

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

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

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Eighth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
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, Hon.	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.
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MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	N.D.P.
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SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
SMITH, Scott, Hon.	Brandon West	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.
VACANT	Kirkfield Park	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 21, 2006

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYER

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 206—The Phosphorus-Free
Dishwashing Detergent Act**

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Inkster, that Bill 206, The Phosphorus-Free Dishwashing Detergent Act; Loi sur les détergents à vaisselle sans phosphore, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, this legislation will ban the use of phosphorus in dishwashing detergent as an important step in reducing the amount of phosphorus going into Lake Winnipeg in order to begin the process of cleaning up the lake and reducing the algal blooms.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? [*Agreed*]

**Bill 4—The Consumer Protection Amendment Act
(Prepaid Purchase Cards)**

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Mackintosh), that Bill 4, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Prepaid Purchase Cards), be now read for the first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce this bill today. The bill amends The Consumer Protection Act to prohibit expiry dates on most gift cards and other prepaid purchase cards and to require the disclosure of certain information to consumers.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? [*Agreed*]

PETITIONS

Headingley Foods

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

The owner of Headingley Foods, a small business based in Headingley, would like to sell alcohol at their store. The distance from their location to the nearest Liquor Mart, via the Trans-Canada Highway, is 9.3 kilometres. The distance to the same Liquor Mart via Roblin Boulevard is 10.8 kilometres. Their application has been rejected because their store needs to be 10 kilometres away from the Liquor Mart. It is 700 metres short of this requirement using one route but is 10.8 kilometres using the other.

The majority of Headingley's population lives off Roblin Boulevard and uses Roblin Boulevard to get to and from Winnipeg rather than the Trans-Canada Highway. Additionally, the highway route is often closed or too dangerous to travel in severe weather conditions. The majority of Headingley residents therefore travel to the Liquor Mart via Roblin Boulevard, a distance of 10.8 kilometres.

Small businesses outside Winnipeg's perimeter are vital to the prosperity of Manitoba's communities and should be supported. It is difficult for small businesses like Headingley Foods to compete with larger stores in Winnipeg, and they require added services to remain viable. Residents should be able to purchase alcohol locally rather than drive to the next municipality.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister charged with the administration of The Liquor Control Act (Mr. Smith), to consider allowing the owners of Headingley Foods to sell alcohol at their store, thereby supporting small business and the prosperity of rural communities in Manitoba.

This is signed by A. Cattersen, Jon Stefanson, Herb Wilks and many, many others.

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

Crocus Investment Fund

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

The government needs to uncover the whole truth as to what ultimately led to over 33,000 Crocus shareholders to lose tens of millions of dollars.

The provincial auditor's report, the Manitoba Securities Commission's investigation, the RCMP investigation and the involvement of our courts, collectively, will not answer the questions that must be answered in regard to the Crocus Fund fiasco.

Manitobans need to know why the government ignored the many warnings that could have saved the Crocus Investment Fund.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Premier (Mr. Doer) and his NDP government to co-operate in uncovering the truth in why the government did not act on what it knew and to consider calling a public inquiry on the Crocus Fund fiasco.

Mr. Speaker, that is signed by Jose Buno, Larry Dominguez, Carmine Gatdula and many, many other Manitobans.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): I am pleased to table the Quarterly Report for the six months ending September 30, 2006, for the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board, copies of which have been distributed.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us today Mr. Kenn McLaren who is from Victoria, British Columbia.

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Lottery Revenue-Sharing Agreement Aboriginal Casinos

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): We learned this morning, through a leaked report to CBC, that the Minister responsible for Gaming has arrived at a \$20-million lottery revenue-sharing agreement with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs.

We certainly understand and support initiatives to promote economic development. We understand that this agreement came about as a way to atone for broken promises to open five Aboriginal casinos. So far, Mr. Speaker, we have been unable to obtain a copy of this agreement.

I wonder if the Premier would be willing today to demonstrate transparency and table a copy of that agreement for all members of this House.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, there is no final agreement. There have been discussions and memorandum of the parameters of a potential agreement. The final agreement has not been negotiated by the governments, and it is, therefore, not completed.

* (13:40)

Mr. McFadyen: Since the government is leaking stories on the basis of incomplete agreements, I wonder if the Premier, who has indicated today that he is aware of the parameters of that agreement, would be prepared today to indicate whether any of the economic development initiatives that are contemplated by this incomplete agreement will go toward benefiting the growing number of Aboriginal people living in urban areas. We want to know, because 40 percent of our Aboriginal people living in Manitoba live off reserve in Winnipeg and other urban areas, whether there is anything in this agreement to benefit these individuals.

Mr. Doer: The member opposite would know that the number he used which, as I say, has not been finally signed off, but it is certainly a number that has been discussed between the government and Aboriginal people, is about \$4 million a year. That is certainly a minor amount of money that has been invested in urban Aboriginal people since we have been elected. There are a number of targeted programs for Aboriginal people in all our centres in Manitoba. One of the first decisions we made is the anti-gang outreach program in the Indian and Métis

Friendship Centre that was capriciously cut by members opposite. That money was reinstated not only to the Friendship Centre in Winnipeg but right across Manitoba; many of which are in urban centres to give people employment and to give people hope.

Mr. Speaker, we have reinstated money that disproportionately was cut off of young Aboriginal people, children, when the members opposite clawed back the child poverty provision. There is much more money going to Aboriginal children in urban centres than the money even contemplated in this agreement. We have also targeted urban Aboriginal people in building the Red River College in downtown Winnipeg, which has a number of courses addressing Aboriginal training opportunities. We have a 40 percent increase in enrolment at the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg. We get up every day caring about Aboriginal people and Aboriginal people in urban centres. We did not cut them off like members opposite.

Aboriginal Communities Smoking Ban

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I see the Premier is still obsessed with fighting old wars. I guess when you are as out of steam as this government is that is the best you can do. I find it passing strange that the Premier talks about clawbacks while his government holds on to the money that is coming through by way of Child Tax Credit, which should be going to foster families in Manitoba. It is absolutely shameful and it is hypocritical.

Given that the Premier and his government based their appeal of Justice Clearwater's decision on the smoking ban on the notion that it could impede future economic development agreements between the provincial government and Aboriginal communities, I wonder now given that the current Attorney General, the minister at the time said that the decision by Justice Clearwater could have implications for economic development initiatives.

Now that the government is going ahead with a new economic development initiative, will they confirm that it is a term of that agreement, that they care as much about Aboriginal children and Aboriginal people who are non-smokers in enclosed places? Will they make it a term of the agreement that the law respecting non-smoking in indoor spaces in Manitoba is going to be applied province-wide as a condition of this agreement, no escape hatches, no

weasel words? Does the Premier want to stand up for non-smokers in Manitoba regardless of race? Will he put his money where his mouth is and make that a term of this agreement?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Well, Mr. Speaker, it is pretty appropriate that the member opposite is asking questions about legislation and leadership. It was provided by the Member for Carman (Mr. Rocan), and I just want to applaud the Member for Carman.

The member opposite talks about going back to old battles. I can't think of an old battler more extreme than Don Orchard. I want to say to the member opposite that we certainly appreciate the work of the all-party committee. I would also point out that the member opposite may not have studied the issue of by-laws that are under the Indian affairs act. He would note that in Saskatchewan, and it has been a changing government in Saskatchewan with the federal government, the federal government has changed. The by-laws still stand on smoking status, so I think he should inform Manitobans of that fact.

We have said that we will respect the decision of the judge on the issue of smoking. We've started with an agreement with the Swan Lake First Nation community. We're in discussions with other First Nation communities. We were in discussions actually before the Clearwater decision because we do recognize that we would like to have greater reduction of smoking in public places, including in Aboriginal communities. We recognize the legal authority of by-laws. We note the position of the federal minister in terms of Manitoba. That is, I think, encouraging.

But the Clearwater decision, in terms of other economic development, is very, very important. We know that to succeed, for example, in building Wuskwatim, we needed to have an economic agreement that included training for Aboriginal people. Would that then be challenged in court under the Clearwater decision as being prejudicial to other people who don't live in the Aboriginal community? It may be argued on that basis but, having said that, the land and water and traditional territory is that of the First Nation.

We believe, unlike members opposite, that we have to build hydro into the future. We also know that we have to do it with Aboriginal people who live and reside in the area, and that's why we can begin to slowly but surely in co-operation have smoking not allowed in gaming facilities in Manitoba, in First Nation communities as we have with Headingley,

and also have an economic affirmative action program for training Aboriginal people, where they have a higher number of people on welfare—

An Honourable Member: Speech.

Mr. Doer: Well, I know it's speech. Members opposite mothball economic development for Aboriginal people. They mothball hydro development. We build it in partnership with Aboriginal people.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a new question.

Government Advertising Campaign Spending

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, Mr. Speaker, I think again the Premier is obsessed with history, but if we're going to talk about history let's make sure that we get it right. It was our party and our government in the 1990s that moved ahead on Treaty Land Entitlements after being stalled for decades under an NDP government, a process which has become bogged down under the current NDP government because of a lack of will on their part to resolve some of these important outstanding issues; northern flood settlement implementation agreements under the former Progressive Conservative government in order to allow development to proceed in the north while providing appropriate compensation and participation by First Nations people. So if the Premier wants to talk about history, then let's make sure that we get the facts straight.

Now I'm not sure what the Premier's answer was to the last question. The last comments he made prior to today on the issue of the smoking ban were that there were going to be no exceptions. They had negotiated an agreement with Swan Lake that there will be no smoking in the facility. The same day, the chief says: Oh, wait a minute, we've got an escape hatch. We're not worried about this agreement. The Premier built in a sly escape hatch that allows us to allow smoking indoors in the facility, which is why we're looking for straight answers; a yes or no today, Mr. Speaker.

On a new question to the Premier, with respect—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. McFadyen: The Premier commented the other day that he was trained at St. Paul's not to ramble,

and I don't know where that training went, but the rambling answer to the last question called for some rebuttal.

But, I want to move on to the question, Mr. Speaker, and the question is as follows—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. McFadyen: Small victories, Mr. Speaker, small victories. Thank you.

With \$1.6 million in public money already spent on the "Spirited Energy" campaign, we've learned today that they've set aside another \$800,000 in taxpayers' funds to spend on a government advertising campaign. Straight government ad buy, \$800,000. At a time when we have children in care staying in hotel rooms, at a time when our roads are crumbling, at a time when our taxes are the highest in the country west of Québec, when is the government going to close the gap between its rhetoric and the reality of this government's actions?

At a time when only three of them can muster the energy to speak on a Wheat Board resolution, when are they going to put their money where their mouth is? When are they going to show some energy? When are they going to cut taxes for young Manitobans and close the gap between the rhetoric and the reality of what's going on under this government?

* (13:50)

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Dealing with the rebuttal, there was a proposed agreement on Treaty Land Entitlement in 1987 that went to the former Minister McKnight and was rejected by the Mulroney government. So we have to go back a long way on this issue. But, going forward, this Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Lathlin) has got 250,000 acres that he's put in place to satisfy some Treaty Land Entitlement issues that are outstanding with the federal government.

Speaking of the federal government, they did approve a treaty status for urban reserves at the Swan Lake First Nation. When the member opposite talks about a loophole, it's called the Canadian Constitution. I know the member opposite would want to be accurate, but it does allow for the federal Minister of Indian Affairs to make a decision of by-laws. He stated a position on that, and hopefully will deal with the matter and resolve it the way we've

negotiated it. But I think it's important he puts that on the record.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite talks about crumbling roads. Let me deal with the phony swagger of the member opposite when he worked for the Filmon government on economic development. The Conservative budget on highways and maintenance, they started at 167, after 11 years they went to 177. They raised gas tax 2.5 cents a litre. All the money they collected in gas tax, did they reinvest it in highways? They stole \$45 million away from the motorists and truckers of Manitoba and left us a crumbling situation.

The member opposite goes on CBC radio and said: We warned them seven years ago. Well, we did increase our budget by 47 percent. It wasn't perfect, but they sure did warn us. They stole the money from the gas tax and didn't invest it in highways. That is their record, and they are accountable.

Mr. McFadyen: I just want to say to the Premier that in a two-week period where last week we cut six bridges out of the floodway project because we don't have the money to protect Winnipeggers, but next week he's got \$800,000 for a phony advertising campaign. Where are his priorities? He should be ashamed of himself.

Mr. Speaker, at a time when he's cutting back on flood protection for the people of Winnipeg because he hasn't got his priorities straight and he can't manage a Popsicle stand, never mind a floodway expansion project; at a time that with a litany of examples of mismanagement they can find \$800,000 to spend on an ad campaign, and especially with that ad campaign it talks about "Spirited Energy;" there's lots of great things going on in Manitoba in spite of this government. I can tell you that when I and my family moved back to Manitoba in 2003, we came back in spite of this government, not because of it, with the highest taxes in the country west of Québec. So at a time when they're running a campaign—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I need to be able to hear the questions and the answers in case there's a breach of a rule. I am sure that you would expect me to make a ruling, but I wouldn't be able to unless I can hear the words from honourable members. So I ask the co-operation of all honourable members.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, given all the government's purported passion on the issue of the Wheat Board, they managed to have three members

stand up. The members for Dauphin, La Verendrye, Brandon East, Brandon West, Gimli and 29 out of the 30 members from Winnipeg couldn't muster the energy last night to get out of their seats to debate the Canadian Wheat Board.

Given that they had completely run out of steam, given that they have completely run out of energy, when are they going to wake up? When are they going to close the gap between the rhetoric and their actions?

Mr. Doer: First of all, Mr. Speaker, the agreement on the floodway was reached between the federal and provincial governments. I am surprised the member opposite would be criticizing the lead minister here in Manitoba. The 665 was maintained, and members opposite raised the bridge in Springfield yesterday. It is 1-in-700-years. The proposal was to go from double lanes to four-lane bridges to double lanes. It was just considered a luxury because 1-in-700-years in terms of—
[interjection]

Well, members opposite, let me get to this because the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) certainly didn't deal with some of the challenges on the eastern side of the province. They couldn't because they didn't have any money; they didn't raise any money from highways. They took more from gas taxes than they put back into highways—
[interjection]

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: The twinning to the Saskatchewan border will be completed by us.

The member opposite raises a lot of issues. He raises the Canadian Wheat Board. I would point out, first of all, that the private sector in advertising has invested over a million dollars in this campaign, unlike other provincial campaigns of a similar nature. Secondly, I would also point out that the Alberta government is investing a million dollars in the destruction of the single-desk system of the Canadian Wheat Board and the call on just one vote for barley.

