

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

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The Honourable George Hickes  
Speaker*

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Ninth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
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.
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	N.D.P.
BOROTSIK, Rick	Brandon West	P.C.
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
BRIESE, Stuart	Ste. Rose	P.C.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	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.
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
HOWARD, Jennifer	Fort Rouge	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.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARCELINO, Flor	Wellington	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McFADYEN, Hugh	Fort Whyte	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	N.D.P.
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Carman	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
ROWAT, Leanne	Minnedosa	P.C.
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELBY, Erin	Southdale	N.D.P.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

**Wednesday, June 4, 2008**

**The House met at 1:30 p.m.**

### ***PRAYER***

### **ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

#### **House Business**

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Government House Leader, on House business?

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader):** On House business.

Mr. Speaker, I'm rising on House business so that this matter can be dealt with sooner rather than later, so that people can be advised of the committee hearings. I'd like to announce that the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Food will meet on the following days and times to consider Bill 17, The Environment Amendment Act (Permanent Ban on Building or Expanding Hog Facilities): Friday, June 6, from 10 a.m. until midnight; Saturday, June 7, from 10 a.m. until midnight; Monday, June 9, from 10 a.m. until noon and again at 6 p.m.; Tuesday, June 10, at 6 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to announce that the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs will meet to continue to consider the following bills: Bill 6, The Securities Amendment Act; Bill 25, The Embalmers and Funeral Directors Amendment Act; Bill 29, The Business Practices Amendment Act (Disclosing Motor Vehicle Information); Bill 38, The Balanced Budget, Fiscal Management and Taxpayer Accountability Act.

The Legislative Affairs Committee will meet on the following days at the indicated times: Friday, June 6, from 10 a.m. until midnight; Saturday, June 7, from 10 a.m. until midnight; Monday, June 9, from 10 a.m. until noon and again at 6 p.m.; Tuesday, June 10, at 6 p.m. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** It's been announced that the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Food will meet on the following days and times to consider Bill 17, The Environment Amendment Act (Permanent Ban on Building or Expanding Hog Facilities): Friday, June 6, from 10 a.m. until midnight; Saturday, June 7, from 10 a.m. until midnight; Monday, June 9, from 10 a.m. until noon and again at 6 p.m.; then on Tuesday, June 10, at 6 p.m.

It's also announced that the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs will meet to continue to consider the following bills: Bill 6, Bill 25, Bill 29, Bill 38.

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### **PETITIONS**

#### **Long-Term Care Facility—Morden**

**Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background for this petition is as follows:

Tabor Home Incorporated is a time-expired personal care home in Morden with safety, environmental and space deficiencies.

The seniors of Manitoba are valuable members of the community with increasing health-care needs requiring long-term care.

The community of Morden and the surrounding area are experiencing substantial population growth.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) to strongly consider giving priority for funding to develop and staff a new 100-bed long-term care facility so that clients are not exposed to unsafe conditions and so that Boundary Trails Health Centre beds remain available for acute-care patients instead of waiting placement clients.

This is signed by Jack Peters, Jeff Penner, Carla Peters and many, many others.

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

### **The Elections Act Amendments**

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

The background to the petition is as follows:

In the constituencies of The Maples and Wellington, serious allegations were made about inappropriate behaviour by high-ranking NDP members, and the Premier (Mr. Doer) failed to show leadership in enforcing a political code of ethical conduct.

Elections Manitoba has made it clear that it does not have the jurisdiction or any authority to enforce in any way a shared code of ethical conduct.

The '99 Monnin inquiry clearly wanted an effective code of ethics, not the current non-enforceable code of ethics that the Premier and others continue to ignore.

The '99 Monnin report states, and I quote: "If the political parties fail to implement a Code of Ethics by December 31, 2001, that the standard Code be made compulsory by legislation."

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Manitoba Legislature to consider acting on the 1999 Alfred Monnin report and include the principles of a shared code of ethical conduct into The Elections Act.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by R. Lacap, A. Velano, E. Quindara and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Jean Altemeyer who is the mother of the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer), Sean Altemeyer who is the member's nephew and Claire and Larry Morse from Greensboro, North Carolina.

Seated in the public gallery we have with us today 6 students from Sansome elementary School under the direction of Mr. Kyle Briggs, who are the guests of the honourable Member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady).

Also in the public gallery we have with us from Souris School 25 grade 4 students under the direction of Ms. Theresa O'Brien and also the driver, Lawrence Reid. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Arthur-

Virden. *[interjection]* Oh, it's Minnedosa. Okay, sorry about that.

**An Honourable Member:** Do you know something we don't know?

**Mr. Speaker:** It wasn't on my list so I just took a guess. It was a wrong guess. Usually it's on the list. So the school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Minnedosa (Mrs. Rowat).

Also seated in the public gallery from Centennial School we have 23 grade 4 students under the direction of Ms. Cathy Renaud. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar).

Also we have with us in the public gallery from Gray Academy of Jewish Education 15 grade 9 students under the direction of Mrs. Linda Connor. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson).

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

\* (13:40)

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### Trade Meetings Premier's Attendance

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Trade and transportation, as all Manitobans know, are critical to our economic position and the creation of thousands of jobs for Manitobans fundamental to our quality of life.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's been some confusion as of late with respect to this NDP government's policies on trade and transportation. Now, we know that the Premier (Mr. Doer) is in Guanajuato, Mexico, today, tomorrow and Friday, and he's promoting free trade with Mexico, even though he used to be opposed to free trade with Mexico and now that we already have free trade with Mexico.

He's also promoting an inland port here in Winnipeg that doesn't exist and which we may lose because we're being out-lobbied by Saskatchewan and Alberta. Now, the decision on the inland port is not being made in Guanajuato. It's actually being made in Ottawa, Mr. Speaker.

Also, Mr. Speaker, earlier this week there was a meeting in Québec City to discuss free trade between Ontario and Québec that the Premier wasn't invited

to, and that item, similarly, is not on the agenda in Guanajuato.

Similarly, Mr. Speaker, there was a western premiers' meeting last week to discuss western free trade and the Premier sat on the sidelines. Again, this item is not on the agenda in Guanajuato.

So I want to ask the Deputy Premier: The Premier's in Guanajuato promoting a free trade agreement with Mexico that already exists, promoting an inland port that doesn't exist which we might lose because the decision's being made in Ottawa. Would the Deputy Premier—and it might be an unfair question, but could she just walk us through the Premier's thought process?

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Deputy Premier):** Mr. Speaker, the Premier is indeed at the North American SuperCorridor Coalition conference in Mexico, and that conference started in 1997. I give the previous administration credit for starting that coalition, and I would also say that when the previous administration was in place, there were many trips to Mexico because they valued and thought trade with Mexico was important.

Mr. Speaker, it's amazing that the member opposite would think so little of this group that is going to Mexico to promote the inland port, people such as Charles Loewen, Jim Carr, Art DeFehr, Art Mauro and Chris Lorenc.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Certainly the issue is one of priorities in terms of prioritizing the Premier's travel schedule.

Now, we know that the decision on the inland port may be made soon, and that decision's being made in Ottawa. Decisions around Ontario and Québec free trade are being made in eastern Canada. Western Canada free trade decisions were discussed in Prince Albert last week. So the Premier (Mr. Doer) is in Mexico promoting a free trade agreement that already exists and that he used to be opposed to.

I wonder if the Deputy Premier can just indicate why it is the Premier is not in Ottawa fighting for the inland port. Instead, why is he not fighting for the inland port in Ottawa that he's currently promoting in Guanajuato, Mr. Speaker? Is it just the case, once again, that when things get hot, the Premier heads for the beach?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Speaker, the inland port is very important to Manitoba and that's why we are working on it. When we go to Ottawa, the member

opposite says we shouldn't negotiate in Ottawa. When the Premier goes to Mexico with the business community to promote the inland port, the member opposite says we shouldn't be in Mexico, that we should be in Ottawa, not in Mexico.

