Justice Minister. If you decide that you want more police on the streets in Manitoba, you have to ask for them, and he has not asked for them.

We will not vote for a Throne Speech that does not address the gang, the drug and the violence problems of our province. We will not vote for a Throne Speech that offers no hope and opportunity to Manitobans who are waiting for jobs. We will not vote for a Throne Speech that offers no hope to Manitobans who are waiting in pain or does not address the crisis in rural health care in Manitoba.

We will not vote for a Throne Speech that will not offer support for Manitobans with large ambulance transfer bills. We will not vote for this Throne Speech because it shows that this NDP government has absolutely no ideas how to deal with the agricultural crisis in this province. Over two years have passed since the BSE crisis, and a shovel has yet to be put into the ground to turn sod in order to try to increase the slaughter capacity of this province. There is obviously no strategy on behalf of this NDP government and no plan.

Mr. Speaker, I look at some of the preamble to the Throne Speech, and it indicates in one of those paragraphs that Manitoba is one of the best places to start a business. That is what it said. I cannot believe it. Where have they been? Where have they been since 1999? Where have they actually been? Try to convince the private sector of that. There is no evidence of that at all.

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Manitoba introduced *Manitoba Check Up 2004*, and they indicated in the year 2004 that there has actually been a reduction, a loss of private-sector jobs in Manitoba, 1400 less private-sector jobs in 2004 than there was in 2003. That is the record of this government. That speaks volumes, Mr. Speaker. That certainly shows exactly what this government is all about. Try to convince the public sector. They would not agree. They would not agree that this is one of the best places to start a business, because if it were, there would be more businesses starting up.



There would be more private-sector jobs available to Manitobans, not less.

The members opposite have crowed and crowed about their half billion dollars of hydro sales to Ontario over the next six years. Mr. Speaker, this will not support the costs of a new hydro dam. Half a billion dollars over six years? That is not going to support the cost of building a hydro dam. It is not enough. It is not enough for Wuskwatim. It is not enough for Conawapa.

This Throne Speech is devoid of new ideas. It is a tired government, particularly with respect to the justice announcements as we talked about before. They could have taken our justice plan *Enough Is Enough!*, but they chose not to, and the reason they chose not to is because it was not their idea. They did the same thing, exactly the same thing when we came out with our plan with respect to legal aid reform. They ridiculed it and then at the end, when Ron Perozzo came out with his report, it was exactly the same thing as we had recommended and they adopted it as their own without giving us any credit.

So that is what this government is all about. They do not have new ideas with respect to justice or the economy. All they do is they try to distance themselves from a real plan in terms of the economy that we will be presenting to this Legislature and to all Manitobans and to the real plan that we have for real sensible solutions to the justice issues that are facing our province.

There are no new ideas to help farmers. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that another 10 percent reduction in the school tax on farm land just does not cut it, absolutely not. Our farmers in the Lac du Bonnet constituency, as in the rest of Manitoba, are devastated by the weather patterns that have created the problem that they have had for the last two years, and this 10 percent school tax reduction on farmland is really an insult. It is a slap in the face to our hardworking farmers across this province. It is peanuts. They had the ability to eliminate that school tax off farmland immediately and forever and they chose not to do that. Instead, they frittered away the new revenue that was available to the province for this year, courtesy of the federal government.

\* (16:20)

The Throne Speech is all about old announcements. In particular, the tax reductions that were announced, in spite of those tax reductions, if you implemented every one of them, which some

take effect on January 1, 2006, some take effect in 2007, if you implemented every one of those so-called tax reductions today, Mr. Speaker, and did a comparison among the 10 provinces in Canada, we still are the highest taxed in Canada. That is how far we are behind in terms of tax reductions in this country. Other provinces have taken the lead. They have tried to become tax competitive. We are still the highest taxed province in Canada.

With respect to health care, Mr. Speaker, we still have hallway medicine. This was announced in the 1999 election, the Premier announced that in fact he would eliminate hallway medicine in six months for \$15 million. Absolute nonsense. He ran on that promise and he did not fulfil his promise. He failed to deliver. Manitobans, I know, are listening, and they see what is happening with respect to the promises of this government that time and time and time again they do not fulfil their promises.