The member opposite should be running for the leadership of the Conservative Party in Alberta because he has exactly the same position as Alberta. These people are not standing up for Manitoba producers. They're Chuck Strahlites. We don't need Chuck Strahlites here in Manitoba. Why would every Conservative member opposite vote against one vote for wheat and one vote for barley? They have not

only voted for the single desk, they have now been stripped naked on their position. They have exactly the same position as Chuck Strahl. They don't want a vote for wheat producers, only for barley producers. That's the Alberta position. It's supported by a million dollars of taxpayers' money. Shame on you.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, here we get more of what we've come to expect from this Premier; name calling, excuses and more phony promises. He's standing up and making phony promises. What happened to ending hallway medicine in six months? What happened to his grade 3 guarantee that every child in Manitoba by grade 3 was going to be able to read and write? Those went by the wayside. Those aren't talked about anymore because it was all spin.

When he talks about fixing highways, Manitobans have every right to be sceptical given the spin and the record of mismanagement. If the Premier could spend a little bit less time in California—he wants to stand there and call us names. All he wants to do is hang around with Governor Schwarzenegger. I don't know if he is trying out for Danny DeVito's role in the remake of *Twins*, Mr. Speaker, or what he's trying to do with all the time he's spending in California.

Why doesn't the Premier come back from California, spend some time in Manitoba, get to know what is going on in our communities around the province? Why doesn't he explain to Manitobans how it is that three members of his caucus can find the energy to speak on the Canadian Wheat Board? Fifteen members of our caucus, including some of the best producers and farmers in Manitoba, speaking passionately on the issue of the Wheat Board. Then he gets up, just to add to the litany of misinformation put on the record, he says more than a million dollars by the private sector put into this campaign, while he has refused time and again to respond to questions that are access to information as to what the private sector has put in.

Will he come clean? What is the breakdown between taxpayer money going into the "Spirited Energy" campaign and private-sector money? Why doesn't he come clean? Lay it on the table and then explain to Manitobans why it is that only three members of his caucus can find the energy to debate important issues for rural Manitoba.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I would point out that the vote for wheat producers of Manitoba was 31. The vote against KAP, against wheat producers, against having a vote for wheat producers was 14. People

stood to deal with this issue yesterday. I would point out—

An Honourable Member: That's petty. For a leader, that's petty.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

* (14:00)

Mr. Doer: Well, I guess it is petty for the Conservatives to have a vote. It is petty for the Conservative Party of Manitoba to have a vote.

I would note that the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) doesn't want to give the wheat producers a vote, and when we call on having a vote for wheat producers we're petty. Well, yes, we are petty. We want a vote for the wheat producers. Why do you want to give a democratic vote to a barley producer in Alberta and not give a democratic vote to a wheat producer in Manitoba? We need people who are going to stand up for Manitoba, not stand up for others. Thank you.

Population Migration Manitoba Workers

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, according to Statistics Canada, in 2005, 9,880 more people moved out of Manitoba than came into Manitoba from other provinces. That's an airplane load every week leaving Manitoba for greener pastures in other provinces. B.C. Hydro took notice, and this week's officials are recruiting more skilled Manitoba workers. Why? Why are they doing this? Because Manitoba is fertile ground for convincing Manitobans to leave our province for hope and opportunity elsewhere.

So I ask the Minister of Finance: Why has he failed to keep Manitobans in Manitoba?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): I thank the member for the question because it allowed us to put on the record that we have 9,000 newcomers coming to Manitoba this year. Over the last seven years we've seen more young people stay and come to Manitoba than have left, which is the exact opposite of the record of the members opposite when they were in government. They lost people every year. They lost population.

Our population is growing. We are one of five provinces that have population growing in this country. Our young people are staying. Will the member opposite support the tuition fee rebate that we announced in the Throne Speech? I'll bet you

right now that he'll vote against it in the upcoming budget.

Mr. Hawranik: Mr. Speaker, young Manitobans won't stay here simply because of a tuition rebate. Manitobans want hope and opportunity. They want long-term, meaningful jobs created by a strong and vibrant economy. Manitobans are lining up for jobs with B.C. Hydro, and yesterday B.C. Hydro took in 100 applications from Manitobans.

So I ask the Minister of Finance: Why has he failed to create an economy capable of generating long-term, meaningful jobs for Manitobans?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, our population of the 15-plus age group has grown by over 6,000 since 1999. This is two times the amount of young people who were coming back to Manitoba in the '90s are staying here. Our economy on 20 indicators is leading and above the Canadian average on 15 of those 20 indicators. Our growth for this year is 3.2 percent. The number of jobs we are creating in Manitoba is double the amount we created in the '90s. All the indicators are showing that the Manitoba economy is growing since we have come into office. Personal disposable income alone is up 5 percent this year. When members opposite were in power, Manitobans were getting poorer. They had less disposable income every single year under these guys opposite.

Mr. Hawranik: Mr. Speaker, let me remind the minister that the only thing that is saving this government's bacon with respect to population growth is our immigration program that we started in the 1990s in this province. That's what's saving Manitoba.

Manitoba Hydro spokesman, Glenn Schneider, said that people are going to make their own decision about where they want to live and work. When Manitobans look at our economy they see a provincial economy that has always performed below the national average for each of the last six years. The only economy in Canada, and they compare that to the rest of western Canada, vibrant economies in western Canada. That's their choice.

So I ask the Minister of Finance: Why has he failed to provide hope and opportunity for Manitobans? Why has he failed to make Manitoba more competitive?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, there is a Stats Canada story out just today that says retail trade in Manitoba has enjoyed a very healthy growth in this province since '03. We are above the Canadian average, third

highest in the country. Housing starts are among the best in the country.

Since 2000, we have over 15 different indicators that show we are doing extremely well in this province; wage settlements above the Canadian average; building permits triple the Canadian average; consumer price index, actually lower than the Canadian average; exports triple the Canadian average; exports to the United States quadruple the Canadian average; housing starts, three times the Canadian average; housing starts in urban areas, more than 60 percent higher than the Canadian average; exports in manufacturing shipments, almost four times the Canadian average; and real GDP growth—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Foster Families Universal Child Care Benefit

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Family Services has intercepted money from the federal government's Universal Child Care Benefit that was to flow to foster families and he has kept it for himself. Since July 1, when this money began to flow, he has pocketed almost a million dollars.

Will the Minister of Family Services flow this money directly to foster families?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Housing): Mr. Speaker, I know the member opposite likely had her leader whisper in her ear that there is a communist plot.

I can assure the members opposite and Manitobans that there is one important plot that is unfolding in Manitoba and that is to strengthen fostering. That is, in large part, flowing from the recommendations of the Children's Advocate and the Ombudsman, Mr. Speaker. They have recommended very strongly and repeatedly in their report that the Universal Child Care Benefit flow to foster parents. We agree.

Mrs. Taillieu: Mr. Speaker, this NDP government's Big Brother attitude towards families is flabbergasting. He actually believes that he knows better what families should do with their money. If he believes that then why didn't he use the money he had sooner? He has received a million dollars starting in July, and at a time when the number of children in hotels has reached 166, an all-time high, yet he just sat on the money. He didn't flow it to

families. He didn't use it to create any foster spaces, to recruit foster families.

When will he do the right thing and flow this money to where it is intended, to families?

Mr. Mackintosh: I thought I heard from members opposite several weeks ago that the government should implement the recommendations from the Children's Advocate. We certainly agreed with the Children's Advocate, and I just quote from that report with a recommendation that we endorse and it's now to be implemented. It said: We recommend that the Child Care Benefit that will be remitted to the provincial government be used to create a fund for ongoing support of foster parents to provide training for more effective communication with agencies and to provide enhanced respite for foster families.

Why do they flip-flop? Why are they so flaky on what to do with this report? We know what to do.

*(14:10)

Mrs. Taillieu: Well, it is very interesting that the minister says he stands behind the Children's Advocate's report. He has not implemented a lot of other recommendations that have come forward from that office.

Mr. Speaker, today we have learned of a woman who signed up to be a foster mom and yet she was told she had to wait three months for orientation. We hear of another foster mom who's lost in the system. She is forgotten about. Foster mothers are available but this minister has chosen to keep kids in hotels.

He's had the money that was intended for foster families for five months now. It's intended to go to families and instead he's kept it. When will this minister flow this Universal Child Care Benefit intended for the use of families to choose options in child care? When will he flow that money through as part of a foster family recruitment plan?

Mr. Mackintosh: The member might want to examine what the federal government is doing in Manitoba with the Universal Child Care Benefit that would otherwise flow, Mr. Speaker.

The Province says, in law, the guardian of the children in care is putting the money through the Changes for Children program, which is unfolding with the co-chairs, into a fund to support foster parents. I don't know where they were when 6.1 million was added to support foster parents because I know—I guess I have to reiterate myself. What did they do in 1993? They cut foster family rates; '94, '96

and in '99, in an election year, what did they do? They were shameless. They cut foster family rates, Mr. Speaker. Not us, we've raised the rates and now more than ever we've seen a sudden upsurge in people wanting to be foster parents. That's the—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Health Care Review of Regionalization

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): In 2000, the Minister of Health adamantly refused to do a review of regionalization because he said at that time it would cause too much chaos.

A few months ago, in June of this year, the next Minister of Health refused to do a review of regionalization because he said it would cause too much chaos.

Mr. Speaker, now in the Throne Speech, the government has announced a review of regionalization. We've been fighting for that for seven years and now they finally announced it. I would like to ask this Minister of Health why she has now flip-flopped on the issue?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, it seems the members opposite are a little bit sensitive about who gets credit for what idea.

The members opposite seem to think that this concept of a 10-year review, an appropriate time incidentally to do a review of regionalization, is wholeheartedly their idea. You know what's funny, Mr. Speaker, is on the one hand their sensitivity about who gets credit for what idea and, yet, I hardly ever hear members opposite taking credit for the Leader of the Opposition's idea to sell Manitoba Hydro, for example. I never hear them take credit for that idea. I never hear them bragging to get credit for the idea of selling the Manitoba Telephone System, for example. They're sensitive about whose ideas are which, but very particular about which ones they talk about.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, I really am amazed to see a new Minister of Health being so arrogant when she's got so much to learn about the system.

It's interesting that, on the heels of this spending scandal in the Burntwood Regional Health Authority, the government has now agreed to do a management review of regionalization. Can the Minister of Health explain why she is only doing a limited review, a management review of regionalization, and why not a broader review of operations, results, finances,

administrative costs and poor front-line morale? Why is she limiting the scope of a review of regionalization?

Ms. Oswald: Mr. Speaker, again I would tell the member opposite that certainly we believe that 10 years after the introduction of the regions this is a good time for us to be doing a review. Certainly we want to ensure that we're looking at front-line service, making sure that those services are getting directly to patients who want that good care. We want to ensure that accountability and governance issues are examined.

The member opposite seems to be making some determination about what the review is going to be about when, in fact, the terms of reference have not yet been announced.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, I'm only referencing the minister's own Throne Speech where she talked about a management review. When we have had nine patients die waiting for heart surgery in Manitoba, when we have had one patient die waiting for ER care in Manitoba, I would call that chaos. For them to drag their heels for seven years is totally inexcusable.

The *Thompson Citizen* said, and I quote: There is a culture of financial mismanagement and abuse that has developed under this provincial government that makes these scandals the norm rather than the exception.

Mr. Speaker, on the heels of the spending scandal in the Burntwood Regional Health Authority, I would like to ask the Minister of Health if the review of regionalization would also look at her government's poor oversight and the poor management of the RHAs.

Ms. Oswald: Again, certainly we are going to be looking at having an external review or looking at a number of issues concerning the RHA, including best practice so that can be shared, issues of governance and accountability. We have certainly made some steps since coming to government in 1999, including merging two RHAs, incidentally, an instantaneous \$19-million administrative saving right there. We have been looking at ensuring that RHAs are working to their full potential.

Certainly, the member opposite might be cynical about Manitoba, but I wonder if she was able to see the *Globe and Mail's* attitude today about Manitoba when they made mention about cancer therapy that, in fact, while many provinces struggle with waiting

times Manitoba bucks the trend. Manitoba is a provincial star in its bid to reduce health care queues. That is an opinion about Manitoba I'd like to talk more about.

Phosphorus Pollution Dishwashing Detergents

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Water Stewardship.

While it is nice to see the government finally take an interest in the decades of damage that phosphorus-loading has done to Lake Winnipeg, I am disappointed at the government's minimalist remedy of buffer strips. Studies show that buffer strips, as they are proposing, have only a minimal 0.4 percent impact on reducing the overall amount of phosphorus going into Lake Winnipeg.

In contrast, Liberals are proposing a simple, straightforward way to reduce the amount of phosphorus entering Lake Winnipeg by five times as much through the simple step of eliminating needless phosphorus from dishwasher detergents used in Manitoba.

Will the Minister of Water Stewardship support our solution of banning phosphorus from dishwasher detergents in Manitoba?

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Water Stewardship): Well, Mr. Speaker, while the Leader of the Liberal Party brings forward a dishwasher bill, we have in 2003 brought forward a whole strategy to protect the water of Manitoba from source to tap.

Now, recently, we announced the water quality management zone regulations which are posted on the Water Stewardship Web site. There will be public consultations. We encourage all Manitobans to be part of this consultation, as we have throughout our whole process, in protecting our water for our children of this generation and the generations to come.

Mr. Gerrard: For seven years the government has been promising to clean up Lake Winnipeg, and yet the algal blooms this year are worse than ever. This government has not been effective.

Mr. Speaker, more than 30 years ago phosphorus was banned from laundry detergents across Canada because of problems in Lake Erie. Phosphorus-free detergents are already on the market. Banning phosphorus from dishwasher detergents has already occurred in other jurisdictions. There are no serious technical, financial or legal problems to doing this. It

is the lowest cost way of achieving the biggest reduction in phosphorus going into Lake Winnipeg.

I ask the minister: Will she support our bill to ban phosphorus from dishwashing detergents in Manitoba?

Ms. Melnick: Well, I thank the member for the second question because it lets me expand on the fact that while he is dealing with one product, with one element of one product, again we have a comprehensive plan. We are looking at all nutrients from all sources flowing in all the waters of Manitoba. We also have an action plan on how to clean that up. We will be going to public consultation on the urban and developed areas. We have had consultation in agricultural areas. Again, Manitobans get water, and they understand that this is the government that cares and is taking action on cleaning up water today and in the future.