Mr. Speaker, one of the member opposite's chief advisers I believe is the former Minister Jim Downey, and what did Jim Downey say about missions to Mexico? He said: Travelling with government missions gives Manitoba companies much more credibility in Mexico. It really helps open doors and raise the profile of new markets.

Mr. Speaker, that's what our Premier is doing. He's in Mexico with Manitoba businesses—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Well, Mr. Speaker, under the previous government, as the Deputy Premier has indicated, it was the minister and the Deputy Premier who attended, and I'm surprised that this Deputy Premier isn't feeling slighted as a result of her failure to be invited and to lead this important mission.

We certainly promote any and every effort to promote trade, Mr. Speaker, particularly in places where we don't already have free trade agreements, like Saskatchewan. We would certainly encourage free trade with exotic places like Ontario and Québec and places with great beaches like Alberta and high mountains like British Columbia, because those are the places where we don't have free trade. We've already got free trade with Mexico.

I just want to ask the Deputy Premier: Because we wanted to ask the Premier some questions about his flip-flops on trade policy, is it possible that he got confused and thought that we were asking about his flip-flops on his trade missions in Guanajuato?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite may try to divide and conquer, but this is a team, and we support each other wherever we are. Last week the Premier was in Saskatchewan; we supported him there. The Premier is in Mexico, and we support his being in Mexico.

Mr. Speaker, he talks about the trade minister going to Mexico under the Conservatives. Well, I can tell you that Gary Filmon valued Mexican trips to such an extent in 1998 that he took a government delegation to Jalisco, Mexico. It included nine government representatives plus 23 business delegations and it cost \$120,000.

But they valued trade, Mr. Speaker, and our government values trade. Our government is committed to supporting Manitoba's position for an inland port, and we will continue to work on that.

### **Mexico Trade Meeting Premier's Attendance**

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

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, the Premier of the day signed an agreement with Mexico, and it's a good agreement. It's a good agreement. The reason he got that agreement was because he had the credibility and the strength of his beliefs in free trade as the only major party leader in Manitoba to support NAFTA at the time. So he had the credibility to go to Mexico and sign trade agreements, and now all these years later the Premier (Mr. Doer) of the province is in Mexico, presumably, maybe hoping to stave off any attempt to repeal the agreements already in place.

I know that the last Premier certainly wasn't in Mexico on trade missions when the legislative business of the House was at its peak, when we're dealing with critical matters such as Child and Family Services, balanced budgets, the bill that he foisted on the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chomiak) with respect to elections.

I just want to ask whether members opposite feel that they're being well served by their Premier as he takes his flip-flops to the beach in Guanajuato while the rest of them grind it out here in committee.

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Deputy Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I can't imagine the Leader of the Opposition being critical of a Premier in the province going to represent our province in another country to build on trade, to open and support the NASCO route for trade, to be there with business to promote and develop the inland port.

The only thing I can think of, Mr. Speaker, is that the member opposite is jealous. He's jealous that he didn't win the election. He's jealous that he cannot lead Manitoba business on a trade mission like this. Shame on you.

### **Mexico Trade Meeting Promotion of Pork Products**

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, that's just not fair. If I had a choice between being in committee at 1 a.m.

last night and being in Mexico, I would have taken committee at 1 a.m. last night.

Mr. Speaker, it was a great place to be. The Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) and many members of this Legislature were making inspiring speeches last night in committee, and there was nowhere else in the world I would rather have been.

I look forward to being there tonight, and I will just ask the minister: Given that the Premier is promoting Manitoba trade with Mexico and one of our biggest exports to Mexico is wonderful Manitoba pork products, I wonder if they can just indicate, is the Premier going to sign an agreement to export even more Manitoba pork to Mexico?

\* (13:50)

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Deputy Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I know the member opposite was adviser to the Premier. He never had that opportunity to be the Premier, but I think he understands the importance—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I remind all members we have a lot of guests here, and they come down to hear the questions and the answers, so let's have a little decorum please.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that the member opposite knows how important it is to have the leader of the province there to promote and support and reinforce our global competitiveness advantages, and that is what our Premier is doing. Our Premier is in Mexico, and he is working to ensure that Manitoba continues to be a central player in the improvement of the northwest trade corridor. He is there with businesses, promoting Manitoba as the place for the inland port. I would ask the members opposite to get on board and promote Manitoba as well.

### **Inland Port Facility Premier's Support**

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** The inland port that the minister is referring to is one that I called on the Premier (Mr. Doer) four weeks ago to lead a delegation to Ottawa, not Guanajuato, to Ottawa, to make sure that we don't lose the inland port, because right now, as we speak, Mr. Speaker, there are representatives from Saskatchewan and Alberta in Ottawa lobbying to take the inland port away from Manitoba just as the Premier is in Guanajuato promoting an inland port that doesn't yet exist and that we might lose because he's being out-lobbied by Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Now, I know Ottawa is not as exotic as Guanajuato, but I just want to ask the minister why it is that the Premier didn't get his priorities straight, go to Ottawa and make sure we have an inland port before he goes to Guanajuato to promote it.

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Deputy Premier):** Again, I can assure the member that the Premier has raised the issue of the inland port in Ottawa, in Saskatchewan last week, Mr. Speaker, and it will be on the ministers' meeting very shortly.

I want to tell the member opposite—he's talking about Manitoba being in Mexico. Well, I can tell him that Saskatchewan is in Mexico, not at NASCO, but Saskatchewan is in Mexico trying to promote their [*inaudible*] Mr. Speaker.

I want to also tell the member that although he is portraying that the Premier is at the beach, I would ask him to look at a map of Mexico. Where the Premier is is in the middle of the continent. It is not on the coast.

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

#### Point of Order

**Mr. McFadyen:** Just a point of order.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I had not recognized the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, so whatever comments you made were not put on record. Also, I did not hear the comment so if you would like to put the comments on record, here's your opportunity.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was just, on a point of order, going to, with respect to the comment, withdraw the word "beach" and substitute it with "poolside."

I wonder if the member opposite could provide the Premier with a map to committee room 255.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The honourable Government House Leader, on the same point of order.

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding that the Leader of the Opposition is obviously embarrassed by this point, I don't think it's a point of order.

The only reference that I understand that the Leader of the Opposition had was to make a marina in Point Douglas and remove 500 residents. He promised that during the campaign without realizing he'd have to relocate residents.

I know he's embarrassed, but he does not have a point of order. A point of order just doesn't come because you're embarrassed for getting the question wrong.

**Mr. Speaker:** On the point of order raised, the honourable member does not have a point of order.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Speaker:** We will continue on with question period.

#### Enhanced Driver's Licences Cost to MPI

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** Earlier this week we learned that the cost of implementing the enhanced driver's licence initiative is \$13 million. We also learned that this NDP government has told MPI to pay for it. Yesterday I asked this government to justify their raid on MPI. The Premier (Mr. Doer) said that he hadn't had a briefing on the issue.

Maybe the minister can answer my question: Why is this government forcing MPI to pay for the enhanced driver's licences?

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act):** Mr. Speaker, when I announced the enhanced driver's licence at the press conference, I also announced how much it would cost and how it would be paid for. It's being paid by the Manitoba government over a period of time back to MPI. That's how it's being done. I announced it the day that I announced the initiative at the press conference specifically without question because it's pretty fundamental that one deals with the financing issues, and we could justify and point out what the financing was.

So, day one, I pointed it out to the public, and the member had a chance for a couple of briefings in respect of this. If he missed that point, it was very clear, and it is very clear.