I give you another example, Mr. Speaker, in terms of old announcements. In terms of my area, the Pinawa CancerCare program is one of them. We heard that in the budget. We heard that in the last Throne Speech, and they still have not turned sod, although I am pleased to hear that the renovations for the Pinawa hospital and the CancerCare program that is going on there will be tendered this year. But all it is, is another announcement, announcement, announcement without any action. I want to ensure that this does happen.

New ambulances, well, we need them. The care in rural communities is obviously lacking. We have a lack of physicians in Brandon. We have a lack of resources in rural Manitoba. Obviously we need those ambulances to transport people who do not have the resources in their own community, Mr. Speaker. They do not have the resources in their own community in terms of medical attention and we need ambulances obviously to move them. But what we do not need is the government charging for inter-facility transfers when there are no services, when the services that are not offered in rural Manitoba are offered in Winnipeg and they transport people from rural Manitoba into Winnipeg. That should be no charge. That should go without saying.

*Mr. Harry Schellenberg, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

There is no long-term economic plan. I would like to be able to speak a little bit about Finance, the Industry and Economic Development and Mines, which is my responsibility, of course, as critic in this

area. There is no long-term economic plan by this Premier and by this government, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In fact, I go out and tell people that there is no economic plan by this Premier and by this government. In fact, their only economic plan that I know of is really written on the back of a napkin. That is their economic plan. They have got nothing in writing. They have got no vision. They do not know what they are doing in terms of the economy. I do not think there is anybody over there, very few of them over there, that do have business experience so they do not really realize what it takes to turn around the economy and this province.

There is no tax reduction plan. There should be a tax reduction plan. There is no plan to make Manitoba competitive with the rest of Canada. Any tax reductions that they have had over the number of years that I have been here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have been minimal. It is less than other provinces. We are not tax competitive with other provinces. Other provinces are reducing taxes at a much greater rate than we are here in Manitoba. The Province, when they do reduce taxes in certain areas, they backfill the loss of that tax revenue in other ways with increases and licences, backdoor tax increases and user fees and permit fees. Also, as you know, they increase the applicability of the provincial sales tax to legal fees, to engineering fees, to architecture fees in the last budget. In the budget before that, they even applied the provincial sales tax to the labour portion on mechanical and electrical contracts. So those are the types of things that this government is famous for. On the one hand, they give minimal tax reductions to businesses and individuals, much less so than other provinces, and, on the other hand, they backfill it by increasing user fees and backdoor taxes that they have become famous for.

With respect to the personal income tax situation, clearly we are the highest taxed in Canada. A family of four earning \$30,000 a year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, pays more taxes in Manitoba than in any other province across this country. A Manitoba family of four, a two-earner family of four earning \$60,000 a year pays more taxes in Manitoba than in any other province in Canada. Now this does not come from the spin doctors that the members opposite have employed. This comes from an independent source. The Institute of Chartered Accountants gave that report a couple of weeks ago in the *Manitoba Check Up 2004*. Certainly, members opposite should be listening in terms of where they are in terms of tax reductions in this country.

In addition to that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know there is talk of increasing the minimum wage and we heard even from some quarters that people want the minimum wage to increase to \$10 an hour. Well, our position is quite clear. Our position is let us allow people who earn a minimal amount of money, let us allow people to keep their own money. Let us not tax them to death. Of course, it is in the best interests of this Premier and this government to increase the minimum wage to \$10 an hour because then it means more tax revenue for this government. That is what it means, on the backs of businesses that sometimes cannot afford those kind of increases. Let us give them more of their tax money. Let us let them keep more of their tax money by increasing the personal exemption. We have among the lowest personal exemptions in Canada. Only Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia have lower personal exemptions than Manitoba.

We are one of only four provinces in Canada that does not index our brackets, our income tax brackets, for inflation and this results, of course, in bracket creep. But that is in the interest of this government not to index those brackets for inflation because obviously they are going to get less tax revenue.