Government Advertising Campaign Spending

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, this Premier has spent millions in the development of "Spirited Energy." Not only that, I don't even think the Premier knows what a buffalo looks like. The new emblem that the Premier has is more of a raging bull.

When I discussed this issue with the constituents I represent, if the Premier was in tune with his constituents, what he would find—and there is a lot of bull over there, I must say. What my constituents are telling me is why is this government spending the millions for development and promotion telling Manitobans that they have to buy into "Spirited Energy" when there is so much more that that money could be spent on, such as hallway medicine, such as the road conditions. There is so much more. Why are you doing this at this point in time, and, by the way, do you know what a buffalo looks like?

* (14:20)

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Well, I know what a buffalo chip looks like, Mr. Speaker, and there's two of them sitting right beside each other because one chip poses in front of a group of "Spirited Energy" T-shirted youths in his blog, and the other one has another petition in a different way. That is why the Liberal Party, it's the only party I know that had three members and had three different positions on the sale of the phone system; one for, one against and one abstained. Same thing now as it was before.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, Oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I'd just like to draw attention to members. They might want to pick their words carefully in the future. All members in the House are honourable members, and, hopefully, you'll treat each other the same way.

Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Speaker's Ruling

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have a ruling for the House.

Following the Prayer on November 16, 2006, the honourable Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) rose on a matter of privilege contending that the honourable Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Lathlin) was in a potential conflict-of-interest situation due to comments that the minister made during committee considerations of Bill 32, The Real Property Amendment Act. The honourable Member for River Heights concluded his comments by moving "that the matter of privilege raised today by myself regarding the possibility of a conflict of interest regarding The Real Property Amendment Act be referred to a Standing Committee of the Legislature." The honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Chomiak) and the honourable Official Opposition House Leader (Mr. Goertzen) also offered contributions to the Chair.

I took the matter under advisement in order to consult the procedural authorities. I thank all members for their advice to the Chair on this matter.

There are two conditions that must be satisfied in order for the matter raised to be ruled in order as a prima facie case of privilege. First, was the issue raised at the earliest opportunity and, second, has sufficient evidence been provided to demonstrate that the privileges of the House have been breached in order to warrant putting the matter to the House.

The honourable Member for River Heights asserted that he was raising the issue at the earliest opportunity, and I accept the word of the honourable member.

Regarding the issue of whether a prima facie case exists, I would note for the House that Joseph Maingot advises on page 180 of the second edition of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, that: "The Chair is in no position to interpret either the law or the Constitution. Whether something takes place in this House is constitutional or legal is not for the Chair to

decide. The Chair only decides whether we are following our own rules." The concept that speakers do not decide questions of law is supported by a 1994 ruling by Speaker Rocan and by a 1996 ruling by Speaker Dacquay. Therefore, it is clear that the Speaker is not in the position to determine questions of law.

I would also note for the House that there is legislation in place, The Legislative Assembly and the Executive Council Conflict of Interest Act, which deals with the issue of conflict of interest by describing actions that are prohibited, as well as steps that must be taken to avoid conflict-of-interest situations. The legislation also outlines penalties for members found to be in conflict-of-interest situations. The remedies provided by this legislation include the ability to request either formal or informal advice from the Legislative Assembly Conflict of Interest Commissioner concerning members' obligations under the act. In addition, there is also the remedy of applying to a judge of the Court of Queen's Bench for authorization to have a hearing before another judge of the court to determine whether a member or minister has violated the act.

In addition, Speaker Hanuschuk ruled on a matter of privilege raised in 1970, regarding an alleged conflict of interest by members who were voting on The Automobile Insurance Act, that it was beyond the jurisdiction of the Speaker to decide if a conflict did exist. Given that there is legislation that deals with conflict-of-interest situations, and given that the Speaker does not determine questions of law, it would be inappropriate for me as Speaker to be making a decision about whether or not a conflict of interest has occurred.

Also, House of Commons Speaker Parent ruled in 1994 that a matter of privilege raised about a potential conflict of interest was not a prima facie case of privilege, as it was disagreement as to the facts, which does not fulfil the conditions of parliamentary privilege.

I would therefore rule that the matter is not in order as a prima facie case of privilege and remind members that there are other remedies that can be sought regarding conflict-of-interest situations rather than raising the issue as privilege in the House or asking for the intervention of the Speaker.

I would also note for the House that issues of conflict of interest or potential conflicts of interests are issues that must be taken seriously, because not only can there be serious consequences as outlined in

The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Conflict of Interest Act, there is also the issue of public perception and public trust and confidence in elected officials that could be shaken if valid conflict-of-interest situations were found to exist. Similarly, caution should be exercised when raising alleged conflicts of interest, as this can have the action of perhaps unjustly tarring the reputation of those members so accused if no conflict-of-interest situation is found to exist. I would urge members to exercise caution when raising such matters.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Grey Cup

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the city of Winnipeg and, indeed, the citizens of Manitoba in hosting the 94th Grey Cup on Sunday, November 19, 2006. It is a testament to the hospitality of the city of Winnipeg and Manitobans that this week-long event was such a huge success.

There has already been an amazing positive response from across the country on the event this year. Many people have said the festivities in Winnipeg ranked second to none in terms of the events, hospitality and overall atmosphere. This is a direct result of the hard work of so many volunteers who worked so many hours to ensure the event was successful. I would like to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate all of the volunteers, the businesses, the fans, the Winnipeg Blue Bombers Football Club and the Canadian Football League for making this Grey Cup exceptional.

The Grey Cup this weekend wasn't about the game, but was also showcasing our community spirit. One great example of this was when the MTS Centre was opened to those who could not watch the game elsewhere. This was a powerful gesture that reminded us all of what the Grey Cup really is. It's an event that brings communities across Canada together.

An estimated 100,000 onlookers took in the Grey Cup and Santa Claus parade. The Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) and the members from Arthur-Virden and Tuxedo were joined by their families and friends on a lit horse-drawn carriage selected because of its unique history and energy-efficient nature. I know this event will be remembered by the five children on board and all the children who had the pleasure of enjoying this cheerful parade.

Once again, congratulations to all those involved in organizing this event and ensuring it was an enjoyable experience for so many people. We look forward to cheering on the Bombers next season and hope to see them in the 95th Grey Cup in Toronto. I look forward to having Manitoba host the Grey Cup in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (14:30)

Senior Citizens

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): I rise today to speak on seniors in our province. One of the fastest-growing segments of Manitoba's population, seniors are a vital part of our growing society. They contribute to the strengthening of our community through their knowledge, experience and volunteer work. As a senior myself, I understand the concerns my constituents have raised with me during my door-to-door canvassing about the availability of support for seniors in the Transcona-Radisson area.

Our support services are structured to help seniors remain active and contributing members of our community. On September 29, this year, in honour of October as Seniors' and Elders' Month, our government announced \$90,000 in grants through the Advancing Age strategy for seniors' organizations to undertake unique projects including providing transportation services, promoting seniors' activities and health awareness, examining housing issues, and developing volunteer recruitment strategies.

We have also expanded the Safety Aid program which provides low-income seniors with safety items such as peepholes, deadbolts and non-slip bath mats, as well as forgivable loans for minor home security improvements.

Starting in 2007, seniors will be allowed to split eligible pension income when calculating their provincial income tax. This tax break matches the federal tax changes just announced and will save pensioners an estimated \$11 million.

Mr. Speaker, in my constituency of Radisson, I have been working with several interested organizations and individuals to advance seniors' housing projects. Currently, Madeline Estates, a seniors' housing co-op, is under construction on the corner of Madeline and Regent. I would be thankful to everyone involved in this project, including my colleague, the honourable Member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), for their hard work and perseverance. Needless to say, I remain committed to the seniors at

the Prendergast Centre in Windsor Park, who are real builders of a great community out there. Thank you.

Town Complex Construction (Churchill)

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): I rise today to call attention to a very important issue affecting the well-being of many residents in the town of Churchill. The NDP government has elected to move forward with plans to centralize government services in the community by expanding the size of the town complex to accommodate additional offices for departments such as Manitoba Conservation.

However, completing the structure requires the demolition of the community's bowling alley. Although the facility has not been in operation for several years, many in Churchill believe it should be restored to provide further recreational opportunities. Mr. Speaker, when the town council in Churchill refused to consider the position of the community residents on the issue, they distributed a petition requesting the Province of Manitoba and the town council renovate the bowling alley. This petition was signed by over 250 residents.

According to the 2001 census, there is a total population in Churchill of 950. Fully one-third of the community objects to the demolition of the bowling alley and wants to see their town and provincial government provide recreational funding for its restoration and use. I would like to table a copy of the petition that was submitted to the mayor of Churchill as well as an illustration of the attitude Churchill residents have towards the town complex construction.

As a near-Arctic community, Churchill faces many challenges in terms of healthy living. Its residents believe that destroying the bowling alley will deprive them of social and recreational opportunities already limited by the community's relative isolation in Manitoba's far north.

The community itself is unable to support the associated renovation and operating costs, and they are looking to their government to assist them in promoting greater recreational activities as a means of assuring the general health and well-being of their citizens. Rather than fund an additional town complex development, residents would prefer the money be devoted to upgrading the bowling alley.

There is also an economic factor to consider, Mr. Speaker. In addition to losing access to recreational facilities, the town complex itself will localize government services potentially at the expense of

Churchill's local economy because office space is already readily available throughout the community. The mayor and town council have indicated to the residents—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been granted. The honourable Member for Minnedosa, to continue.

Mrs. Rowat: Thank you.

The mayor and town council have indicated to the residents they have no choice in this matter because this NDP government has decided the Town Centre Complex development will go forward. Meanwhile, the provincial government has stated they are constructing the Town Centre Complex because it is what the Churchill residents want.

Mr. Speaker, 250 people in Churchill have clearly stated that they are not in favour of the Town Centre Complex if it means destroying their bowling alley. The government of Manitoba has a responsibility not only to make its services available to Manitobans, it has a responsibility to look after their physical and mental well-being as well.

A letter of support for the residents of Churchill was submitted by the critic for Healthy Living in October. To date, we have received no response from this government whatsoever.

The NDP government's commitment toward the best interest of this province's residents has been questionable in almost every aspect of its administration. I urge the government to reconsider its plans for the Churchill Town Centre Complex, with the goal of making a financial commitment to the town's recreational needs. Thank you.

Sherridon Cold Lake Mine

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, in mining circles you often hear the old adage that if you want to find a new mine, try drilling in the shadow of the head frame of the old mine. This

appears to be true once again, this time in Sherridon, Manitoba.

Yesterday, November 20, I was privileged to bring greetings from the Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mines (Mr. Rondeau) to a news conference at the Manitoba Club. It was at this news conference that Tom Healy, senior vice-president of Halo Resources, gave an exciting presentation on new mineral extraction opportunities near the old Sherritt Gordon property in Sherridon/Cold Lake, Manitoba.

Impressive new ore finds have been located on the new property, which comprises about 180 square kilometres. Halo Resources' senior vice-president, Tom Healy, referred to it as finding raisins in the cake. Apparently, there are quite a number of high-grade raisins. Preliminary assay results indicate impressive percentages of zinc, copper and other metals. This is excellent news for the Sherridon and Flin Flon region. The close proximity of this site to both the railroad and the Flin Flon smelter will figure significantly in the future potential of one or more new mines.

Halo Resources stressed their appreciation of the provincial government's support for their ongoing projects. They made it clear that Manitoba's regulatory and investment climate made it one of the world's most hospitable environments for the mining sector.

That same evening, I was privileged to join the mines minister and over 700 delegates at the 38th annual Manitoba Mining and Minerals Convention at the Winnipeg Convention Centre. It was exciting to be able to discuss these new opportunities with so many old friends from across all of Canada, and particularly from northern Manitoba.

I look forward to the many partnerships and opportunities that continue to arise in Manitoba's mining sector; \$1.5 billion worth of mineral production and \$49 million in annual exploration means that mining will continue to play a major role in Manitoba's economy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Provincial Nominee Program

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to recognize what I truly believe was a phenomenal program that has done so much for the province of Manitoba.

The Provincial Nominee Program, which was signed off by the national government back in '98

and then-provincial government, has led to thousands of immigrants coming to our province. The potential is great. I wanted to use this opportunity to emphasize that the Province is starting to lose by not allowing for that office to be properly resourced. In fact, the waiting lists continue to grow, and I believe it is a substantial cost by us not adequately providing the necessary resources to ensure that we're issuing the certificates in a more timely fashion.

I also want to emphasize to the government that I am concerned in terms of the government not allowing for other occupations such as nursing and other professionals to be able to come under the PNP program like a computer engineer, Mr. Speaker. To obligate some occupations to have to get their qualifications approved here in the province definitely puts them at a distinct disadvantage. I would appeal to this government to look at what the intent was back in 1998 by the then-federal Liberals and provincial Conservatives that wanted to be able to use that program to the benefit of all Manitobans by recognizing the value that this program could continue to have, an enhanced value by looking at those two issues that I'm bringing up today in hopes that this particular minister will take some immediate action to resolve, in particular by providing more staff to clear up some of those backlogs.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ADJOURNED DEBATE

(Third Day of Debate)

* (14:40)

Mr. Speaker: Resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Member for St. Norbert (Ms. Brick) that the following address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor:

We, the members of the Legislative Assembly in Manitoba thank Your Honour for the gracious speech addressed to us at this Fifth Session of the Thirty-Eighth Legislature of Manitoba, and the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) in amendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Emerson.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, I stand today in this Chamber realizing full well that this will probably be the last time that I will get an opportunity to stand in this Chamber as a member of the Legislature, of this Assembly, an Assembly

which I am extremely proud to have had the honour to serve in. Members from government side, no matter which party governed, members of opposition, no matter which party was the opponent, I have learned to know many of you, become good friends with many of you and have truly appreciated the camaraderie that goes on in this House. I think that the verbal jousting that goes on from time to time is something that adds to the levity that must happen, I think, in this debate in order for it to be an emotional debate and a debate that carries weight and is valued by many in leading toward the decision-making process that will serve in the best interests of all Manitobans. I have seen and witnessed many of those debates. I've experienced the butt end of a number of them.