**Mr. Graydon:** I attended two of the bill briefings on this topic, and the minister couldn't bother to show up for either one of them. Maybe he needs a briefing on the topic as well. Enhanced driver's licences are government responsibility, not the insurance company's responsibility.

Why is this minister telling MPI to pay for the enhanced driver's licence instead of rebating that \$13 million to Manitoba drivers?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, the voluntary licences are being produced by MPI. It's an attempt to make sure that the trade between Manitoba-United States and our contacts can be maintained, can be maintained at steady levels even though we're seeing a drop-off because of U.S. security measures. It's trying to be in front of the curve. The money will be paid by the Manitoba government to MPI for the cost of doing that, and I indicated that at the very beginning.

If he wants me to attend the briefings with him and MPI, that's fine. I just thought that—in fact, the member's pretty credible. I just thought he could meet with MPI and then I wouldn't be an impediment and have the answers come through me; could go directly to officials. But if he wants me to sit there at the meetings, that's fine. I'll sit there at the meetings with him.

#### **Waste-Water Treatment Plants Government Funding**

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** Mr. Speaker, according to the Lake Winnipeg Stewardship Board, it says, and I quote, the City of Winnipeg has three waste-water treatment facilities that currently contribute about 5 percent of a phosphorus load to Lake Winnipeg. The provincial government has ordered the City of Winnipeg to upgrade its waste-water treatment facilities. In a Clean Environment Commission report it stated that, and I quote: The senior levels of government should assist with the cost of achieving improved nutrient management and other water quality enhancement measures. A funding formula of one-third municipal, one-third provincial and one-third federal should be used.

Mr. Speaker, will the government set aside its empty rhetoric when it comes to environmental issues in our province, agree today to funding a full one-third of the \$1.8-billion projects?

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** Well, indeed, Mr. Speaker, it is very significant. For the first time we're seeing licensing waste-water treatment in the province, thanks to this government, thanks to a referral to the Clean Environment Commission. As I pointed out numerous times to the member opposite, not only have we committed to the licensing but we've already put in place our share of the first stage. There was money budgeted this year. We've committed to the \$235 million that is the one-third of the waste-water treatment facilities.

We've also indicated, Mr. Speaker, that when the City of Winnipeg moves to the next stage in terms of combined sewer overflow, which will be taking place after the building of the waste-water treatment plants, we will also be there. We made a long-term commitment. They did nothing; we've acted on water treatment in this province.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Today in the gallery we have a group of grade 9 students here from my constituency, and they know full well that \$235 million comes nowhere near representing one-third of \$1.8 billion. I wish members opposite would be able to understand that same thing.

Mr. Speaker, will the government agree today to live up to the mandate of the Clean Environment Commission report and fund a full one-third of the upgrade, or are they intent to just sit back and allow the further dumping of raw sewage into our rivers?

\* (14:00)

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, Mr. Speaker, this member, in committee, tried to lump in all the costs, say it was \$1.8 billion, then actually it might be more like \$2 billion or \$3 billion. The figures from the City are the figures that we have based our one-third share on. This is out. This is public information. That is the \$235 million.

She likes to play games, Mr. Speaker, with the numbers that are there, but we're actually not only committing to 2012, we already have committed money. That is the share of the waste-water treatment plant. The next phase is the combined sewer overflow.

This, for the grade 9 students, by the way, didn't happen under the Conservatives. It's happening under the NDP. That's the big political difference in this province. They talk; we walk the walk, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to waste-water treatment.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Mr. Speaker, it's been nine years and they've done nothing. They continue to allow for the dumping of raw sewage into our rivers, into our lakes. They continue to allow that, and, you know, maybe it is a dispute over the facts, but my facts say that \$235 million does not represent the \$1.8 billion that, by the way, Mr. Minister, has been reported all over the newspapers. It's been talked about at the City. It's been talked about everywhere else. Everyone else seems to understand that this is going to cost roughly about \$1.8 billion. The minister seems to be the only one that doesn't understand it.

Will the minister agree today to fund one-third of the \$1.8 billion that it's going to take in order to stop the dumping of raw sewage into our rivers, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Speaker, I'm glad young people are watching this because I want them to know between 1988 and 1999, when the Conservatives were in power, they were supposed to have sent the issue of waste-water treatment to the Clean Environment Commission. They were supposed to have done that in 1993. They didn't do it. They didn't do it in '94, '95, '96, '97, '98, '99.

When the NDP got into power, we sent it to the Clean Environment Commission. We have the licensing. The first plant is operating under a licence. We have committed to the recommendation of the Clean Environment Commission. We've not only licensed it, we're funding the first phase in the waste-water treatment plants.

That's the NDP difference. We care about the environment; they don't, Mr. Speaker.

#### Agriculture Department Promotion of Pork Industry

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** Mr. Speaker, Manitoba Agriculture clearly recognizes the importance of pork production in Manitoba. On their Web site, Pork in Manitoba states, and I quote: Options to stimulate value-added activities providing ways to use grain produced in Manitoba were investigated. Pig production, pork processing were identified as a way to add value to grain. Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives are strongly committed to the pork industry, end of quote.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Conservation: While the Department of Agriculture is actually promoting the pork industry, why is he trying to shut it down?

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Conservation):** Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the member should just step back for a minute and think about what Bill 17 is all about. It puts a moratorium in place, capping the number of pigs that can be produced in three sections of our province of Manitoba, and we have a Clean Environment Commission report that says that in the other R.M.s, we need to bolster the framework there to protect Manitoba's water.

He can portray this anyway he likes, Mr. Speaker, but when he starts talking about the economics of this, he needs to look at the big picture,

as any government would. He needs to look at the big picture in terms of how much clean water contributes to our economy in this province in terms of agriculture and in terms of all of our industries across the board. Then I think he might see it in a different light.

**Mr. Eichler:** There's nowhere in the CEC report that says anything about a moratorium. This is self-inflicted by the Minister of Conservation.

Mr. Speaker, the same Manitoba Agriculture Web site states, and I quote: The province has sufficient agricultural land for expansion of pig production facilities and environmentally sound manure disposition, end of quote.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Conservation explain why he is working at cross purposes with the Department of Agriculture which clearly says there's room for pork production right here in Manitoba. He can't even get it right between their own departments.

**Mr. Struthers:** Well, maybe, in that narrow, little focussed Tory view that he has, that might be correct. But, Mr. Speaker, I encourage the Member for Lakeside to broaden his view as if he was on the government side of the House making decisions that impacted everyone.

Time after time we've seen our Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) go to bat for the pork industry, work with Manitoba Pork to make sure that we have—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I need to be able to hear the questions and the answers, please. The honourable minister has the floor.

**Mr. Struthers:** There's no cross purposes here, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Agriculture, myself and other members of this side of the House have worked with Manitoba Pork to make sure that the pork industry is in a good position. They're dealing with a high dollar. They're dealing with rising input costs. They're dealing with a—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Eichler:** Mr. Speaker, the same Manitoba Agriculture Web site states, and I quote: The Province is doing the best possible environment for stable long-term development. Sustainability in the pork industry is one of Manitoba's highest priorities, end of quote.

Clearly the Department of Agriculture understands the importance of pork production to Manitoba's economy.

Will the Minister of Conservation get together with the Department of Agriculture, producers and stakeholders, draft a new bill that reflects sustainability for the pork industry, scrap this Bill 17 the way it stands today?

**Mr. Struthers:** The R.M. of De Salaberry is very interested in moving forward economically. The R.M. of De Salaberry is very supportive of promoting the pig industry and other agricultural entities. What does the R.M. of De Salaberry say about Bill 17? Very simply, the R.M. of De Salaberry council commends and supports your government's decision in extending the moratorium on the hog industry. Mr. Speaker, for this member to suggest that we rural Manitobans don't care about water protection, he's wrong.