In terms of the taxation for corporations, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can tell you that large corporations, and large corporations are defined as those corporations who earn more than \$400,000 annually, with profits of more than \$400,000 annually, Manitoba is actually the fourth-highest tax rate in Canada. When we look at small corporations, corporations that are earning less than \$400,000 in profits annually, we are the fourth-highest taxed in Canada. We are just over-taxed, it is as simple as that, and the rate of taxation, when I look at the rate of taxation on manufacturing and processing corporations, manufacturing and processing businesses in this province, we are actually the second-highest rate in Canada.

When you look at all of that and you look at the effect on businesses that it has within our province, it is no small wonder that this is a province that is being described as a province that is not friendly for business in this country. When you look at all of that, we find in reality that Manitoba is the highest taxed province in Canada.

We do not have a debt reduction plan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Actually, debt was not even mentioned in the Speech from the Throne. The only

plan that I heard is to follow balanced-budget legislation, that \$99 million a year that we have to pay down toward our operating debt, but that is legislated and that legislation came from this side of the House prior to 1999. We are thankful for that.

We have a debt, a total debt in this province of Manitoba, of almost \$20.4 billion in this province. \$1.5 million a day is what our debt increases every day, every single day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, our debt goes up by almost \$1.5 million a day. That did not come directly from me, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I encourage members opposite to check the budget. That is their numbers. That is members opposite's numbers. That is not my numbers. The debt is projected to increase by \$526 million this year alone and I would encourage members opposite to open the budget, the budget that was presented by their very own Finance Minister. They will find that those are the numbers that were presented to us here in this House, encourage those of you and those members opposite who have not checked it out yet to check out our debt clock, the debt clock that is on my Web site. You will be surprised at how quickly that debt piles up, that mortgage that is there for our children and our grandchildren to pay back, how that increases day after day after day.

\* (16:30)

Not only that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but \$767 million in debt servicing costs every year; \$767 million a year, and we are not talking about simply the tax-supported debt. We are talking about the total debt of the Province of Manitoba and there is still only one taxpayer in Manitoba. You are a taxpayer in terms of paying taxes to the provincial government to pay the interest on the operating loan that is out there, but we are also a ratepayer paying to Manitoba Hydro. We are also a ratepayer paying to Centra Gas. We are a ratepayer paying for other utilities across this province. When you add together all of the debt-servicing costs of all of those Crown corporations that we are responsible for as government and members opposite are responsible for as government in trying to control the debt of these Crown corporations and the Province, all told \$767 million is used annually for debt-servicing costs. When you look at it in terms of a family of four, that takes \$3,000 each and every year out of the pockets of a family of four in Manitoba.

I would hope that the Finance Minister has listened to Governor Dodge of the Bank of Canada when he told us very clearly in the *National Post* a

few days ago that it is time for governments in Canada—and he was speaking directly to the Finance Minister, and I hope that he was listening—whether it is provincial, municipal, or whether it is federal, to pay down the debt.

We are in great economic times through no fault, of course, of this government, but through the world economy in terms of the dynamics in the world economy and the dynamics across Canada. We are in good economic times, and if you cannot pay down the debt now, when can you? If there is an increase in interest rates, it is going to have a tremendous effect on Manitobans and their pocketbooks and on the taxes here in Manitoba. First of all, the debt is almost \$20.5 billion. You increase the interest rates by 1 percent and you have an extra \$205-million drain on the Treasury here in this province.

Where is that going to come from, Mr. Deputy Speaker? It certainly has to come from somewhere. Someone has to pay it. I guess the answer probably of the Finance Minister of this Province is add it to the debt, just keep adding the interest to the debt. But someone has to pay for it, and in order to pay for it, if we have to pay for it, if he listened to Governor Dodge, he is going to be forced to increase taxes in Manitoba and we will be even less tax competitive than we are today.

The NDP press releases have all indicated that they have paid down the debt in accordance with the balanced budget legislation. But all we are talking about in terms of paying down the debt is the operating debt, and that is the small debt of the Province. We have to look at the debt as larger than just the operating debt. The operating debt is the small part of the debt of the Province; it is not the large part. But I guess, if you want to focus on anything positive, the only thing they can grasp onto is the operating debt because it is required that that operating debt be paid down in accordance with balanced budget legislation, legislation that we introduced.