I will never forget when I first walked into this Legislature, and I had just been appointed Minister of Natural Resources, and the critic for that department was the former minister, John Plohman at the time. When he asked a question, he, of course, knew the answer explicitly to the question that he asked because he had served as a minister. I stood there and had taken the advice of my bureaucrats, probably not listening well enough when they had briefed me on the issue that they thought might be coming, and I honestly don't remember the response, but one of these days I'm going to go into *Hansard* and read that first response. But it was not deserving of a person that had just been appointed a minister of the Crown, and it taught me a lesson that if you really don't know the answer, stand up and say so. There's nothing wrong with that, and I hear that many times in this Legislature when ministers stand up or when members of the opposition ask questions that they really are sometimes hesitant, and that just tells me that they're not quite sure of what their response should be. Or sometimes we use other issues to divert the attention away from, and that is part of the process in Question Period in this House, and I accept that.

But does it serve the best interest of the people of Manitoba? I think straightforwardness, straightforward answers as I see many of the current ministers of the NDP administration give, are worthy of what people of Manitoba expect of us, and I believe that it only serves in the best interest of the House when we do those kinds of things, when we are straightforward, straight up, give the answers to questions that are asked and ask questions that are worthy of good answers. I believe that there is a tremendous opportunity for those of us who have

served here for many years to be tutors to those who are going to come after us, and the reason I say that is because tonight I will be attending an event in our constituency that will see five people compete for the nomination for the Progressive Conservative Party in the constituency of Emerson.

People have asked me who the front-runners might be in that competition. Quite frankly, and as honestly as I can, I must say that I don't really know who the front-runners might be, if any of them are. I think all five of them are worthy of the nomination, and all five of them would serve in a very professional capacity if they were elected members of this Legislature. But what I am absolutely impressed with is that we have better than 1,600 people that have come forward and bought memberships in the Progressive Conservative Party. That tells me, Mr. Speaker, that the political process in this province is alive and well, as it should be, and that speaks well for the people of Manitoba.

I want to, today, express an appreciation to those people that have given me the most support in my career as a politician in this Assembly. One of those people is up in the Speaker's Gallery here today, and I want to recognize her. She is my mother-in-law, and she is 90 years old. I say to you, any of you when you are 90 years old and you can walk up those steps and you can sit in that Legislature in that Speaker's loge as she is doing today, I will say all of us should be honoured by her attendance here today. Thank you, mother.

The other person that is sitting there has been my greatest support and, at times when I felt, and I do this once in a while, feel down on myself, she has been without question my biggest pillar, and as a spouse, my wife, Dora, deserves all the credit in the world for putting up with me when I'm not around, and being there for me when I come home and listening to me and some of the frustrations I vent from time to time, but also giving good advice when I most need it. Thank you, Dora, for being there always for me.

Secondly, I want to say to all my colleagues on this side of the Legislature that are members of the Progressive Conservative caucus: No greater friends could I have ever encountered and no greater friendships could I have ever made than I've made with all of you. You have been a support. You have been my worst critics when I most needed it. You have been there as pillars of support during the time that our family most needed support, and most of

you know what I talk about, because when you lose a grandson on the streets of the city of Winnipeg the way we did, it is not pretty, and it was great to see all of you and to experience the warmth and the comfort that we needed at that time in our whole family. So I thank you for that. I also want to thank the members on the government side that came and offered their condolences and offered their support during that time.

* (14:50)

I want to say this, that that issue is still not resolved, and until that is resolved, we in our family will not be able to put that to rest. So we are looking forward to justice at some point in time being done in that case. We know and have great confidence in the justice system, and we believe that eventually justice will be done and those that were responsible will be brought forward. However, till then, we wait.

I also want to say that when I first came to this Legislature and was given the responsibility of a ministerial portfolio, some of the mistakes I made I will always remember. Some of the right things we did I have long forgotten. So, if those of you who sit here expect me to talk a great deal about the great things we did or the great things that happened when I was the minister, don't, because those things other people will talk about at some point in time. I believe it behooves all of us to give our all to those who elect us to serve them. Far too often, we forget that we are the servants of those people who elect us.

I am probably one of the most humbled persons in this province because I came from a family that grew up in a one-room shack. When I say a one-room shack, I mean a one-room shack. We had a stove in one corner. We had Mom and Dad's bed in this corner, and we had a roll-out cot in that corner, and the kitchen table was to the centre of the room.

That's how I grew up. We were very, very fortunate that this province gave us a livelihood and gave us an opportunity to prosper and that we were governed by people who understood the need for freedom because in the agricultural community, in the business of agriculture—and it has become a big business today. It wasn't then. It was far more a hands-on, family-oriented—and when I say family-oriented I will explain that, but a family-oriented business at that time. But it was a business.

It took the whole family. Whether it was stooking in the fields at that time or whether it was herding the cattle on the roads, because our pasture

wasn't big enough to feed the five cows that we had, or feeding—we called it at that time slopping the pigs and gathering the eggs. Those were little chores that we as little guys did. We were saddled with those chores. We thought at that time it was saddling. We were taught how to responsibly take part in the provision to put food on the table at our house.

Far too often I see today where we stand in Chambers like this and we grieve about 14-year-olds not being able to walk a quarter of a mile to meet the bus. Well, when I was six years old and started school, I walked a mile and a half to school, summer, winter. When it was too stormy to walk, Dad would hook the horse on the manure sleigh, throw a blanket and some straw in it, and we would drive the horse to school. When you were seven years old, you would unhitch the horse and put it in the barn at the school.

That teaches responsibility. Far too often today we spend far too much time holding our children's hands and not teaching them responsibility. I say to us as a society, to all of us as a society, that if we taught our children and allowed our children to become part of the workforce at a much, much earlier age than we do today, we would all be beneficiaries in the long run. Teach your children to work. Allow them to work. It is not child labour. It is teaching responsibility, and that's where we as a society often lack.

I want to focus today a little bit on the industry that I grew up in, the business of farming. Farming, as I said before, was much more a livelihood than it was a business, such as we know today. But today, we, as legislators, think we know far better than those farmers out there that practise the business of agriculture every day. We know far better than they do. I see it in our laws on the protection of water; I see it on planning acts; I see it in land-use policies and all those kinds of things. I have to wonder how far governing bodies in this country—which we still call a free country—are willing to go to exert their authority on others as we're doing in agriculture today.

When I look at our new water policies—and I will be the first one to stand tall and say we must protect our waters and we must protect our lands. But, when I was a young farmer just starting out, I didn't have the luxury of attending a university. I didn't have the luxury of attending a high school. I went to work. When I was 15 years old, I was told: It's time for you to make a living; so I moved to the city of Winnipeg. But five years later, when I came back I had enough

money saved up to buy a little patch of land, and I did that. But I will never forget when the university professors and others, when I started attending some of these seminars, started telling us: If you guys keep on farming and mining the soil that you're farming the way you're mining it now—and this was back in 1957-60, if you keep on mining it the way you're mining it, there will be no soil for you to farm by the time we reach the year 2000.

Well, not only have we reached the year 2000, but the soil that we farm today is in much, much better condition than what I found it when I first bought it, much better condition. At that time everything was mouldboard black, and when the winds came in the spring, the soil would blow and our ditches would fill up. In the fall of the year we would plough it all down again. Today, you don't see that anymore. Why is that? Today, we talk about the phosphorus that the farmers are putting in the soil to keep the productivity levels at where they must be in order to raise a crop. I tell you that most of the farmers that I know today soil test, because who in their right mind would pay \$400 a tonne for fertilizer, without knowing how much you should put into the ground in order to raise a crop? I ask you that. How irresponsible would it be, from an economic standpoint, not an environmental standpoint, but an economic. I mean, who would be silly enough to do this? So farmers soil test. The minister hasn't quite learned that yet, the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), that this actually happens out there, and I would suggest to her that maybe she would want to come to our farm or to any other farm, a modern-day farm operation, to take a look at how agriculture is applied today.

*(15:00)

Secondly, when you look at the run off—we consider it run off, and there are now new laws applied as to how we are going to be able to drain land in the Red River Valley. Well, the Red River Valley—and we had visitors from another part of the world—and many of you know that we've travelled a lot—came and said, when they stood in the front yard of our house and looked out, they said: Never in our life have we seen anything as flat as this. They didn't believe that there was another part of the world that could be as flat as the Red River Valley is.

We have to make sure that when you get a four-inch or a six-inch or a seven-inch rain that the water can get away in order to be able for us to harvest our crop in the fall. This government that governs today

hasn't fully understood yet that, when you make ditches, normally grass grows in those ditches very quickly. When the water starts running into those ditches off our fields, the filtration that takes place is quite immense, and most of the soil that we perceive to be running into the rivers doesn't exist because there's very little soil that moves off farmland today. It might have when you mouldboard ploughed it and made it black, but when you leave it in stubble and either minimum till or zero till, there is no soil that moves, I'm sorry.

So I say to those that are governing and for those that will govern on this side of the House, be careful what kind of laws you put in place because you will impede the very people that are now, in my view, the best stewards of the environment that I have ever witnessed or met anywhere in my total career, the farmers of Manitoba. The reason I say this is just before I came here this morning my phone rang, and it was a dairy farmer 10 miles south of Steinbach in my constituency, phoned me and said, you know, we were in the midst of building a brand-new lagoon as ordered by the departments of Conservation and Water Stewardship, had been ordered to build a brand-new lagoon to ensure that there wouldn't be any nutrient runoff off of their farm.

He said, we were in the middle of building it and the bureaucrats came in and ordered us to work 24 hours a day. He said this Cat operator that they had hired to build this lagoon had been working for 50 hours straight, and fell asleep on his Cat and almost killed himself. He phoned me and he said: Is this what we have to put up with in order to meet the new standards of the new government? I said, I will make the phone calls, and I did.

The response I got from the department this morning was, this is what we have to do. I say to the ministers and I say to people that might be ministers on this side of the House, be careful what you do because the long-term effect might be worse than what you're trying to remedy.

I met with a scientist from the Freshwater Institute this spring. He said to me: Jack, be careful how you meddle with the content of the water. You might create a worse monster than what you're trying to deal with. You might create a bigger monster than what you're trying to deal with.

I met with soil scientists and they said, we're not sure whether the lake is actually deteriorating or not. He said that, scientifically, we have not determined that yet. I said, should we then not wait, be patient

and wait for the scientific evidence before we do things that we might regret later? He said that might be good wisdom if we did that. So I looked last spring, attended a conference where we saw photographs taken of Lake Winnipeg, photographs of the algae in Lake Winnipeg taken by satellite 400 miles up. I called it the 400-mile science of the NDP, the 400-mile science of the NDP. When I asked the person that was showing the picture, I said, were those colour-enhanced, those pictures? They look as if they were colour enhanced. And he said, well, we have to be able to see properly.

Now, if that's the science that is being used today to determine whether we should or should not meddle with the nutrient levels in the lake, then I think we should stand back and re-evaluate where we want to go with this whole matter. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that this government has done what I saw here a little while ago. Doer's straw man was the title of this article. It says: Doer's straw man. I read from the article: Our Premier, I believe, has used water and land issue to convince those that know very little about the make-up of rural Manitoba and the agricultural industry and has used that issue to drive home the fact to make him look as if he might be trying to do something to save the environment.

Well, there are roughly about 12,000 real farmers in this province. I say to you that those 12,000 people have invested millions and millions of dollars to change the way they do business in this province, as they have in the rest of the country, as they have in North America. They have spent vast amounts of money to change the equipment they use, to change the technology they use. It doesn't even resemble the agricultural industry that we saw 20 years ago.

The nutrient levels that are being contributed today—and these are scientific studies that have been done on the Red River—the nutrient loading in the Red River from Emerson to Winnipeg has gone down over the last 20 years, and it doesn't surprise me that it has gone down. Look at the evidence; you've got the charts. The government has the charts. Why have they gone down or why might they have gone down? Because of the vast and immense changes that the farmers have made in rural Manitoba to ensure that their resources would stay where they put them because they need them to grow those crops. Why would they want to waste them and throw them down the river? So they made vast changes, huge investments in how they do business. Will that benefit the environment? I say: Immensely.

Do they get credit for it from us, the politicians? No. We don't even recognize it. I am sorry, and I think we are all guilty of it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, why am I focussing on agriculture so much? Agriculture is my business. It's my heart. It's my very being. I have studied agriculture from the time I was a little boy, and I try and keep abreast of what the new technology is, as do virtually every farmer that I know because they have to in order to be able to survive.

*(15:10)

I want to say this, Mr. Speaker. I would not have come here if it hadn't been for my deep beliefs and deep faith in our people. And I have one small group of people to thank that I want to thank and that is my executive in my constituency for working hard to allow me to be here. I want to thank the people in my constituency for supporting me and giving me the opportunity to serve here. But, above all, I want to thank my family: my three boys for taking over the operation of the farm when I left there almost 20 years ago, and doing an excellent job of managing that operation. They have made it a multi-million-dollar operation. It wasn't me; it was them. They're young, they're well educated and they know their business. They're good businesspeople, as are all my neighbours, as are my constituents, as are the cattle producers that had a huge impediment cast on them two years ago. But they survived. They were willing to stand together, Mr. Speaker, and work together, and that's how the farm community acts today. They're willing to stand side by side, shoulder to shoulder, help each other, neighbour as neighbour. When one combine fails, then the other combine rolls in, and when one farmer fails, the neighbours roll in.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to you today that it behooves all of us to, at some point in time, just stand still and recognize the immense contribution that that community has made to the welfare of all of us and the economy of this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: I'd like to draw attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us today Mrs. Dora Penner and Mrs. Nettie Neufeld. On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here today.

* * *

Mr. Conrad Santos (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, this Member for Wellington listened intently to the speech of the honourable Member for Emerson and he picked up three ideas that he would like to reiterate.

First, the Member for Wellington pays tribute to all good agricultural farmers in this province for producing food and other stuff, not only for Manitoba but for the rest of the world. Second, he mentioned that we are servants of people who elected us. That is a good standard of measuring the behaviour of representatives of the people. Thirdly, he acknowledges the indebtedness, emotional and otherwise, to the wife and the mother-in-law, family members and friends who put up with us in trying to fulfil our obligations as servants of the people in the interest of all Manitobans.

This Member for Wellington, in this Fifth Session of the Thirty-Eighth Legislature of the Province of Manitoba, will focus on three topics: politics, people and paradox of language. He will use the classical term "man" to include both men and women because it will be very difficult to have a facility language always mentioning his and hers, so I will use it in a generic, all-inclusive sense to include both.

Let's start with politics. If politics is the practical art of getting what, where, when, how, why, the question is: What is it that people really want to get out of politics? If in politics, the practical art is the art of being wise for the well-being of others, as the honourable Member for Emerson had mentioned, is it the well-being of others or the well-being of the self that people who engage in politics are actually doing? Which is the true and genuine politics? The interests of others or the pseudo phoney politics of the interests of the self?