#### **Bill 34 Government Priority**

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East):** Yesterday I asked the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Mackintosh) to stand up for Manitoba children in care and make Bill 34 his government's first priority. Mr. Speaker, the bill wasn't called for committee last night, it wasn't called for committee this morning and it wasn't called by the House minister today for any day between now and the end of next Tuesday.

I'm wondering if the Minister of Family Services would stand up today for Manitoba's children in care and ensure that safety is the first priority and ask his House leader to call Bill 34 tonight to committee—that's the Social and Economic Development Committee of this Legislature—so that we can get on with passing Bill 34 and making children a first priority.

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Acting Minister of Family Services and Housing):** We do have the option of calling bills with two days notice. If the members opposite, if the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) would stop filibustering for hour after hour in the committee, if the members would hear more than four or five presenters over a six-hour period and wouldn't filibuster, we would be able to put a lot more bills through.

Last week they accused us of holding back Bill 17, when we'd agreed with the members opposite not to bring Bill 17. I'm getting a bit suspicious about members opposite playing political games, Mr.

Speaker, when we have important bills that we've designed and have a House schedule to pass and they're filibustering in committee.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Bill 14 was moved through committee this morning. That's because both parties made that happen. We're prepared to move Bill 34 through committee today. This government seems hellbent on trying to ensure that they line the pockets of their own political party and gut balanced budget legislation ahead of putting safety of children first.

Will they call Bill 34 today so that we can pass it and get on with protecting the safety of children?

**Mr. Chomiak:** This is not appropriate, but I asked for four bills to go through today and the opposite side said, we're only going to do one, and then we had to adjourn because they wouldn't do anymore. We are happy to do Bill 34 tonight. I'm happy to call Bill 34 tonight in the other committee where it is, if the members—you know, the members say we don't want to hear the public. Then they filibuster. Now they say they want to have these bills come forward.

I'm happy to have these bills come forward as long as they guarantee they're not going to filibuster, and they listen to the public. We're happy to do that, but they've been filibustering. The Member for Steinbach talked for two and a half hours on motions in a committee when the public was sitting there, while we were waiting to hear a bill.

That is filibustering. That is phony. That is playing politics at the expense of Manitobans.

\* (14:10)

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** But it was this government and their members on committee that walked out of committee and then came back and adjourned the committee last night.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I remind members when the Speaker is standing, all members should be seated and the Speaker should be heard in silence. If members wish to have a conversation, we have two empty loges here. They are more than welcome to use them. But we need to be able to hear the questions and the response.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and my question is very simple. Public presentations have already been heard and been closed on Bill 34. We're ready to go clause-by-clause

on Bill 34 and get on with ensuring that protection of children in care is a first priority in this province.

Mr. Speaker, will the government or will the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Mackintosh) stand up today and indicate that he's going to fight for children and he's going to ask his House leader to call Bill 34 today and get on with protecting children?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, we have a House sessional order that all parties signed that says all bills brought before May 1 in this Chamber will pass in this Chamber next Thursday. We have an agreement with the other side that all bills will be passed next Thursday. If the members want to change the order, if they want to go back on what they asked for last night, which was us allowing to call people three times, which is against our normal rules but we allowed it tonight on Bill 36, and bring other bills forward, we can agree to that.

I will agree, Mr. Speaker. We've agreed to virtually everything to get the stuff through. If they want to bring 34, that's fine with us, but we don't want to jeopardize the rights of the public to come and speak, which apparently they said that they want to have happen.

But we have a House order and we're prepared, Mr. Speaker, to have all the bills pass.

#### Liquor Bottles Warning Labels Implementation

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Healthy Living has said that there are about 200 children each year diagnosed with FASD in Manitoba. This is likely a very significant underreporting, but even if it were only 200 children a year at an estimated lifetime cost of \$2 million per child, this adds up to \$400 million a year that the government is adding in terms of cost each year by not preventing FASD.

Why is the government not ready to make the change, support our bill which would require labelling of alcoholic beverages warning people about the problems with FASD from consuming alcohol during pregnancy?

I ask the Minister of Healthy Living: Is this because the government is making money from selling alcoholic beverages and is scared of doing without the revenue?

**Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Healthy Living):** We have shown our commitment to

working with community partners, health professionals, parents across this province by providing information regarding FASD and the risk of drinking alcohol while pregnant. We have worked with our partnerships, Manitoba Liquor Commission. We have a strong campaign that gets the message out, With Child Without Alcohol. Together we're passing that message throughout the province.

We see that makes a difference. We know that it is. We know that the professionals are saying prevention through education and awareness is essential. But, also, we need to ensure that we have a system that provides the supports for those children with the diagnosis of FASD and for those families. That's why we have invested money in the nationally renowned Stop FAS program.

**Mr. Gerrard:** The minister is ready to admit she has a partnership with the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission to sell alcohol. She's bringing in money. Surely to goodness we can forgo the revenue from selling alcoholic beverages to women during their child-bearing years. Come on.

Look, 200 children a year means 1,700 children with FASD since this government came to power. You add that up; that's \$3.4 billion in new costs as a result of this government's failure to prevent FASD.

It's time to start changing. It's time to label alcoholic beverages with warning labels. When is the minister going to do it?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** As I previously stated in numerous answers to the member's questions, we are working on addressing the issues of FASD through a continuum of services, looking at the most important being prevention and public awareness and by getting the message out to community members through different avenues, through the Parent-Child Coalition, by looking at the Stop FAS program that we have throughout the province of Manitoba. It's important that we continue to provide that message so we can deal with reducing the incidence of FASD in our province.

We continue to work with our partners. We are making a difference. As we increase prevention and public awareness, we also need to be providing those services for those individuals and families.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, \$3.4 billion is a lot of money. Since this will have to be paid over the lifetime of individuals, much of this is a liability for future governments, provincial governments. The liability is like a debt that will have to be paid by

future generations just like environmental liabilities which the minister is now budgeting for.

So I ask the Minister of Finance: When is he going to start recording in the budget the FASD liability, and when is the Minister of Finance going to stand up and say, enough is enough; we're going to label alcoholic beverages and do everything we can to prevent FASD?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance):** The member asks about accounting policy and we can discuss the fine points of when you record a liability as I've already discussed with him, but what the member should acknowledge is that the Healthy Child investment in our budget for families and children is among the best in Canada. It's a world-recognized program.

The money that we're putting into day care is considered first-class, state-of-the-art practice for the country. The money that we're putting into prevention programs through the Liquor Control Commission, on a per capita basis, is, or will be very soon, the highest in the country.

Mr. Speaker, this government has made a commitment to children and families in terms of key investments which will prevent problems, and that's not to speak about the education system where we have dramatically increased funding, not only on the prevention side, not only on the disability side, but in such a way that every part of this province gets the benefit of increased investment in education to the advantage of all children and families.

#### **Chronic Disease Patients Government Programs**

**Ms. Erna Braun (Rossmere):** Mr. Speaker, chronic diseases such as diabetes affect many Manitobans. Prevention, treatment and regular follow-up are all important to help Manitobans living with chronic diseases live healthy and independent lives.

Can the Minister of Health please explain the government's recent investments to support Manitobans living with chronic diseases?

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** I'm happy to answer the question and inform the House, including the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), who may wish to know that we recently made an \$11.8-million investment to strengthen our primary care renewal project and to move into phase 2 of the Physician Integrated Network.

Members of the House may be very interested to know, Mr. Speaker, that this is going to involve the recruitment of an additional 65 family physicians in Manitoba who are going to be part of this project. It's going to involve continuing the ongoing funding to the four clinics that took part in phase 1, Heroes in Manitoba, I would absolutely report, and it's also going to go a long way to ensure that patients and their doctors can work together to improve access and to deal with chronic disease. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Addictions Foundation of Manitoba School-Based Program Status**

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa):** The Minister of Healthy Living was talking about education and information as being essential for addictions.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Healthy Living indicate to the House the status of the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba school-based program?