We have to look at all of the debt because when you go into a bank or a credit union and you ask for a loan and they ask you for your credit information, ask you what you owe, they do not just ask you for what you owe on your motor vehicle, they do not just ask you for what you owe on your mortgage, they do not just ask you for what you owe on your line of credit, they do not just ask you for what you owe on a furniture loan, they ask you for your total debt load so they can assess your ability to repay. That is

where this government is going wrong. All they are doing is quoting the debt that is required to be paid down pursuant to balanced budget legislation and no other debt.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

We had \$525 million of new revenue come into this Province courtesy of the federal government this year, \$525 million in new revenue, and in reality all we need is about \$250 million to \$275 million to run government operations. That is all we have had in history, over the last 10 years, is under \$300 million of new revenue come in year after year after year.

This government had unprecedented revenue courtesy of the federal government, Mr. Speaker, and those unprecedented revenues totalled \$525 million. There is no excuse for not reducing taxes to make us competitive. You have to reduce taxes to make us competitive with other provinces, otherwise we lose businesses, we lose opportunities and we lose our young people.

That \$525 million could have easily, easily applied to eliminate school taxes on residential property and farmland today and forever. It would have actually eliminated those two taxes immediately and forever because what it did, that 525 million new dollars that came into the province, is it increased the base of revenues, so it would be there forever courtesy of the federal government. What it requires to eliminate education taxes on residential property and farmland is \$270 million a year. That is the cost to the province. It is not \$600 million. It is not \$700 million, as I have heard members opposite talk about before. It is \$270 million. That \$270 million could have come from that extra \$525 million of new revenue coming into the province this year, and because of that we could have eliminated school taxes completely off residential property and farmland and still paid for inflationary increases and increases in programs that government provides to us.

Mr. Speaker, the debt, as I mentioned before, is out of control. It is climbing at the rate of \$1.5 million a day. It is currently at a level of almost \$3.4 billion at this point. I made a comparison before 1999 versus after 1999. The total debt of the province actually decreased under PC administration by \$6 million. The numbers are there. They are not my numbers. They came directly out of the budget papers and out of the financial statements that this government has introduced year by year by year.

There is no job creation plan, absolutely none. We have private-sector jobs that should be driving the economy of this province and, yet, they are not. All we have are public-sector jobs being created by this government. We need the private-sector jobs to provide the taxes to support the salaries, of course, of public-sector jobs. Not that public-sector jobs are not good jobs, Mr. Speaker. We are not arguing that. But when you look at the numbers of jobs created since 1999, 36 000 jobs in this province were created since 1999, and 75 percent of them, a full 75 percent, 25 700 public-sector jobs were created. Only 25 percent of them were private-sector jobs, 10 300. In fact, when you look at the private-sector numbers, in 2004 the number of private-sector jobs in Manitoba actually decreased by 1400 jobs. No wonder this debt is climbing. No wonder that this government has not decreased its taxes, has not become tax competitive with the rest of Canada. It cannot. All it does is use the excess revenue to create more public-sector jobs instead of cutting taxes and making us more competitive.

I point to the October 27 edition of the *National Post*, and in terms of real GDP, they talk about GDP increasing in Manitoba. Only Manitoba, only one province in Canada had the real GDP shrink from 2005 to 2006, the only province in Canada. That speaks volumes about the ability of this government to grow our economy. That speaks volumes about the ability of this government to run government as a business and to ensure that our economy grows and jobs are created in Manitoba. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

\* (16:40)

**Mr. Conrad Santos (Wellington):** Honourable Mr. Speaker, in direct answer to the allegation of the honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet that the majority government now has no plan and no strategy, no ideas, I directly answer that. The Member for Wellington explicitly states a seven-point economic policy plan framework for this majority government which includes education, innovation, investment, immigration, communities, energy. Those are economic plans. Since there is also an allegation that there is no idea, the Member for Wellington wishes now to talk about ideas included in what they call the games model of analyzing political conflict.

Our society is always in a situation of conflict. There are many conflicts: husband and wife, rich and

poor, urban-rural. Wherever you look at, it is situation of conflict, rivalry and competition. But, before we can deal with any situation, if we are in a position of decision-making authority to deal with the situation, we have to analyze the particular situation at hand.