But how can we discern the difference and know the difference between which one we are promoting? If politics is a competitive contest, is it a contest of vested interests in the guise of principles? Or is it a contest of principles as defined by vested interests? Who defines what is interest and what's vested interest? If we are using resources other than our own, then there must be some kind of a seeming conflict of interests between the interests of the self and the interests of all others who presumably have a claim to these resources that we are using. If politics is a civilized way of dealing with human problems, publicly or privately, is it preferable to deal with public problems in a public manner? Or is it also

preferable to deal with private problems in a private manner?

Now, if, as the honourable Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) had mentioned, he spent all his lifetime almost in politics, if the practice of politics is some area of calling or vocation or occupation or profession, is that area of human calling, does it necessarily have to have a preparatory training period, or are you learn by doing? If politics, or especially the pseudo type of politics, involve people who play dirty, does it mean that if you are a politician, you are dirty? If you are dirty, why are we here? Some people play nobly, with an eye to history because it is really this politics, the political process, that determines the survival or extinction of individuals, of families, of groups or nations even. In precarious situations, as we are witnessing now, in the field of international relations, the politics of our nations, in the face of current terrorist and nuclear confrontation, how decision makers play politics may even lead to the survival or extinction of all human population. That's how important politics is, and I think it's an honourable profession provided you play it in an honourable way.

Mr. Gerard Jennissen, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

And what about the political and social world in which we live, we rule and we work? Is our world, political and social, a world of illusions? Is it a world of mere shadows and reflections of legitimately true and real things located elsewhere in the ideal, intangible, invisible world? Or is it only what we see, what we hear, what we taste, what we smell, what we touch? In the scientific world, is it these things that are the ones that really matter, ignoring or denying the unseen world of truly enduring and lasting things and values?

* (15:20)

Now, let's go to the next topic: people. If "people" means humankind, and a human being is a member of that collective called "humankind," known in science as homo sapiens, wise beings, where do we come from? The Darwinian theory of evolution posits that we humans evolved from some ancestors of the orangutan, the gorilla and the chimpanzee; that's one theory.

In contrast, the biblical theory of creation states, so it is written: Dieu créa l'homme à son image, à l'image de Dieu, Il le créa; homme et femme, Il les créa. God created man in his own image. In the

image of God created He him. Male and female created He them. It is a theory of creation.

Created out of what? Alors Yahvé Dieu modela l'homme avec la glaise du sol, Il insuffla dans ses narines l'haleine de vie, et l'homme devint un être vivant. And the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

If the first human was dust formed by the fingers of the hands of the creator God from the dust of the ground and by the breath of the Almighty was made into a living soul, what is this thing called the human soul? Are we composed of some divine elements as well as some earthly elements? Is a human being a mixture of earthly and heavenly qualities? Does man have some degree of wickedness in him as well as some degree of goodness at the same time? Is he or she virtuous as well as vicious, paradoxically rational and irrational? Very difficult to comprehend, that is what we are.

Science asserts that unlike the lower forms of animals, humans have the ability to reason in a logical way, the ability to think, the ability to intuit, the ability to introspect by the use of his mind, the mind being distinguished from the brain which is the physical part of the body. Above all, we speak intelligible language, the basic tool by which we communicate with others individually and collectively.

So we go to language. If language is the means used by human beings to express their thoughts and feelings, are there sufficient words, sounds, signs, movements for humans to adequately express anything they want to express completely and satisfactorily? If all human beings originated from one source, as we are told in the good book, can we say that initially when there were yet not so many people on the earth, the whole earth must be of one language and of one speech? If such was the case, how has it come about that there are so many languages and dialects today?

We can recall perhaps the biblical story of the Tower of Babel where the people tried to build a structure, wanted to go to heaven, and so the Lord said: "Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. . . . Let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." That is the myth of the Tower of Babel, a story in the Bible.

Now, the bigger question is what has language got to do with the fate and destiny of human beings? Are we able to understand and comprehend that the very destiny and fate of people and nations, individuals and groups, organized or unorganized, depends upon the kinds of language that we use? When we interact directly or indirectly with other peoples, other nations, the question is: Why is it that we cannot use plain and simple language to reveal our thoughts and feelings to others clearly, concisely, and confidently?

If we can think first before we speak, why are we not able to mean what we say and say what we mean? Do we or do we not agree with Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes when he said, and I quote, in *Town v. Eisner*, 145 US 418, quote: "A word is not a crystal, transparent and unchanged. It is the skin of a living thought, and may vary . . . in color and content, according to the circumstances and time in which it is used"? Might not a promise "to re-evaluate, restudy," a project given during the heat of an election campaign, after the election is over, mean "ignore and shelve" the project?

Now there is some problem with language, and in civil society, what are some of these problems? First, there are, are there not, some confusing words. I'm basing this remark on a book by Richard Lederer entitled *Crazy English*. There are some crazy words even in the most magnificent of all languages, the English language, that comedians make fun of. For example, if a firefighter fights fire, what does a freedom fighter fight? Freedom? If a weightlifter lifts weights, what does a shoplifter lift? A shop? Is there any egg in eggplant? Is there any grape in grapefruit? Is there any pea in peanuts? If a traveller offered you a seat in a non-stop flight, would you take it? If the flight is non-stop, how you can go to the ground? Crazy, indeed, some of the English language. It is full of vagaries and paradoxes.

What is a paradox? We are full of paradoxes, everything that you observe, everything you say, and everything you see. A paradox is a statement that—*[interjection]* Yes. Seemingly, they are contradictory ideas, but which may, in fact, be true. Can we have an example of one? In the statement of the Lord Jesus of Nazareth, He said: "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." That is a paradox.

Okay, let's have another example here; example of the apostle of the Gentiles, Apostle Paul. He said: "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you

seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise." That is a paradoxical statement, "for the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God."

* (15:30)

Now, we said that our language is full of paradoxes and allegories too. What are allegories? An allegory is an extended expression using symbols, figures and actions about human conduct and human experience with hidden spiritual meaning beyond and transcending the text that we are reading will be an example of an allegory.

When Jesus Christ said, quote: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. . . . I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. . . . If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." That's an example of a parable.

That's the first problem, too many paradoxes and vagaries and allegories in the language.

Second problem, is there one-to-one correspondence between words and meaning? Could a single word mean many different things? Could many different things be symbolized by a single word? That's one of the problems. If a lover said to his beloved, there is engagement now. What does he mean? It means surrender. Who is surrendering to whom? We don't know. If an army officer said engagement in the field, that means a different thing. It means fighting, battle, shooting. So the word "engagement" has many meanings, and it can be applied in many different contexts. That's just an example.

The third is what we already referred to: a word is not merely a word. A word has something substantial in it. In fact, there are some, what we call coloured words in our language. So, is a word, or is not a word merely a garment to wrap around human thoughts? Or are words often the very substance of meaning by which we learn from life itself? Those are some of the problems of the English language.

Now, when we speak politically, are we merely speaking or are we doing already? Is a speech a form of action? In the realm of practical politics, one word you utter can mean a lot of consequences. Therefore, speaking is acting, and a speech is action. The

language itself is activity. It is something doing. Whether we speak or we act, do we or do we not do so in order to accomplish a purpose? In almost every case, is it not that our purpose is to speak and influence someone and realize our intention? In influencing someone and realizing our intention, are we able to get what we want? If we are able to get what we want, are we able to get what we want for the self or for others? I think that is the distinction between good, genuine politics and phoney, imitation-kind pseudo-politics.

When we speak politically, don't we tend to ask, to beg, to condemn, to command, to explain, to plead, to persuade for countless purposes, some selfish, some altruistic? When we speak and we are in a state of believing, thinking, and feeling, are we or are we not aware of whom we speak with, what we speak about, when we speak, where we speak, how we speak, and why?

Why do some people dislike practical politics? They shy away from it. Many young people today, I have personally experienced, are shying away from the political process. This is pathetic. Why? Because what they see is the pseudo-politics and not the genuine one, where everyone shoots from the lips. Is it a personal or a political war of words, or is it a show, a dramatic, artificial show that excites the passion of the people?

So we know that words are important and meanings are doubly important because, unless our meanings are represented by words, we could be misunderstood. By our words it is written we shall be justified, and by our words we shall be condemned. Therefore, whatever we utter, we should be aware of its consequences.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

The Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) had alluded to the short run and the long-run effects of things that we do, of things that we decide politically and in the policy-making process and administratively in the implementation of these policies. These are difficult also to distinguish. Since the election period takes place every four years, should politicians say things and decide things with a view for the next election, or with an eye for the next generation? Or should it be the other way around? Should we decide policy in the short run and in the long run with an eye for the next generation and ignoring the next political election and take the risk? How can you implement your policy if you're out of power? So it is a paradoxical kind of a situation as

well. You have to weigh accordingly all your advantages and disadvantages, study the critical situation as effectively as you can, make up your mind and then accept the consequences, because you are responsible for what you decide. People are accountable for what they do. People are accountable for what they see and what they make, and we cannot escape that responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, I have no desire to extend the period. All I need to say I have said. Thank you very much.

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): I am fully aware that the current government might not call an election until the spring of '08, but I am kind of hoping that this will be the last Throne Speech that I will be speaking to. I am a politician, Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, and I want to say that the reason that I hope this is the last Throne Speech that I have an opportunity to speak to is not because I'm in a hurry to get out of here, it's because I think the people of Manitoba are going to get in a hurry looking for a new government, and want a new government now that they've seen what we have got in this Throne Speech.

* (15:40)

Mr. Speaker, we have got a lot of re-announcements. I suppose I could forgive the Premier (Mr. Doer) for that. We have got a lot of re-announcements that were tied to something that I've never seen before happen in this House where the Lieutenant-Governor was given a script to read, which is the way our parliamentary democracy works, but, in that script, he was forced to spend a fair bit of time deriding the black hole of the '90s, as the members of the current government are wont to describe. I have never seen a government force the Lieutenant-Governor into that kind of a position before. They are so bereft of ideas, so bereft of seizing the opportunity to lead this province somewhere where we can keep our young people at home, where we can develop opportunities, that the only way they can develop a Throne Speech was to talk about what should have been done a decade before they came in government.

They have just overseen the greatest growth in recent history of this province, a year-over-year income to the government of this province, and that's the best they can come up with for a Throne Speech. I tell you, Mr. Speaker, that was disappointing, and it will be a disappointment for the population of this province when they start to go through what we will

be able to make out of that Throne Speech, what the government of the day will have to do with the grist that's in the Throne Speech, and there was very little there.

Mr. Speaker, I want to address that one aspect of what we are dealing with in the Throne Speech, because governments survive from year to year knowing that, generally, because of the growth in the economy, there will always be some increase in revenue to government. We've now gotten ourselves in a place in society where, if there isn't a modest increase in expenditures or in salary or in programs, then it suddenly becomes a cut back.

Well, I would only indulge in one bit of financial history, and that is that in 1990—I think it was about June of 1990—the year-over-year growth in revenue to the province of Manitoba dropped to zero. When this province, along with every other province in the country, was going through the biggest economic downturn since the 1930s, that was the type of decision that needed to be made during the '30s. But we saw a conversion as we came out of the '90s. As we finally had gotten this province to where we had gone from an annualized deficit of between \$400 million and \$600 million to where we could produce a balanced budget, there was such derision from the then opposition, Mr. Speaker, you could hear it from here to Churchill. There was such derision about: what's a balanced budget; who wants a balanced budget. I mean, why would you even impose something like that on yourself or on the community that you represent.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to just read back into the record a couple of quotes from our Premier. He said, on the record, your "silly balanced budget legislation." That was the gentleman who is now our Premier. On CBC radio, shortly, about three years later, he went on to say, I would never support fiscal conservatism. So that's where we know that the Premier of the day, since the 1999 election, we know that from his philosophical bent that is how he has tried to lead this province.

Of course, he's been very cautious about his comments, but some of his colleagues were much more forthcoming. The former minister of family services and health: A bill that's designed to make Manitoba the laughing stock of the financial management world. That's what the member for Crescentwood said about balanced budget legislation. But then he went on—and look, I kind of like the member for Crescentwood because I usually

know where he's coming from. He's one of the more formidable debaters in this Chamber, but I just strongly disagree with his philosophical approach.

He went on to modify his comments by saying: I claim absolutely no knowledge in the area of statistics. I have a great deal of difficulty interpreting them without somebody on hand to help me; so I'm not suggesting that I know what we ought to do.

This was a gentleman who assisted the Premier in managing the financial affairs of this province. So I'll leave that aside now, Mr. Speaker, because I don't want to spend too much of my valuable time quoting from the ministers of the Crown, but I do have one other brief quote from the *Western Standard* when it talks about our situation and, most recently, their thoughts about where we are going in finances and in future prospects for this province. In short, Manitoba's economic prospects are, now that Saskatchewan has oil, among the worst in the western provinces. The NDP and their labour pals are keeping taxes high, government big; 30 percent of the provincial budget comes from federal transfer. The deficit is only masked by pillaging the profits from Hydro. The Keystone province virtually qualifies as a Maritime province.

Well, I've got friends in the Maritimes, and I admire and love that part of our country, so I rush to point out that that is a quote, not necessarily spoken from my heart, Mr. Speaker, but it ties into—if I have a chance to leave one message with the government and with my colleagues about what's happened in the last seven or eight years in this province, it came home to me on the weekend when I was thumbing through the farmers' papers, and I saw a quote from our Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk). Now that's the Minister of Agriculture and rural economic development. I think she failed both of her responsibilities in this quote when she was at the committee in Ottawa. She said, I want to see farmers in Manitoba get a better return, and she was talking about the Wheat Board which was the reason for her being there. She said, I don't want them to be sacrificed for value added. I don't want them to be sacrificed for value added.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Emerson just spoke eloquently about his roots in the community that he represents, and what it means to be able to make a living on the land in this province. Then we have that kind of leadership saying we don't want to be sacrificed on the horns of value added. If ever there was a part of the agricultural opportunity that

we need to grasp, it is value added. That's what the fight was about during the BSE crisis, because we couldn't value add. That was what the fight was about when oats were taken from the control of the Wheat Board, because we didn't have a market until we developed our own processing in order to access the market that was there crying for the product.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the other aspect of what I wanted to touch on this afternoon is the fact that I have been enormously blessed by having a chance to represent the people from Ste. Rose. I have been fortunate enough, I suppose, that a lot of people have forgotten what some of the history was of the Ste. Rose area, but it is currently an amalgamation of a number of boundary changes that have occurred each year. I guess it happens across rural Manitoba because it signifies that we have seen a shrinking population in some parts of Manitoba. But parts of the Ste. Rose riding were represented by the now-Member for Carman (Mr. Rocan) for a while, and, previous to him, Charlotte Oleson, the Minister of Family Services in 1988 to '90. It was represented before that by Pete Adam whom the members across the way, I am sure, will remember fondly. It was represented before that by Gil Molgat, who, I think, would strike a familiar tone with our two colleagues from the Liberal Party. He became a senator, and he was a leader of the Liberal Party in this province during the years that he represented that area.