\* (14:20)

**Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Healthy Living):** Mr. Speaker, the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba has been serving this province very well for over 50 years. They provide prevention, intervention, as well as aftercare services to people from youth to adult, for women to men.

They provide information throughout the schools through their community-based program, as well as youth programming that they offer around intervention, as well as making sure that they get that important message of prevention out to youth in Manitoba.

**Mrs. Rowat:** The minister said today that she's working at continuing to share the message. Well, Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister also quoted in saying that she's working with partners from other jurisdictions across departments and looking at solutions at prevention and education.

Well, can the minister please tell me and the principal of Elton Collegiate, Barry Lee, why AFM has a moratorium on expanding its school-based program which focuses on prevention and education?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** Mr. Speaker, that program is very well respected across the province. We continue to provide it through schools making sure that we get the message out to youth. Prevention is essential. We've seen the benefits of prevention through our crystal meth strategy ensuring that young people do not start that road of addictions and ensure that they

have the quality of life that they deserve, that they are able to deal with the pressures through our prevention programs that we do through Healthy Child Manitoba.

We believe that it's essential that we go to where the youth are to provide the services, and that's why we provide community and school-based programming.

**Mr. Speaker:** Time for oral questions has expired.

### House Business

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader):** On House business.

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay, on House business.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might have leave of the House to have the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs to meet tomorrow afternoon in Room 254 from 2 p.m. until 6 p.m. in order to go clause-by-clause over Bill 34.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

Is there leave for the Committee on Legislative Affairs to meet between 2 and 6 p.m. tomorrow to deal with Bill 34, clause-by-clause? Is there an agreement?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** No.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Leave has been denied.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader—

**Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Official Opposition House Leader):** On House business.

**Mr. Speaker:** On House business.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Mr. Speaker, is there leave—if you could canvass the House as to whether or not we can go line-by-line on Bill 34 tonight, the reason being, of course, between 4 and 6 tomorrow we obviously have a vote on the budget?

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Government business is only brought in by the government, so the honourable

member cannot bring forward a proposal for House business. It's called by—the honourable Government House Leader, on House business?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. There are already presenters that have been called to attend twice, in fact, three times, to attend tonight on both sides of the committee and they're being called—that's why I called it early for tomorrow and the next day, but I'm prepared to sit down with the Opposition House Leader and find a time to go clause-by-clause for 34 and all of the other bills. We're ready, able and willing.

**Mr. Speaker:** I would encourage House leaders to do their negotiations off the floor of the Legislative Chamber. I was rising because I have a ruling for the House.

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

### Speaker's Ruling

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I'm making a ruling here.

During oral questions on May 29, 2008, the honourable Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) raised a matter of privilege regarding a situation where a closed sign was displayed on the front door of the Legislative Building, even though evening committee meetings receiving submissions from the public were still in progress. At the conclusion of his remarks, the honourable Member for Russell moved that this serious matter be referred to the Committee on Legislative Affairs and then be reported back to the House and that an extension be given to Manitobans registering for committee. The honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Chomiak), the honourable Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) and the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) offered advice to the Chair.

I took the matter under advisement in order to consult the procedural authorities. 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; 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 Russell indicated that he was raising the issue at the earliest opportunity, and I accept the word of the honourable member.

Regarding the second issue, whether the privileges of the House have been breached, I must advise the House that there is a problem with the process used by the honourable Member for Russell. According to *Beauchesne's* citation 107: "Breaches of privilege in committee may be dealt with only by the House itself on a report from the committee."

Also, as stated by Marleau and Montpetit on page 128 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*: "Speakers have consistently ruled that, except in the most extreme situations, they will only hear questions of privilege arising from committee proceedings upon presentation of a report from the committee which deals directly with the matter and not as a question of privilege raised by an individual Member."

This finding is supported by rulings from Manitoba Speakers. Speaker Rocan made such a ruling in 1989, in 1993 and in 1994. As Speaker, I have made similar rulings twice in 2004, once in 2005, twice in 2007. Therefore, on the basis of the procedural authorities and given the long-standing practice requiring committee issues to be raised in the House by way of a report from the committee, I would therefore have to rule that there is no *prima facie* case of privilege.

That having been said, I believe the issue of access to the Legislative Building for committee meetings is an issue of concern to all members of the House, and, as Speaker, I will be writing to the Minister of Infrastructure and governmental services and to the government staffperson charged with responsibility for security in the Legislative Building to bring this issue to their attention. I also intend to meet with these individuals to recommend the implementation of procedures to ensure that the Legislative Building is not locked during the holding of meetings of standing committees where presentations from the public are being received.

\* (14:30)

### Point of Order

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell):** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

**Mr. Speaker:** On a point of order.

**Mr. Derkach:** Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your ruling on this matter, but, obviously, the process issue was one that has impeded this to be resolved. Although you are going to be talking to people who are in charge of the Legislative Building, there is no

assurance to the public or to us in opposition that, in fact, the government will accede to your recommendations with regard to taking or leaving the closed sign off the doors. There is no admission from the government that, in fact, they erred. There is no admission from the government minister who is responsible for this building that indeed the signs will be kept off so that the public can have full access to this building, especially during times when the committees are sitting.

**Mr. Speaker:** For the information of all members, when a Speaker makes a ruling there are only two options: to accept the ruling or to challenge the ruling. But I guess there could be a third one where a member is seeking some clarifications. But to raise it on a point of order to me wouldn't be appropriate. It would be a matter of clarification where I could, if you want further explanation where you don't understand something of the ruling, but not to get into debating it. So, I've heard from—the honourable Member for Russell?

**Mr. Derkach:** Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with you that this is not necessarily a point of order, but we do require some clarification on the matter because I respect the fact that in your ruling, you indicated there was a substantive issue here and that you would be addressing it with members of the government. But, I think, for clarification purposes, the House should understand what the process the government is going to follow because the Legislative Building is not under your purview. I contend it should be, but it is not, and, therefore, we need to know from the government, for clarification purposes, whether or not the government is going to keep the closed signs off the doors during times when the building is supposed to be used for committee hearings.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Acting Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation):** It's actually Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation. I will ensure that our department makes our staff available as soon as possible to meet with you, as is part of your rulings. We will follow up immediately on that.

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay, I think—the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, just as a matter of clarification with respect to the ruling, and we

support the ruling and clearly there's a procedural step that would need to be taken to bring the matter back to the House.

But, in addition to the points that have been made in the ruling, we would certainly support an addition to the Speaker's letter which would make a recommendation that control over this building be transferred to the Speaker's office from government offices so that appropriate measures can be put in place and a certain level of comfort can be provided to all Manitobans that an impartial elected Speaker has control over the building as opposed to a government minister or department who may have a conflict in certain scenarios. We would support an addition to the ruling or an addition to the letter that would make that recommendation, Mr. Speaker, and I would just simply put this on the record as a matter of clarification of our response to the ruling which we accept and agree with.

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I fail to understand. The Leader of the Opposition actually accused me of putting the sign up last week. I mean, paranoia is reigning supreme in this Chamber by members opposite who are using every device whatsoever to filibuster. You have made a ruling. It's under government services and infrastructure. It'll be looked after. As I understand it, it was an error made one night by a new employee, from what I understood, and the members are making it into the Kennedy assassination, November 22, 1963.

Mr. Speaker, members opposite ought to show respect not only for your ruling, but for all members of this Chamber. And I thought the member was maybe getting up to apologize to me for accusing me, literally, of putting the sign up. That would be a first in this Chamber if the Leader of the Opposition would apologize.