The questions are these: Are the parties in conflict pursuing goals that are simply incompatible? Are the parties in conflict aware of all the strategies that are allowed by the game that they play, the legitimate rules, such that there are certain rules depending on the games you play? There are kinds of games of entertainment like sports, games of chance like gambling, games of skill like boxing or some other sport, or bridge, or whatever, Monopoly, Scrabble, games of skills. What is the commonality in all these types of games so that we can build up a theory to understand the situation in everyday life?

We need some way of understanding the conflict situation. There are some elements that are common to all these kinds of games. There are rules, first. Second, there are strategies in every kind of game. Third, there are payoffs, whatever the kind of game is.

Now, if the game is such that there are only two parties or two groups of people in rivalry with one another pursuing incompatible goals that excludes any kind of bargaining between them such that when one wins the other loses so that one's gain is the other person's loss, we characterize the game as a zero-sum type of game. It is a zero-sum type of situation. Example: boxing, either Muhammad Ali wins or the opponent wins. Example: two-party system in the United States, either the Democrat wins or the Republican wins. There are only two players or two groups of players and they are pursuing incompatible objectives. That is known as the zero-sum type of game. This is typically illustrated by what is known as the prisoner's dilemma. It is a very, very powerful model. It was invented by a mathematician known by the name of John von Neumann in 1937. It was elaborated upon later in 1944 by von Neumann and Oscar Morgenstern, another mathematician. Then it was elaborated and then applied by a Princeton economist in 1994. His name is Nash, and he won the Nobel Prize. In this year, a political scientist from Harvard named Thomas Schelling won again the Nobel Prize on this game theory of political settlement of conflict. Now, this is obviously a very important and significant model to understand, especially in our political life as well as in the world situation of conflict which involves either the

survival of this planet or its decimation in the case of nuclear war.

So there are strategies to follow. What do we mean by strategies? Strategies are all the options open to the players or participants in the game of conflict. All these are strategies. In a zero-sum kind of game there are only two possible strategies. Therefore, if there are two players and each one has two strategies, you can imagine a matrix of two columns and two rows, a square matrix. In each of these cells, four of them, would be the possible outcomes. Either the first player wins, that means the other will lose. That will be one outcome.

In the matter of strategies, in this prisoner's dilemma, the situation is this: Two people are arrested *in flagrante delicto*, in actual commission of a crime, trying to steal a motor vehicle. So they get arrested by the police. Then, in the investigation, it appears that they were suspects in a multimillion-dollar bank robbery where somebody got killed. So they were told they were also suspects in that other more serious crime. The strategy of the prosecution is to separate the two. The rules are they do not communicate with one another. There is insufficient evidence to charge them of the more serious crime, but they certainly will be convicted of the minor crime of theft of a motor vehicle. The penalty there is from one year minimum to two years maximum in the lower crime. But in the higher crime, more serious crime, the penalty is a minimum of three years and a maximum of ten years.

The prosecution says to each of them, "All right, you guys, either you confess or you deny the allegation and accusation about the bank robbery." Each of them has to decide on his own. What to do? There are only four possible outcomes, or possible payoffs. Prisoner 1 confessed; prisoner 2 also confessed. That will be the first cell and there will be an outcome. They know exactly what will happen. They were told if both of them confessed, they will be charged with the more serious crime, but will get the minimum sentence because they will make it easier for the police to solve the crime. The other outcome is one confesses, the other denies. I should also repeat that. The first one confessed; the second one denies. So it is a reflection of the two matrixes. The last one will be both of them deny, in which case the prosecution will have no grounds, no evidence, and they will only be charged with the minor crime. Both of them will get the maximum penalty, which is two years.

\* (16:50)

Now, what would you do if you were one of the prisoners? Would you confess or would you not? That is a dilemma. That is why it is called the prisoner's dilemma.

Now let us go to the other type of game. It is called non-zero sum game or it is called the variable outcome game or it is called the multiple motives game. No matter what the name, the strategies are different. The thing that you will apply there will be a different kind of strategy because there is no application of the winner-loser kind of solution. You do not minimize your losses and maximize your gain in that kind of game because there are other alternatives other than win or lose situations. Therefore, it is possible to have co-operation between the two contestants, and in the co-operation, they can, of course, bargain, and if they bargain, they can arrive at a different outcome, not a win-lose where winner takes all.