* (15:50)

So, when I look at the political background of the community that I represent, I feel enormously blessed that they would let a farm boy from Neepawa speak on their behalf in the Legislature. The one thing that I need to point out, which is very much related to what has occurred in this Chamber, is that I and others in my community became the benefactor of Duff Roblin's revision and improvement of the education system in rural Manitoba when he changed the rule of the education system so we could be amalgamated, and made it so that somebody like myself could actually attend high school because, in those days, if you weren't a resident of the community where the high school was established and they were full, they were full. I had a neighbour who moved to town, and his father took a job in town just so his sons could get to high school.

So I was one of that first tranche of amalgamated districts which was allowed to go to the high school because it was then our right. We were part of the district that was paying to support the school. But

interesting about that, and I don't think of myself as real old, but the fact is that it might be longer ago than most people in this House want to remember or talk about. But the fact is the roads were so bad in my area that they couldn't get a school bus in to where I was, and—[interjection] Well, I did not have as modest roots as my friend from Emerson described. I can tell you I'll bet my roads were as bad as anybody's because, frankly, we wrecked a vehicle and sometimes drove a tractor two miles to meet the school bus. And, in keeping with the story where you walk two miles uphill both ways every day, the fact is that I rode a horse for a number of years to school as well. So that tells you that in the area that I represent—

An Honourable Member: Wow.

Mr. Cummings: Yeah, you would never know it now, would you? The horse would give up. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, the area that I represent has some very prosperous farmers and businessmen. I also still represent an area where—let me rephrase that. I also represent that area where there are still a lot of farmers who are making a living in very difficult circumstances. Long distances from where their service centres are, very much hands-on physical responsibility in running their farms, and their future survival is very much dependent on whether or not there would be a government in place that will speak to whether or not there will be value-added, whether or not it will provide opportunity for them to get their sons and daughters, in some cases, to stay in the community to continue to practise their version of agriculture.

Now many cases that is cattle because the land is not highly productive land. On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, the cattle industry, I would suggest, is going to be dealt a card very much like the hog industry has been dealt in the last short while, and that is that it's very easy from a distance when you think milk comes out of a refrigerator and a combined cardboard/plastic container and you think beef comes out of a saran-wrapped package in the cooler, that it is very difficult sometimes for those of us in rural Manitoba to explain that we are not pillaging and plundering the rural landscape when we are practising our agriculture. In fact, we are changing it. In fact, agriculture does have an impact on the rural landscape, but it is also true to say that those who are doing it know darn well if they don't do it right, it won't be there for their kids, won't be there for anybody to be able to earn a living from it, and that will be a tragedy if we allow our two communities to

become two solitudes. One of the difficulties in providing good governance in this province has always been that there is a very large urban population right around where we are right now, and there are others of smaller stature: Brandon, Portage, Thompson. We all know that, but the fact is it is more evident here than most other parts of rural Canada where the urban population is concentrated and where it is, through no fault of their own, potentially becoming more disconnected from the realities of the agricultural economy, and it is the job of all of us in this Chamber, rural or urban, to remember that agriculture is still one of the main and cornerstones of economic activity in this province.

Even though we lost the opportunity to become the "Chicago of the North" when it comes to processing livestock, we now have an opportunity in OlyWest to reverse that. And we can see the concern that's being raised about that type of a project being brought close to an urban setting. But the thing that people in this community forget and the people that we in rural Manitoba, the people in rural Manitoba, we have a tendency to forget because we don't see it every day. And what we all forget is that when we talk about the population of hogs in this province, there are three to four million little hogs, only weanlings, freshly weaned from their mothers, that are being shipped out of the province. So it is enormously misleading to talk about a nine-million-member hog population in this province when in fact a third of them are being exported before they're 40 pounds. So the waste that comes from that number of pigs is vastly reduced. When you consider that the average sow in a good quality operation will produce approximately 20 weanling pigs per annum, you can extrapolate the number of adult hogs that are related to that population being produced. So I put that on the record, Mr. Speaker, not as a political observation but as an observation for all of us to be responsible for future opportunities in this province.

It's no different than the northern part of this province where we know we have economic opportunities relating to mining and tourism and all of the historic significance that we have around Hudson Bay. All of that is part of the make-up of our culture, our province and part of our future if we handle it right. But when I see headlines like this, Mr. Speaker, an article written by an American duck hunter who came up to Manitoba and didn't like what he saw, and the headline says: "I am not an alien." Manitoba laws are making American hunters feel unwelcome. Well, I had the privilege, as have others

in this caucus, of being responsible for some of the activity in natural resources over the years.

My colleague from Emerson had that responsibility as well. And one of the things that I believe we both believe strongly was that tourism and the future opportunities in parts of rural Manitoba are related to harvesting of our wildlife, to encouraging the tourism to come here, make them feel comfortable. When I have an American duck hunter show up in my yard driving a \$40,000 quad-cab with a trailer on behind with all his equipment, you'd say, well, he's bringing it all with him. Just think of the potential that he has to spend money in this province: he paid the gas in that thing all the way from Pennsylvania.

That's the type of potential we have to encourage people to come here, make them feel welcome, encourage them to be part of it. This hunter makes the comment that the word "alien" starts to be the first problem. He's a neighbour; he came north to hunt. And then you relate that to what is going around and it's probably in everybody's e-mail box these days, that it's an advertisement: Come to Argentina. The gentleman referred to it in here. He said it cost him no more, it cost him no more to go to Argentina and duck hunt than it cost him to come to Manitoba. Well, if we treat him with laws that discriminate against him after he gets here, why wouldn't he go to Argentina, and why would we push him there? Why would we push him there? That's the difference between good government and bad government. *[interjection]*

Come on, heckling's welcome; speak up.

Mr. Speaker, I look at comments that have been made about this province's economic situation relative to what we saw in the Throne Speech and whether or not there was leadership demonstrated in that Throne Speech. You know, the *Winnipeg Sun*, you love them or hate them depending on the day, but this particular day in their editorial comment they said that if nothing else is done to reverse the economic trend that Manitobans face, there will be less government funding available in the future to maintain the highways and the hospital. That's really why I am concerned about what has happened over the last eight or nine years. We turned this province from a province that had a huge annual deficit into a province that had a balanced budget, but it was struggling to keep up with its health care and its educational opportunities. We've turned it into a province that now gets a third of its revenue from

transfer payments, and that's good to have. But in taking that third of our transfer payments, what have we done with it? We have gone from a \$6-billion budget in 1999 to an \$8-billion budget now. The cumulative increase in expendable dollars to the government has been enormous; it's been a multi-billion. You know, one of the things, there are few times in politics when you've never, when you just wish that you could reach out and verbally choke somebody because—

An Honourable Member: Verbally?

* (16:00)

Mr. Cummings: Verbally. I'm not a violent man but I do get excited. One of the things that has disappointed me the most is when we lost the election, when the previous administration lost the election in 1999 and the people spoke, and the people are always right. I'm not belly-aching about it. I'm disappointed that we let it happen.

But the fact is, Mr. Speaker, the fact is the Premier (Mr. Doer) spent the next six months being derisive about where was the billion: I can't see the billion. Can you see the billion? Have you found the billion? I mean, he was having a good time. And I must admit, I was embarrassed. We handed him a cudgel on which to beat us, I thought. But we knew there was a billion dollars out there and we said so, but we didn't say it in a convincing enough manner. He found it, and he found another billion. Within a little over two years we were into an increase of \$2 billion over and above what was a base of \$6 billion. That explains why there is more money to spend on the aspects of health care or education and, I would have thought, on infrastructure. We've got a death-bed conversion now to repair infrastructure.

An Honourable Member: Four percent in 11 years?

Mr. Cummings: Well, you know, obviously the member across the way has a hearing difficulty because the fact is—you know, it's about this dome. Sorry, I didn't mean the member for Crescentwood, Fort Rouge now, yes. The fact is the Member for Gimli (Mr. Bjornson) I'm sure can calculate the difference that 20 percent makes out of a \$6-billion budget. The fact is that when you now have an opportunity where we could have had a commitment from the current government not only to expand the floodway but to expand it in a logical, sequential manner that was affordable, as they have chosen to do with so many other things in the last few years, they chose to grandstand: We've said it will be on

time, on budget. It will be the second coming of Duff Roblin. It's no longer going to be "Duff's Ditch; it's going to be "Gary's Gully."

No, the fact is that it's one example of a number of things that have happened over the years where I wish the government would have applied more of that fiscal conservative thinking that the now-Premier denounced several years before he became the Premier. That would be like a Conservative saying they would never embrace social programs, and we know on this side that some of the better-managed social programs put in place were, in fact, put in place by Conservative administrations.

The fact is that this province demands government that is reasonable, that is understanding and that was trying to do the best towards people. As the Member for Wellington (Mr. Santos) said earlier: We're not in here to serve ourselves; we're in here to serve the people. We're not in here to serve the political party only that we represent when we come here, but we're here to represent the people who elect us and the people in the broader population of the province. That, I think sometimes, we all, including myself, are in danger of forgetting.

I had the privilege of coming here in 1986 with a large group of greenhorns. We could describe ourselves no other way, but there were, I believe, 11 of us that came in, in '86, and it's almost like being too nice to the opposition to say this, but the fact is two years spent in opposition were the best training that anybody could have to go into government and become a good government. I make no apologies for the fact that I always felt that I was part of one of the better governments in recent history for 11 years.

Mr. Speaker, as we go from there, let me remind everybody that in the 1990s the environment was important. Not because I was in the middle of some of the fights about what we did on behalf of the environment, but it was important. We had a Premier who said on day one, on day one, he said the environment and the economy are what we are going to base our government on because it is the right thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, I fear that what we have seen over the last few years is a government that believes the environment is a wonderful political tool, and that has not produced the results that we need on behalf of the environment in this country.

There is a great turmoil going on at the federal level about the debate about how we best deal with

greenhouse gases or how we deal with our responsibility of managing impacts on the environment for the future, but in fact, Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has been beautifully positioned from day one. We have had some wonderful examples of opportunities. We have had some amazing announcements from the government, but what worries me is that these announcements are all so amazingly slow in getting out of the chute.

Mr. Speaker, ethanol is a perfect example. My colleague from Springfield and I were sucked down the rabbit hole by this government when they told us we've got to get this legislation passed because we are going to start building ethanol plants tomorrow. We've rushed through a piece of legislation in this Chamber, and now we have a chance to build a plant in Minnedosa, and this government has been painfully and wilfully absent from active support of making that happen. I don't know why. It is a great opportunity to point out that they're prepared to have opportunity for development in rural parts of Manitoba based on environmentally sound principles.

Thank you for the signal that I am almost out of time, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank everyone who has been so supportive over the years. My wife, Heather, I think, has probably borne the brunt of most of the responsibility of making sure that I survive as a politician. I keep asking my kids, was I away from them too much when they were young? Their comment was: Yeah, but we learned a lot.

I think the community as a whole backed up my family. They supported me. I would just close on one final note and that is I think I have the best campaign manager in Manitoba. She never lost an election, and I have been the benefactor. But I do thank all of my colleagues, everyone in this House, for the cordial way in which I have been treated over the years. I am a combative SOB, so if I have offended anybody's sensitivities for that, I want to apologize. But it has been a great experience, and I hope that the people that represent this province continue to have the backbone that it takes to make it the proper province that it should be.

Some Honourable Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: I think after that he almost changed his mind. I thought he was going again.

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to put some of my thoughts and words on record to support the Speech from the Throne at the

opening of the Fifth Session of the Thirty-Eighth Legislature of Manitoba.

* (16:10)

For me it is an opportunity to thank members and people of Radisson who have given me a chance to serve in this Chamber for the past three and a half years. I have worked hard here at this Legislature by serving on a number of committees and passing some important pieces of legislation, attending public hearings and doing other duties. I used to be an assistant to the Minister of Science, Technology and Energy. Now working as a legislative assistant to Premier Doer, I have enjoyed opportunities to represent my constituents and their views on most of my endeavours. I take pride that I have put Radisson first on most of the issues and concerns when I sit in committees.

I have also been privileged to attend the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in Québec City, where you were present, Mr. Speaker, a member of the Midwestern Legislative Conference in Chicago and in Regina, and I have been working as a member of the economic development and employment committees along with some of the members from the opposition's side. With these visits, I have been actively promoting Manitoba as a province to have excellent opportunities for economic growth and maintain a good quality of life. I have seen and pledged to people from a variety of jurisdictions to come and look what they have to find in Manitoba as a family, to raise a family, to have opportunities for long term, as I have done myself. This is one of the best provinces, I believe, in Canada where you can raise a good family.

I think that the Throne Speech which we heard reflects some of the values that we as a party think, and we as a member of the government endorse. Now, let me elaborate something, some priorities of our government since taking office in '99. I have heard for the past three and a half years some of the members from that side criticizing our progress on health care.

That is bothersome, Mr. Speaker, because I have stated several times in the past in my speeches, and I will not stop till they understand, that you cannot have a publicly funded, private health care system. We have to differentiate between the two-tier system and universal health care, which all Canadians and Manitobans want. It's Americanization of the medical system that you endorse by endorsing private health care homes funded by public money,

and that kind of model will not work. Canadians have said no. Manitobans have said no, and Radisson people said no to this particular ideology in 2003 when I fought that election and defeated the candidate who was advocating health care as an activism. People rejected that particular motion because the ideals of the whole difference between both parties are very crystal-clear to people.

I think a couple of days back, I heard the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) asking about specialists. I have said it several times, Mr. Speaker. It takes close to eight years to train a physician to become a specialist. We are seven years in office now; so what we are doing now will show eight years from now the reflection. We have 101 medical students in the medical colleges now this year. These students, when they graduate eight years from now, we will have those many specialists available to serve in Manitoba.

If you look at what we are trying to do here, we have more practising nurses, and we have \$1 billion more invested in buildings and modernizing health care facilities since 1999. I am pleased to also see the Transcona Health Access Centre, which has become a reality in my constituency that people are attending, and they thanked me and thanked the government for this wonderful thing that has happened right in the community where I live and my constituents live.