**Mr. Speaker:** We're getting into debate here. The honourable Leader of the Official—I'll recognize for a very brief—

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, I do want to say for the record that I believe that the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) is an honourable member. I brought into the House information that had been provided to us by David Newman, a former minister of the Crown which was relaying information provided to him by a member of the security staff. What we know for sure is that the closed sign was left up. I don't want to reflect on the integrity of the

minister. I believe he's an honourable person and I want to state that for the record.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. For my clarification to the House, when a Speaker makes a ruling, it's very rare that a Speaker would give a clarification of a ruling. It's very rare, because I don't want that to become like a Manitoba practice or precedent-setting, because Speakers normally give a ruling and the House has two choices, either accept the ruling or challenge the ruling. That's what I was afraid of.

I wanted to allow the honourable member to make a clarification because I knew that there was some misunderstanding on this process here, so that's why I allowed it. Don't expect it to become a practice of the House that I will allow all rulings to be asked for clarification.

I want to add too, to make it a little clearer, where the honourable member was asking for clarification. I was hoping that it was made clear that, when I said I would write to the appropriate government departments and security because, if the standing committees are extension of this House, that's why I do have a concern.

As the Speaker of the Chamber, the committees are an extension of our business of the House. Any other business that happens in the building is not for me to say or to question.

That's why, when making this ruling, I thought I had made it clear because I said I also intend to meet with these individuals to recommend the implementation of procedures to ensure that the Legislative Building is not locked during the holding of meetings of standing committees where presentations from the public are being—so I thought I had made that clear, that I will make sure that, when we're holding meetings like standing committees, in committees, I will make sure that the door is not locked during the extension of the process of business of the House.

**Mr. McFadyen:** I want to just add to the comments I just made. I, in Question Period—I think it's important because the Attorney General has indicated, I think, with some justification, concern over my having impugned his honour. I want to say that information was provided to us by Mr. Newman, reflecting a comment from a security guard.

I acknowledge that that, in a court of law, would be considered hearsay. I came into the House and stated it as though it was a fact, Mr. Speaker, when I

should've posed it as a question to the minister as to whether it happened, rather than stating it as a fact.

I want to just state that I regret the way the question was posed, and I want to just reaffirm my view that he is an honourable member. If I could have done it over again, I would have put it as a question rather than as an assertion of fact, even though I believed the information was reliable.

It was hearsay and I should've phrased it in a more honourable way and given the member the benefit of the doubt.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the honourable member for that, and now we'll move on into members' statements.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Don Dietrich

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to speak about Don Dietrich who's been instrumental in shaping minor hockey in the Westman region, a real hometown hero, former NHLer and now an accomplished author.

As the parent of a child who experienced the magic of Don's coaching, I have seen first-hand how he was able to take a young group of hockey players, the Manitoba Hurricanes, and teach them invaluable lessons within hockey and in life.

A native of Deloraine, Don played his major junior hockey with the Brandon Wheat Kings, before being chosen in the 1980 draft by the Chicago Black Hawks. He also played for the New Jersey Devils and for a variety of teams in the AHL and in Europe.

Perhaps one of his greatest accomplishments was when he was chosen as a member of the 1989-1990 Canadian National Team. Ever since he retired as a player, Don has been coaching. He donates all of his time to the hockey rink and to the kids of the community.

This past February, with the help of his wife, Nadine, Don published the book, *No Guarantees*. He has a career's worth of stories and he shares them all in his book.

It has not been easy for Don; he now suffers from Parkinson's disease and is battling cancer. His illness is physically debilitating and, when you love something as much as Don loves the game of hockey, you'll do whatever it takes to keep doing it.

Don's inspirational story has shown his players, colleagues and all members of the community that anything is achievable.

I would like to read a poem titled, "The Man in the Glass," that Don shared with our Manitoba Hurricane team. It quantifies his ability to articulate how life mirrors hockey. Don is living proof that, if you can overcome downs in life, you can soar to greatness!

"When you get what you want in your struggle for self / And the world makes you king for a day, / Just go to the mirror and look at yourself / And see what that man has to say. / For it isn't your father or mother or wife / Whose judgment upon you must pass. / The fellow whose verdict counts most in your life / Is the one staring back from the glass. / You may be like Jack Horner and chisel a plum / And think you're a wonderful guy, / But the man in the glass says you're only a bum / If you can't look him straight in the eye. / He's the one to please—never mind all the rest, / For he's with you clear to the end. / And you've passed your most dangerous, difficult test / If the man in the glass is your friend. / You may fool the whole world down the pathway of years / And get pats on the back as you pass. / But your final reward will be heartache and tears / If you've cheated the man in the glass."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

\* (14:40)

### John de Graff School Sustainable Development Day

**Ms. Erna Braun (Rossmere):** On May 28 I had the pleasure of attending John de Graff School's Sustainable Development Day and assembly. Students at the school have been learning a great deal about the importance of the environment and how sustainability connects to plants and animals as well as our fellow human beings.

The students in grades 1 and 2 led the assembly and had been involved in a number of projects in the school and in the larger community. These projects incorporate numerous important concepts that show the connectivity and interaction between our environment and our daily lives. Projects include collecting drink can tabs to purchase a special bike for a student, writing letters to officials about plastic bags, and starting a campaign, "Say No to Styrofoam," which saw the removal of Styrofoam plates from John de Graff's pizza lunch day.

These dynamic students are learning important lessons about sustainable development. The school is also taking part in a clean air walk, school yard clean-up assisted by the Take Pride Winnipeg, and throughout are stressing the importance of being co-operative and being kind to one another. These types of projects contribute to growth and development as citizens. They teach the very important principle that there is a link that exists between an individual and his or her surroundings.

I want to particularly congratulate the students on their letter campaign. Civic engagement is a tremendously important part of our society, and I am greatly heartened that the students at John de Graff are getting this exposure at a young age.

I would like to congratulate all the students, staff, trustees and parents who took part and supported all the sustainable development projects.

I am very pleased that we are joined in the gallery today by Mrs. Margaret Fair, principal of John de Graff School. Mrs. Fair has been a stalwart supporter of this initiative.

Mr. Speaker, as the students at John de Graff School are demonstrating, working together we can ensure that we have a sustainable tomorrow.

### **Fifth World Conference on Breast Cancer**

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Today marks the opening day of the Fifth World Conference on Breast Cancer that is being held in Winnipeg from June 4 to June 8. This international event will give cancer researchers, health-care professionals, survivors and others from around the world, an opportunity to come together and to share breast cancer experiences, as well as to learn the latest advancements in breast cancer research and how to manage and prevent the disease.

The four-day event will feature seminars on the effects of breast cancer and interactive healing workshops. Six hundred international delegates and cancer survivors are scheduled to attend what is sure to be a successful conference.

This is the first time Winnipeg has hosted the conference, and this will benefit Manitoba in an effort to raise awareness across the province. According to statistics from Canadian Cancer Society, in 2008, 780 Manitoba women will be newly diagnosed with breast cancer and 300 will die from it. In fact, the mortality rate for breast cancer is the highest here in Manitoba, the worst of all

Canadian provinces and well above the national average.

In light of this data, it is disappointing that one area of breast cancer diagnosis, where we unfortunately still lag behind many other provinces, is digital mammography. It is imperative that we provide women with the best possible tools for early detection of this disease. Currently, we are not succeeding.

I ask the members here today to join me in recognizing the organizers of the Fifth World Conference on Breast Cancer who have been working diligently for years to make this conference second to none.

We've got to make Manitoba a place that oncologists and, indeed, all health-care professionals want to build their careers, a place they want to call home for the long term. Hopefully, through events like this one, we can make this a reality.

Finally, I would like to salute the hundreds of women and men who are breast cancer survivors. The inner strength and determination cancer patients display is an inspiration. They dig deeper inside themselves than they've ever had to dig and somehow emerge from the experience stronger.