They will say, "Okay, this will be a win-win situation if we decide to meet at the middle like in bargaining. Both of us will win." But if you will not, then bargaining will collapse. Everything will disappear and both of us will lose all this value. That is the difference between the two kinds of game.

Let me illustrate the second one. Supposing you are a taxi driver. You are a taxi driver and you are driving and somebody just pulls a gun on you, a passenger. Then he says, "Okay, give me all your money." What do you say? *[interjection]* No, this is different. You can bargain. What you do is you step on the accelerator, drive as fast as you can and head for a hydro pole, and tell him, okay, guy, throw the gun out or we both die. Throw the gun out the window or we both die. This is a strategy, and if it succeeds, both of them live. The driver is safe. He gets his money. The perpetrator of the crime is of course—*[interjection]*

This is a political obligation. This happened during the missile crisis in Cuba. They have evidence that there are missile installations in Cuba put there by the Russians. They know that they are there. They have photos of them. President Kennedy of the United States said, with the advice from his CIA and FBI and all the other advisers there, what shall we do?

They said we will do this kind of game like the one I illustrated with the taxi driver. We go there, confront them, encircle Cuba with all our submarines and all the missile-headed torpedoes and tell them, tell the Russians, tell Fidel Castro, take away all the missiles or this will be a black hole here and there will be a third world war. We have 10 000 missiles that you do not know about all around the world, if you do not do what we say. That is like the driver saying to the other guy, throw your gun out or we will die. This kind of game is called the chicken's game. It is the chicken who gives way who loses here. That is the chicken's kind of game. It is like the prisoner's dilemma and it is a dilemma, whatever you do.

This also is present, currently now present, in this present situation. There is North Korea with Il Kim Jong II who threatens that if anybody crosses the border from South Korea, or from anywhere, and touches land, North Korea, he will have a nuclear weapon of mass destruction and he will use it. So this strategy says, "Well, the participant who wants to win will make the situation much worse than it is, in such a way that nobody wins. Much worse."

So the U.S., with all the installations there, with all their power, with all their might, are very cautious about antagonizing this reckless loony, perhaps, or behaving like one, because of the safety of every one of us in the world. That is how important this game theory is. That is why we have to understand it very carefully and understand it well. .

. The trouble with this is that we live in a world of some visible reality that we see and an unseen world of intentions. We do not know what is in the minds of people, or in their hearts, except what is manifested by what they do. In addition to that, whenever we talk and speak, we speak in language that is ambiguous. There are words that have double meanings, words that you cannot understand, that you cannot define, and then you are confused. So there is misperception. If there is misperception, there is no communication, there is no resolution. That is the reality of it.

So we do not know whether the reconstruction of reality from what we do or what we say is correct or not. Every individual, according to Jeremiah—this is a prophet; so what he says, we have to listen to. He said, "The heart is the most deceitful of above all

things, deceitful, and desperately wicked. Who can know it?"

"I the Lord search the heart—"

**An Honourable Member:** You are talking my language there, Conrad.

**Mr. Santos:** Yes.

"—and give to every man according to his ways, and according to the fruits of his doings." So, if any man gains wealth or riches without right, he will be like a partridge that sits on eggs that never hatch, and the wealth shall leave him. In the end, he shall be like a fool.

See, all these things about Crocus, about investments, about all these things, it is confusing. Then listen to God. Why are we difficult to understand as human beings? Because we smile when our hearts are aching. Music, there is some like that: "Smile, though your heart is aching."

People can smile at you, they hug you, but in their heart they say, "I want to get rid of you."

So, even in Manitoba relations, you say, you want to approach your wife and, wrong timing, wrong timing, and she says, "I got a headache."

You know that you are in trouble. So it is timing. What to do?

All these things are important. We all play games in life, and we have to understand the game. Even leaders play games.

**An Honourable Member:** Leadership games.

**Mr. Santos:** No, not leadership games, but they borrow from one another, also. They borrow from one another, borrowing.

**An Honourable Member:** Money.

**Mr. Santos:** No, not money, ideas. So I am trying to give ideas that they said we are lacking. That is just a modest suggestion. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have nine minutes remaining

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

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, October 31, 2005

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