Mr. Speaker, let me inform this House and my colleagues in a position that, once the Radisson-nominated candidate for the Tory Party, again now, has been trying to claim the expertise on health care. With my sadness, I must say, that this particular individual teaming with Connie Curran—they had formed a particular team to solve the over-expenditure in health care—and the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) was talking about how the priorities of that then-government was to make sure that health care works and we have a balanced budget. So the idea was to sell MTS to get some money so that we can really pay the debt. The idea was to really fire nurses, to let the doctors go, to close hospitals, to show that you can save money. That kind of consultancy was wiping \$4 million to have installed the system that we are suffering today. That is what I am absolutely, consistently, speaking for about three years, that that ideology will not work. That is what I see, that the small kids from high school can understand. If you want to save money and fire nurses, close hospitals, let the doctors go, you will save a lot of money, but you will create

a dark future that we have seen for the last few years. We are trying to fix what was damaged a few years back.

So, Mr. Speaker, if they had the vision, if they had the desire to fix health care, they would have not only cut those seats, they would have enhanced more seats. Imagine if those 20 doctors per year would have been left to graduate and study today, we would have, in 15 years' average, about 300 more doctors trained in Manitoba and who would have been living here. So those doctors who are not there were the product of the seats that, at that point, the government cut and destroyed, literally, categorically, destroyed the building of a health care system that now we are trying to do.

So I think, Mr. Speaker, this is the difference. This is what separates us from the ideology of the Conservative Party and the Tory party, that we need to see that what we are trying to do is futuristic. What they are trying to do is to see today and forget about tomorrow.

So, now, Mr. Speaker, let me address a very, very sincere and very serious issue that we have been talking about. The Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) raised that issue. I will put some thoughts onto that. Witnessing the natural disasters, climate change and the deteriorating environment of our planet over the past few years, it is clear that we need to be alert. Our climate is changing because of a profit-before-people attitude and failure to protect the environment.

To any responsible government in the democratic world, environment must remain one of the top priorities. In this regard, our party stands strong and acts decisively for the future and our people. It is our Premier (Mr. Doer) and our government in Canada that accepted the Kyoto Accord first with 100 percent support. It was the government of Manitoba and the Premier that were the first in Canada to accept the Kyoto Accord. If this is for our children and for the whole system of organisms of our planet, we must not play political games with this serious issue of environment.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that, when the present government in Ottawa is trying to say Kyoto is not really important, they are trying to make an American-model type of environmental planning which is giving the whole world a great criticism of the Canadian theory of environmental protection. As a country, we are not moving ahead by this image which the present minister of

environment in Ottawa is trying to promote, so we need to see how the Kyoto Accord and its targets of carbon emissions that were planned has not been fulfilled, has not been followed.

Also, it is ridiculous when, I think the Member for Ste. Rose said that the environment is a priority. Now, they are talking about the Prime Minister's target is 2050, by which it could be nearly too late. The time, technology and things are moving faster than we can imagine, and it will be really too late.

I take pride that our province of Manitoba was chosen to have the best climate change policies of any regional government by *BusinessWeek* magazine. We are a responsible government which is democratic, visionary and principled for the long-term, well-being of all people, not like the right-wing thinkers who selfishly see the very narrow today and do not believe in tomorrow and universality and equality amongst all people.

I would like to put on the court, Mr. Speaker, my stand on an important issue which affects my constituents and all too many people of our province. I am talking about the recent announcement by the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers) who put a pause on the hog industry until an in-depth, broader study and title examination of the environmental sustainability of the hog industry in Manitoba is completed by CEC.

* (16:20)

Now, let me make it very, very clear to this House and the people of Radisson whom I represent here that it was the Tory government under Premier Filmon who made the decision to issue an environmental licence to Maple Leaf plant in Brandon, based only on the advice document rather than a full public CEC hearing. That is a fact. There was no CEC hearing; it was an advice document. That kind of risk taking is not something that anybody who is responsible for the environment will endorse.

Mr. Speaker, I'm really sorry to say that. I have a lot of respect for some of the members here, including the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings), who spoke that the environment was a priority and a concern for the Filmon government. I absolutely disagree. Had this been the case, they would have done a full CEC hearing in the Maple Leaf plant in Brandon.

But also I have to state, Mr. Speaker, that where our public institutions are empowered, we must set

them free of political influence and interference, and I think our government is doing precisely that. It was due to the empowered independent authority of CEC that a second shift licence to Maple Leaf was conditional to several strict environmental impact assessment requirements. It was a requirement for the City of Brandon to expand its industrial wastewater treatment facility subject to further review by CEC after one full year of operation.

Mr. Speaker, I had my own business, and I know the safety regulations, environmental regulations, some of the regulations we put as legislators to industry to follow. There is a purpose for that. It is not very easy, but I had, as a business owner, followed that, and I am proud that I succeeded. My factory was ISO 9000 certified. It was a little bit tough time, but we followed that because that is something that is sustainable, that is futuristic, and we must respect that. As an engineer with experience in the pulp and paper industry vis-à-vis effluent treatment plants, I know the problem of phosphorus and nitrogen issues do require details for these.

Mr. Speaker, I am also a strong supporter of economic development and in particular the development of the rural economy, and I accept the tremendous challenge farmers are facing today because of the hog industry crisis. We must work together with visionary thinking to solve this crisis for now and in future. We must maintain and diversify Manitoba's rural economy. Having said that, it would be wrong for me to have a double standard by endorsing a plant to be located in Radisson which may have substantially negative socio-economic and environmental impacts on my constituents.

My top priority as an MLA has always been to put Radisson first. I have said no to locating OlyWest in my community at this location, and I stand by that statement. All issues surrounding this plant need to be examined thoroughly, scientifically and independently, and the people of Manitoba need to have an open forum and express their opinions. CEC is a public institution that fulfils these requirements. I have spoken publicly. I have full faith in the CEC and I will endorse that.

The Tory-nominated candidate running in my constituency is trying to confuse people by making the statement that is absolutely both sides. She says she does not want it here. At the same time, she made the statement that there are 1,100 jobs at stake

because of non-action. *[interjection]* Mr. Speaker, the member made a comment which I am not going to say here, but I think this is highly irresponsible for us to open a plant which has environmental concerns just because it looks good, it sounds good. We have to go through the process. I have been standing firm that I do believe in the CEC. I do believe in public institutions. I do believe in their qualities and judgement, and I think I'll stand by that any day, any time.

Water protection legislation would be revoked by the party, as they have said in the past, which is really again a disaster, a very serious signal to say that they will not look after the environment because they will be short-lived and they have to see something which is for only today and not even for tomorrow.

So the opposition has no idea to respect on how to govern using the public institutions. They literally don't see the big picture of the environment and its long-term effect on Manitobans. In a democratic society, people have the right to express their views, but I expect you to put forward your own plan, give us what you have and, ultimately, unlike Mr. Filmon's administration, I have full faith in officials at the CEC who will evaluate and give their recommendations for the licence to OlyWest plant.

No matter what happens in the upcoming weeks and months, Mr. Speaker, I will speak for my constituents on this issue. I would like to send a clear message to all that our party, our ideology and our plans are community-based, environmental-based and our concerns, our No. 1 priority is for the community's safety, the quality of life and the environment.

The Radisson community puts the environmental sustainability and quality their first priority on their agenda. We are proud that our visionary Premier (Mr. Doer) created a full Ministry of Water Stewardship a few years back to oversee that the future of our natural resources, our lakes, our rivers are protected from flood projects which are detrimental to the sustainability of our environment and natural resources.

Mr. Speaker, we do not want to see what happened to Walkerton happen here. We do not want to see our future being destroyed, our planet, our lakes, our planet destroyed by industrial pollution that will create some economic benefit temporarily but destroy the future. No modern society accepts that. It is very important therefore to have

environmental impact studies, an in-depth study and a detailed study done before we license any industry, let alone the hog industry in any area, not only in Radisson but in any area.

Mr. Speaker, I must say, as a person guided by the principles and ideology of sustainability of our future, our environment, that I would not be greedy for today and would much rather take less today and invest in our future for building of our future for our children and for our future great-great-great-grandchildren. If we don't create a policy that gives due care to the environment, there may not be any tomorrow. I am proud to be part of a government that is building Manitoba, a government which is futuristic, real, fiscally responsible and has confidence and courage. Like the previous NDP government, the Doer government is building Manitoba's future.

Today's *Free Press* front page speaks about MPI, the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, which is a Crown corporation that is operating with great efficiency. It is serving people with one of the best rates in Canada. Now it is giving dividends back to the users, and that is one example which gives us an idea of a vision that was created by Ed Schreyer, who was the best NDP leader you can think of. He had a vision that created Hydro, that created MPI, that we are reaping the benefit today. First an investment is the public investment with a social responsibility that separates us from the opposition party. Yes, I think that's a fact. The Member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson) is nodding her head. I think she's getting impressed, and I would welcome her to cross the floor anytime. An example is the creation of MPI, which is the best-run, most efficient corporation that we have been creating.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have in our Speech from the Throne made several announcements, and they are already stated but I would, you know, like to put some of them in terms of my own record here. We are committed to build 1,250 megawatt Conawapa dam. Now, we are building hydro. Why we are building hydro today is not because we need it today. We are building a hydro dam because we will need it in a few years from now. When you build something futuristic, you may see both. You may see advantages now, you may see advantages in the future. As we have been talking in this House about the resources coming, when can Manitoba become like Alberta? Alberta has natural gas under earth, which is non-renewable. But, if you have, as the Premier (Mr. Doer) has said several times, the water

that keeps the turbines rotating over and over and over again, you create electricity that is pure, clean. You sell and you get revenue out of that. That is the type of vision we want to create. I think one of the examples I would also like to see, which is a lot of people talk about the theory in the modern world today, an economic development theory.

* (16:30)

Now, the Premier (Mr. Doer) and I, the Member for Carman (Mr. Rocan) and a few others went to the trade mission in India. The corporations in that country, which is now one of the world's second largest eco-growing economy—has nine crown corporations. Nine crown corporations all owned by government, extremely well managed. They create such a huge amount of revenues and profits for people that give you an example that it is not the private selling of MTS, privates. You know, selling off Hydro will make efficiency. Hydro, Manitoba Hydro, you know, the best-run corporations; I know it. MTS was sold because it was perceived to be—well, government has no business to own; government has no business to operate. Government has every business to look after the people. That is the difference, Mr. Speaker, in terms of ideology and theories. Crown corporations in India, nine of them, called nine jewels, are generating huge amounts of revenue.

Our neighbour here, Saskatchewan, has the same model that their Crown corporations are creating huge amounts of profit. So we must not feel that by selling a crown corporation you are doing any favour to people. In fact, you are doing disservice to people. At MTS today, we are paying higher rates, and the profits are not coming in the pockets of people. It is coming in the pockets of those that bought the shares at that time. I think that we are building Hydro. I think I will pledge with my colleagues here, and we have said it, that we will not let Hydro be sold. Never, never, Mr. Speaker. That will not happen.

So I think that we have got that vision. We are building Manitoba for future. *[interjection]* Thank you for clapping. That's the wonderful spirit of being Manitoban. Now, we have a \$4-billion commitment to improve and maintain highways over the next 10 years. The largest commitment ever made in Manitoba so that people from United States can visit and enjoy their travel life in Manitoba, which will be prospering.

We have 60 percent tax rebate on tuition fee for all post-secondary students who stay and work in the

province. The first in Manitoba. I must say, Mr. Speaker, that while I was in India, University of Winnipeg has signed a deal with one of the best of schools in India, called Delhi Public School System, and they are very excited. They are already sending people here and they are impressed with the curriculum and education that we have in our own programs. I met the school superintendent from rural Manitoba who wants to come to India with us and try to really get some relationship building so that their curriculum, their own institutions, can recruit the students from that country and have a development and give some possibilities of training them here, so that they can retain and stay in Manitoba.

Minister of Labour and Immigration (Ms. Allan) here might witness the things that we have done for some of the engineering programs, some of the other training programs that we are trying to bring immigrants from outside, train them here, give them opportunities here, and let them stay here in Manitoba. It takes time. We have been only, I would say, only seven years, but the foundations that we are building, the foundations that are building will be sustainable for the next 70 years if you don't dismantle. If you dismantle it, then you will go back to, again, to square one. Keep building it. Keep building it. You will see 70 years from now what we will be. We will be better than any other state, any other jurisdiction in Canada. But do not stop building. That's what we are doing.

We are building. As Premier (Mr. Doer) says, we are the government of builders and doers, and we are going to continue doing. We are going to continue building; we are going to continue developing Manitoba with sustainable, alternative energy resources. We have started it, and this mission must go, must not stop.

We have now an immigration target. We have 10,000 now; we have doubled it to 20,000. So this is what is an ideal thing for us, to invite people from other parts of the world to come. Now, the whole world is becoming a little global village. In reality, people are moving from all over. If we make Manitoba an exciting place then you will see this thousand people may, in fact, double. We may need more. We may need more. We have to have development. Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Lemieux), I congratulate you, sir, for giving this commitment to maintain new highways and build new infrastructure so that we can attract businesses, we can attract people, we can attract economic development here.

The introduction of a green energy manufacturing tax credit, again, is to promote the development and manufacture of clean energy technology in Manitoba. We have one of the best research centres in nutraceuticals, and I think that, again, we are working with some companies from overseas. They are trying to locate here because they totally believe that the research we are doing in the University of Manitoba in the nutraceutical sciences and food sciences is one of the best in the world. This kind of futuristic development in science technology will make our province, again, best.

We have to see the future, Mr. Speaker. That is the reason I am committed. I have committed myself to serve Manitoba and my constituency to see the future. I will not permit or allow myself to be indulged in short-term gains. Therefore, I have stood firm on ideology and firm on my principles when I stood up for my constituents' concerns on the location of the hog plant in that neighbourhood.

I have said this and I will say this, that nowhere, nowhere anywhere in the industry should you put any industry, without—*[interjection]* I would request the member to listen to me and read my lips—without proper Clean Environment Commission, CEC. You did not let that happen. We are working on CEC. The CEC is a professional body. They will do what is good for the environment, what is good for the economy. They are a professional body and we respect that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have said reasonably enough in terms of my own emotions, commitment and pride in this particular government that is showing leadership to build a better Manitoba, a better future for us and a better Canada altogether.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to stand on behalf of the constituents of Charleswood and respond to this Throne Speech.