I would also like to offer my condolences to all of those Manitobans who have not been as fortunate as to have their loved ones survive this disease. Their strength, too, is an inspiration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **Manitoba's Living History Society**

**Ms. Erin Selby (Southdale):** I rise before the House today to celebrate Manitoba's Living History Society. The society is made up of individuals who share an enthusiasm for re-creating Manitoba's rich history through costumes, research, discussion and gatherings. Based in Winnipeg, the Living History Society was formed in 1995, but its record of historical re-enactment stretches back to 1979. Since that time the society has been committed to sharing Manitoba history with the public at events across the province.

Mr. Speaker, history tells the story of how we became who we are today. I would like to thank the Manitoba Living History Society for their role in ensuring that generations of Manitobans will come to know and experience our province's history. I'm also proud to be part of a government that values the vital role of history in our society and supports groups

such as the Manitoba Living History Society. Indeed, I'm pleased to announce that the society has received a heritage grant for the Selkirk Settlers Bicentennial project. The Selkirk Settlers Bicentennial celebrates the 200th anniversary of the arrival of the Selkirk Settlers in the Red River Valley near present-day Winnipeg.

The Living History Society will be producing period clothing that will be used for re-creation of individuals such as Miles Macdonell and the Earl of Selkirk and will provide an interpretive guide and costume manual describing the settlers of the early settlement. The work will be carried out over the next year and will be completed by May of 2009 in preparation for the bicentennial celebrations in 2012.

I would ask that all honourable members join me today in thanking the Manitoba Living History Society for the work that they do to guarantee that young and old alike have the opportunity to live our collective past in the present day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **Dr. Emöke Szathmáry**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to Dr. Emöke Szathmáry who started as the University of Manitoba president on July 1, 1996, and who will end her term soon on June 30, 2008. She's the first woman to hold the office of president and vice-chancellor of the University of Manitoba. She has a passion, as we know, for Aboriginal peoples that has extended to education and social issues. It is also noteworthy that the university essentially reached an international student population of 10 percent in 2006, representing her world view.

The faces of the two campuses have changed with the construction of many new facilities, and she's also launched Project Domino to continue this effort.

She spearheaded the creation of Smartpark, the university's research and technology park. Under her tenure, annual university research income has increased to \$127 million, an effort that was helped by a major increase in federal research funding under the Liberal government in the 1990s and early 2000s, also helped by the high quality of university researchers.

I note that the university now has 47 Canada research chairs and 17 endowed and sponsored research chairs.

Dr. Szathmáry is a noted fundraiser. During her tenure up to the end of May almost \$400 million has been raised. She's received many personal awards. In 1997, she was named a life member of the Canadian Association for Physical Anthropology. In 1998, she was named a Distinguished Lecturer by the American Anthropological Association. She was appointed a member of the Order of Canada in 2003 and elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 2005. In 2007, she received the Lieutenant-Governor's Medal for Excellence in Public Administration in Manitoba and the Franz Boas Distinguished Achievement Award of the Human Biology Association.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Szathmáry and my best wishes to her in the future.

### **House Business**

**Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Official Opposition House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, on House business.

**Mr. Speaker:** On House business.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Mr. Speaker, with respect to concurrence that will be called for this afternoon, I wish to substitute the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) for the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chomiak) so that today, when concurrence is called, we have the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), the Minister of Health, the Minister of Competitiveness (Mr. Swan), all of whom shall be questioned concurrently.

\* (14:50)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. It's been proposed by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, but we have to do this by leave, so I'm going to ask the House that if Health could be substituted for Justice, so the ministers that are being called for concurrence would be Health, Finance and Competitiveness. Is that correct?

Is there leave? Is there agreement?

**Some Honourable Members:** Leave.

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay, there is an agreement.

### **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

#### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to call second reading of Bill 44, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, to be followed by concurrence.

## SECOND READINGS

### Bill 44—The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2008

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chomiak), that Bill 44, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2008; Loi d'exécution du budget de 2008 et modifiant diverses dispositions législatives en matière de fiscalité, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor has been advised of this bill, and I table the message.

***Motion presented.***

**Mr. Speaker:** His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor has been advised of this bill, and the message has been tabled.

**Mr. Selinger:** I'm pleased to present for second reading Bill 44, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, affectionately known as BITSA.

Bill 44 enacts the tax reductions announced in the '08 budget, which I had the pleasure of delivering to the people of Manitoba and to the Assembly on April 9. It also includes several of the measures which I will highlight.

Since taking office in '99, our government has introduced personal and business tax savings totalling over \$1 billion annually, the largest tax reductions in Manitoba's history. Budget '08 alone includes \$182 million in annual tax reductions.

To support our province's largest industry, the manufacturing sector, we announced in the November '07 Speech from the Throne that the refundable portion of the Manufacturing Investment Tax Credit will be increased from 35 to 70 percent, superseding the budget 2007 announcement of a 50 percent rate for '08. This puts \$2.8 million more in the hands of manufacturers and helps them deal with the impact of the strong Canadian dollar, increased competition from foreign markets and rising oil prices.

Bill 44 goes further to assist our manufacturing sector. Under part 1, the general corporation capital tax is eliminated from manufacturers effective July 1, 2008, saving these companies about \$25 million a year compared to 2007.

For other companies, the general capital tax is now legislated to be eliminated by December 31, 2010. In the interim, Bill 44 provides for the following reductions in capital taxes. For larger corporations with total paid-up capital of over \$21 million, the rate will be reduced from 0.4 percent to 0.3 percent in '09, and 0.2 percent in 2010 and eliminated thereafter. For smaller corporations with total paid-up capital between \$10 million and \$20 million, the rate will be reduced from 0.2 percent to 0.1 percent in '09 and eliminated in 2010.

Part 2 contains consequential amendments related to the commencement of the ethanol mandate in '08. As members may recall, in November '07, my colleague the Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mines (Mr. Rondeau) presented the amendments to The Biofuels Act, which eliminated the gasohol tax preference and replaced it with a temporary ethanol fund to support the production of made-in-Manitoba ethanol to meet the needs of our mandate.

This approach is consistent with that taken in other provinces with an ethanol mandate, such as Saskatchewan and Ontario, and by the federal government.

In part 3, The Highway Traffic Act is amended to allow for a 10 percent increase in base fines for speeding and excess weight infractions as listed, along with other feed changes in a news release provided on budget day April 9, and which are included in the '08-09 Estimates of Revenue.

Part 4 contains amendments to The Income Tax Act, which is the largest part of Bill 44. In 2009, the personal income tax first bracket rate is reduced from 10.9 percent to 10.8 percent. The middle bracket threshold is raised from \$30,544 to \$31,000 and the income at which higher income earners must pay tax at the top rate is increased by \$1,000 from \$66,000 to \$67,000.

The basic personal amount, the spousal amount and the eligible dependent amount will each increase in '09 by \$100 to \$8,134. Combined with the increases in these amounts in 2008, which I announced in budget 2007, these credits are offsetting combined inflation for 2008 and 2009. The basic property tax credit is increased to \$600 in 2008, the fourth increase since 1999, when it was \$250. Commencing with the 2009 taxation year, the refundable personal tax credits are increased, benefiting over 281,000 lower-income households

and providing additional savings of \$2.3 million to Manitobans.

Budget 44 introduces a new primary caregiver tax credit of up to \$1,020 per year for a primary caregiver who provides care to a client in the Home Care program. This unique credit is fully refundable, which makes it available to all eligible caregivers—who are predominantly women—even if they are not taxable. The credit is available starting with the '09 tax year.