It's truly a privilege to provide service to the public. Harry Lehotsky reminded us of this at his funeral when he spoke to us via a video and shared his thoughts on his life. It was a very powerful message. It's about wanting to make a difference in someone's life. He did it through his ministry and we are honoured and blessed that we have an opportunity to do something similar through politics.

He talked about how challenging it could be but also how rewarding. He was a good and faithful

servant. He approached what he did with passion and conviction and he wasn't afraid to speak up for what he felt was right. His passing leaves a big void in this city and province and we share a profound sadness with his family, his church and his community.

He left us with a challenge to face every day with gratitude, to work hard to do good, to not give up when the going gets tough, to feel blessed for the opportunities we are given to make a difference. We lost a friend and will miss him. We thank him for what he gave and for what he did for so many and for his challenge to all of us to always try to do better.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think he gave us some lessons and reminders that in the job we have, there are some wonderful opportunities for all of us to strive for, to face those head-on and not be afraid to fight for what you believe in.

I want to welcome everybody back to the Legislature, Mr. Speaker, to yourself, to the table officers, to colleagues on both sides of the House. I would add, however, that we should have come back sooner. There are a lot of very serious issues and I think that the government should have certainly brought us back sooner than they did.

* (16:40)

I want to wish my two colleagues who are going to be retiring from our caucus, the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) and the Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), all the best and to thank them for all their contributions to Manitoba but also to our caucus and for a lot of the lessons that they taught us as new MLAs and as existing MLAs. There's been a lot of wisdom imparted to all of us and we're going to miss them a lot. They have made a great contribution to our caucus, and I'm particularly going to miss having them around to talk to them, and I do want to wish them and their families all the best.

I would also wish the same to the Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Sale), who will also be retiring after the, I guess it depends on when his leader calls an election, but we may not have another chance in here, and I do want to acknowledge his contributions to this province and to thank him, too, for the efforts and good works that he has made happen in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, from there, what does one say about the Throne Speech? Well, I think many of us and many Manitobans expected more from the Throne Speech, and I think there were a lot of

people, and you certainly heard it in the rotunda right afterward, the profound disappointment that was out there. That was also probably the most political Throne Speech I've ever heard. I've been here for a number of years, and I'm not sure when I have sat through one that was so political, but I suppose on the eve of an election we shouldn't have expected much more than that. But, when you don't have much substantive to say, the next best thing is to attack and be negative and to look back, and this government certainly did do that.

They looked back, and they had a lot of re-announcements but not a lot of vision as one goes forward. There were 10 references to the '90s and blaming the Tories and everybody else for their problems, rather than taking responsibility and facing up to their faults and failures. If you don't acknowledge where you're making mistakes, you're never going to be able to go the next step and address them, because you're too proud and arrogant to say that you have made a mistake. It takes a big person to do that, and we don't see it in the NDP government. So, after seven years and seven scandals, the Throne Speech showed us how tired and lacklustre this government has become.

As I mentioned earlier in reading from the *Thompson Citizen*, and I quote this particular sentence that came out of the *Thompson Citizen* paper: There's a culture of financial mismanagement and abuse that's developed under this government that makes these scandals the norm rather than the exception. Certainly, there are a lot of people out there who are starting to talk about that and starting to recognize it in this government, that there is mismanagement and that the way the government is looking at things and proceeding with blinders on in many instances, it's allowed scandals to evolve and grow and develop in this province.

The only meaningful initiatives that they brought forward in the Throne Speech were the ones that we have been fighting for: a review of regionalization which we have fought for, for seven years, grandparents' rights. It was our colleague that has done marvellous work in terms of bringing the whole grandparents' rights issue forward. The Member for Minnedosa (Mrs. Rowat) has gone through the province talking to grandparents, and I think the NDP finally saw that she was right. They were afraid to give her the credit for it, and they jumped on what they should have done a while ago.

Interfacility transfer fees. All of a sudden that became important. They mentioned it in last year's Throne Speech, and they were about to have to mention it again. They knew they'd take too much heat for that, so they thought, prior to the Throne Speech, prior to an election, let's get out there and buy off the electorate out there with this promise. Or they looked at the federal Conservatives and took advantage of some of the federal Conservative initiatives and policies like income splitting and transit funding, and then they are sitting here trying to take credit for those.

So, after years of inaction, what they put forward in the Throne Speech, for the most part, wasn't worth the paper that it was written on. What we heard from was a tired government, an out-of-steam government, a government that really after seven years, you would think there would be a little bit more meat in the Throne Speech and a little bit more understanding of what it takes to drive this province forward.

Instead, in the Throne Speech and even leading up to it we saw a lot of spending. How much did it add up to? Did we hit the billion-dollar mark? We very well might have. A lot of Christmas presents in the stockings for Manitobans, but if anybody really looked at and analyzed the kind of spending that this government put forward, I think most people would find that it is unsustainable, and how the government thinks they're going to find the money to fund some of these initiatives down the road, I guess is questionable.

So, when we were looking for vision, when we were looking for that understanding of the government at how to make money in this province and how to raise money so that we have it for those very special social programs and other programs, we didn't see that at all in this Throne Speech. I think that's what discouraged a lot of people in the Rotunda, in the media and throughout the province. So we are not only dead last in health care, but we're bringing up the rear at many other levels, too.

It is no wonder that many of our youngest and our brightest are fleeing Manitoba. Last one to leave, turn out the lights. Our future is leaving and I may be one of those mothers who is going to lose her sons to another province because they're already at that age in their early 20s where they are starting to wonder what is there here for them. That is one of the things that makes me very angry, is that I may be one of the victims of this government's lack of vision because I

will lose my children to another province. There were no signals in that Throne Speech to keep them here. So how blind can a government and a Premier be? Where was the strategy and the vision to turn the tide? I was waiting for it as a mom, never mind a politician. I was waiting for it as a mom and it just wasn't there. To me that was very, very disappointing.

What was this that we heard in the Throne Speech? I quote this from the Throne Speech: "Between 2000 and 2006 we recorded a net population gain from other jurisdictions, with 6,683 more people coming to Manitoba than left. This compares to a net loss of 9,763 people over the previous six years."

Mr. Speaker, since 1999, 27,500 Manitobans have left, meaning that more people left Manitoba than moved to Manitoba from other jurisdictions, and that is based on Stats Canada information. So why is there such a blatant misleading of the public in that Throne Speech? Is that this Premier's showing of disdain for Manitobans to put out wrong information, to spin it, to try to make something look better, to manipulate information so that it looks like they are doing something. I know they are sensitive on the issue and that is why they've got to go down the road, trying to spin all these numbers rather than trying to be accurate.

Congratulations to Gary Filmon's government who brought forward the Provincial Nominee Program back in the '90s because without that Provincial Nominee Program this government would not have the success it is having with immigration right now. Now, Mr. Speaker, the NDP are sitting trying to take credit for something that they have absolutely no right to take credit for. It didn't happen under their watch. That program came about under the former Filmon government.

Maclean's magazine, May 22 of this year. Isn't this disappointing, Mr. Speaker, where we see *Maclean's* magazine writing about: "Lonely in the Peg. Manitoba and its capital are having an exodus at a time of growth." Even they're noticing it at this level. I am just going to quote a few paragraphs from that particular article because they are referencing, again, Stats Canada: "On March 28, the federal agency reported that over 22,000 people vacated the province in 2005, a sixfold increase from 2004, and the highest number since the peak recessionary year of 1990. Who's leaving? John McCallum, professor of finance at the University of Manitoba, speculates

that they are for the most part 'young, ambitious and well-trained.'"

Well, where was this government in the Throne Speech to keep those young, ambitious and well-trained people here, people who are looking for high-tech jobs, people who are going to settle down and raise families. Instead, the article goes on to say: "Manitoba hasn't really captured the 'new economy'-type jobs in high tech and R&D." We sure haven't. They go on to say that: "Winnipeg itself has the highest crime rate of any large Canadian city and a poverty rate in the core that is roughly double the national average. Security guards at Portage Place, the downtown shopping centre, wear SWAT-like vests. Like having an alarm on your house, the vest sends a message." [*interjection*] Yes, "Friendly Manitoba," "Spirited Energy."

*(16:50)

Well, you know what? On these flak vests, what are they supposed to wear? What a message that's sending. High crime rates: You can't even walk down Portage Avenue right now without getting beaten up. Now it's women and kids that are getting beaten up on Portage Avenue. So what is that saying about this government? I don't know what you have to do to make this government, after all these years, wake up to what is happening.

We are losing our best and our brightest. You know, we will be turning out the lights in this province because we've got a government that doesn't know what they're doing. Where in that speech was a vision for a Manitoba that has a competitive edge, where there's a strong job growth driven by a strong economy, where people aren't afraid to walk down their own streets, where people can get a health care system that they need, when they need it? Why do we have 80-year-old men having to lie down on the floor in an emergency room because they can't get care. Where's the Manitoba where students have the best education system in the country, where vulnerable children know that the child protection system will be there to prevent them from falling through the cracks, where mothers and fathers don't have to say good-bye to their kids who are leaving for greener pastures thousands of miles away? Why weren't these addressed in that Throne Speech? That is what a Throne Speech is all about.

But there's a great ad on TV right now, and it's got a snappy little tune about hands in my pocket, and you know what? I did hear that the NDP are

trying to buy the rights to it, and that they're going to make it into their theme song. How appropriate. Mr. Speaker, that speech shows that this Premier (Mr. Doer) has become yesterday's man, and he doesn't have it anymore. There was no vision in there. There wasn't in that speech what we need to make this province better.

When we talk about health care, Mr. Speaker, I am very disappointed in the last few days. I am disappointed in what was missing in the Throne Speech in terms of addressing the challenges in health care, but I am very, very disappointed in this new Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) in her inability to answer questions in the House. I am very disappointed with her flippant responses and her arrogant responses to some very, very critical issues out there, and to be so flippant and arrogant when we are talking about the kind of patients that are not getting the care they need in this province. Those answers we've been hearing from her in the last few days show what a dismal failure this government has become in terms of delivering health care. They've taken us to the point where health care in Manitoba is rated dead last in the country. That's come from an NDP government. That is absolutely right.

There is a crisis in health care here, and it's all happened under the NDP where patients are dying waiting for cardiac surgery. Nine patients died before this government did anything. Nothing happened in orthopedics till a report was leaked, and then the government acted. Cataracts, I will say there's probably a better progress, but not near enough. Then, in the Throne Speech, this government has the gall to say they've made significant improvements. What planet is this Premier and Health Minister on to make comments like that.

Patients are having to fight for their lives in this province to get care. We've got patients calling us right now that cannot get chemotherapy. They've had colon cancer. They have had surgery. They're waiting for three months to get to see an oncologist—but there aren't any here—to be treated for colon cancer. Colon cancer in one 42-year-old man that was aggressive and it had gone to his lymph nodes, this man had to beg for chemotherapy in Manitoba. What kind of a health care system is that?

Why do spinal cord injured patients not get care? One man, for six years, he can't get in to have a deadly bedsore taken care of. We've heard of patients that are dying in this province waiting to have bedsores taken care of. They are quadriplegics.

They've been injured. They're spinal cord injured, and they can't get in. People as vulnerable as that are having to fight and scream and beg for health care in Manitoba. That's the NDP system of health care. No wonder we're rated dead last. Why are people in Manitoba having to fight for care?

Why have all of our diagnostic waiting lists like MRI, CT scans and ultrasound soared from a Premier that said he was going to slash diagnostic waiting lists? Why have they gone up?

Sleep apnea: We've got 3,300 patients waiting right now for sleep apnea. It's a silent killer. The waiting list has now escalated for some patients to eight years, and the head of it, Dr. Meir Kryger has said: I have had enough with this government, with this begging for resources. He left today for the United States.

Dr. Melanson has 1,500 MS patients. She is leaving. She is an expert and she is leaving here and going to the United States because she said she is tired of fighting for resources and the kind of help she needs to provide good care to her patients. Yet the Premier (Mr. Doer) sits there and the Health Minister sits there, and with their arrogance they are saying we have made significant progress. What bold-faced, misleading statements.

Health care sooner: What a joke that's become, a slogan, "better care sooner." Who's getting better care sooner? Only when there's a crisis in health care does this government act to give any care sooner.

Interfacility transfers: How many times did this government announce it, and on the verge of another Throne Speech where they knew if they didn't do it, there would trouble, and prior to an election when they are out there buying votes by throwing goodies at people. Well, where was your fairness and balance seven years ago if you thought, as the minister has said, it is a dumb policy? The Member for Brandon West (Mr. Smith) said it was a ludicrous policy, and yet what did they do? Nothing. They left it in place because they did not even have the gall to try to take it forward, and all of a sudden, before an election, all of a sudden, we see the government act on it.

ERs: We have got the worst situation Manitoba's ever seen with our ERs. I think the dam is ready to burst. Doctors and nurses are only going to hold on so long. Those thumbs in the dike aren't going to keep that dam from bursting, and for this government to only be able to put a Band-Aid solution on a gaping wound I think shows that they really do not

have a clue as to how serious that problem is and how dangerous it is because patients are being put at risk. You are playing Russian roulette right now with patients about our ER doctor shortage. The ERs are in crisis and we see a government that knows diddly-squat about how to fix that problem.

Mr. Speaker, this problem evolved under the NDP government. It has been percolating for the last few years. It did start under this government where the ER grads don't want to stay here. ER grads don't want to come here and they don't have an answer for fixing that because they've been so incompetent in handling that problem.

So, Mr. Speaker, we've got doctors in this province who are having to come forward at risk of their jobs to beg this government for support and help, and some of them who don't want to come forward are just leaving. Well, that is not a good strategy to have a revolving door for our physicians. It demoralizes patients and it destabilizes our health care system.

We've got nothing proactive coming from this government. All they're really prepared to do is throw money at a health care system that is not going to help. I think with the extra billion and a half that

they've thrown in, all they've done is propped up the status quo.

Our health care system is dead last in the country. Money has not solved the problems, and we've got nothing but a superficial, cosmetic approach from this government who really doesn't have a clue what to do. Certainly, had they had a desire to do something better, they should have done something starting seven years ago. Instead, what they have done is they've thrown money at a health care system that is in crisis.

There are all kinds of problems out there and we've got an NDP government who thinks they've got the moral authority on health care. They don't. It's crumbling under them. They are making a big mess of it, and they should be ashamed that in this Throne Speech they had no vision for any of it. All they had was rhetoric—

Mr. Speaker: Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) will have seven minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 21, 2006

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