Since 1999, the total annual personal and property tax relief provided to Manitobans will total \$710 million when all these measures are fully implemented. Our government is also committed to offering a competitive business environment including lowering taxes. The general corporate income tax rate will be reduced from 13 percent to 12 percent on July 1, 2009, saving corporations over \$28 million. The small-business rate, already the lowest in Canada, will be reduced further from 2 percent to 1 percent on January 1, '09, saving Manitoba small businesses \$9.7 million. Over 80 percent of Manitoba corporations that pay income tax will continue to be subject to the lowest corporate income tax rate in Canada.

Reduced income taxation is one way our government provides corporations with additional resources. Providing businesses in Manitoba with access to capital to expand and create jobs is a priority for our government. Accordingly, the Community Enterprise Development Tax Credit, which we introduced in 2003 to encourage Manitobans to invest in local enterprises, is extended for another three years to the end of 2011.

Also, we are tripling the maximum annual tax credit earned by an investor in a given year under the Community Enterprise Investment Tax Credit, which we introduced in budget '07, from \$45,000 to \$135,000. This recognizes the Community Enterprise Investment Tax Credit investors, which include angel investors, can make larger investments in a particular year, providing eligible businesses with faster access to greater amounts of capital. I would note that the maximum tax credit claimable by an investor to offset Manitoba income tax payable in a given year remains unchanged at \$45,000.

To help build a skilled work force in Manitoba our government introduced a Co-operative Education Tax Credit for employers who hire co-operative education students and graduates. Bill 44 adds a new component, the journeypersons hiring incentive,

providing an employer who hires a recently accredited journeyperson with a similar 5 percent tax credit of up to \$2,500 a year for up to two years for each journeyperson they hire. In recognition of the credit's expanded role it is renamed the Co-op Education and Apprenticeship Tax Credit.

To further promote gains and productivity and efficiency in our manufacturing sector and to provide that sector with certainty of our government's continued support, Bill 44 extends the Manufacturing Investment Tax Credit to qualified property acquired before the end of 2011.

In response to increasing competition from other provinces and U.S. states, Bill 44 enhances our very successful Film and Video Production Tax Credit. Improvements to the credit include an additional 5 percent bonus for films with a Manitoba producer, co-producer or executive producer, doubling the frequent filming bonus available to returning producers from 5 to 10 percent and adjusting the skills transfer requirements to further recognize films where non-Manitobans work on films in Manitoba and Manitoba-resident technical crew members are being trained. Manitoba now has the highest film tax credit at 65 percent, along with Nova Scotia.

\* (15:00)

Bill 44 introduces the new, interactive, digital media tax credit which replaces the new media production grant program, and provides up to \$2 million to encourage development of new, digital media products in Manitoba through this refundable income tax credit, which is equal to 40 percent of eligible Manitoba labour costs. The credit represents a tenfold increase in provincial assistance to this emerging industry.

The new book publishing tax credit is also introduced, helping the publishing industry in Manitoba to grow by providing a refundable income tax credit equal to 40 percent of eligible Manitoba labour costs. This tax credit will also encourage environmentally responsible printing by offering an additional 10 percent tax credit incentive to qualifying publishers for eligible books printed on forest-friendly paper that contains at least 30 percent post-consumer waste paper.

In total, Bill 44 introduces \$120 million in new tax savings for Manitoba businesses. Combined with the reductions implemented since 1999, our government will have reduced taxes for Manitoba

businesses by \$361 million annually when these measures are fully implemented.

Part 5 makes several technical drafting corrections to The Insurance Corporations Tax Act.

In part 6, The Labour Sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Act is amended to allow labour-sponsored venture capital corporations currently registered federally or in another province to apply for registration in Manitoba. If an application by an existing fund is approved for registration in Manitoba, this will allow Manitobans to purchase class A shares sold by the fund, which currently qualify for a 15 percent tax credit, to also qualify for the 15 percent Manitoba tax credit.

In part 7, The Motive Fuel Tax Act is amended to clarify that only hospitals in The Health Services Insurance Act may purchase tax-exempt motive fuel to operate machinery. The act is also amended to update cross-references to measures in other legislation.

In part 8, new retail sales tax exemptions are introduced effective May 1, 2008. These include services to direct agents, consumable items used in the manufacturing process or in providing taxable services, welding tips and nozzles, and press rolls used in the pulp and paper industry.

Also, the existing exemption for smoking cessation products is expanded to include non-prescription products, and the existing shipping supplies exemption is expanded to include non-returnable stabilizing supplies. Together Manitoba individuals and businesses save \$0.9 million annually in Manitoba sales tax.

Other changes to The Retail Sales Tax Act clarify sales tax exemptions for transactions between closely related corporations and closely related partnerships where a sale of tangible, personal property involves a change in legal ownership but not a change in economic or beneficial ownership. Also, the act is amended so that municipal taxes under The Municipal Revenue (Grants and Taxation) Act, such as the accommodations tax recently enacted by the City of Winnipeg, are not subject to sales tax.

The Tax Administration and Miscellaneous Taxes Act, which governs the administration and enforcement of Manitoba capital, payroll, and commodity tax, is amended in part 9. Changes include streamlining the tax appeals process, updating cross-references to various provisions

within the act, and several minor consequential amendments.

In part 10, The Tobacco Tax Act is amended to require tobacco manufacturers to have a permit for all equipment used in Manitoba to manufacture tobacco products and to update the marketing provisions. These measures will further curb the production and sale of contraband tobacco products within Manitoba.

Bill 44 outlines provisions in greater detail than what was discussed during the budget debate and Estimates process. My critic is encouraged to refer to the committee notes, and I invite all members of the Assembly to review this bill.

Finally, we had considered a special levy for filibusters, but after careful consideration, we decided that the co-operation between the House leaders would more than resolve the problem so we declined to put that in the BITSA bill in this budget, but we will consider it for next year if necessary. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet):** I move, seconded by the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik), that debate on Bill 44 be adjourned.

***Motion agreed to.***

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay, the House will now resolve into Committee of Supply.

Madam Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

## COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

### Concurrence Motion

**The Acting Chairperson (Ms. Marilyn Brick):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

The committee has before it for consideration the motion concurring in all Supply resolutions relating to the Estimates of Expenditure for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2009.

On June 3, 2008, the Official Opposition House Leader (Mr. Hawranik) tabled the following list of ministers of the Crown who may be called for questioning in debate on the concurrence motion: the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. Chomiak), the honourable Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald), the honourable Minister of Competitiveness, Training and Trade (Mr. Swan). These ministers can be questioned concurrently.

The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. David Faurschou (Portage la Prairie):** First, on a point of order, Madam Acting Chair, I believe that there was a substitution, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) for the Minister of Justice.

**The Acting Chairperson (Ms. Brick):** Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie, we did indicate that the minister who is being called is the honourable Minister of Health in place of the Minister of Justice. Okay. Yes.

**Mr. Faurschou:** I'd like to ask the Minister of Health questions in regard to long-term care facilities. I had written to her a number of months ago asking follow-up questions to her statement that her department would be reviewing the staffing-to-residents ratios and the acuity of care consideration. Even though the statement has been made and a letter has been written, I'm still yet without any information as to the review and staffing ratios.

Could she please take this opportunity to report to the House the progress of the review and, if the review is complete, perhaps she could table the contents of that review?

\* (15:10)

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** I thank the member for the question. I know that he is a strong advocate for health care, broadly in his community and certainly improvements to long-term care generally, and, specifically, regarding correspondence that I may have received from the member on this issue.

I do endeavour to reply in as timely a manner as possible. If, in fact, this correspondence came to my office sometime ago, and he has not received a timely reply, I do regret that and will endeavour to double-check where that correspondence sits at this time and ensure that, in fact, there's been no error in responding.

Indeed, I can share with the member that, of course, we know that the personal care home staffing guidelines that came into force in approximately 1973 had not received any sort of a review in all of that time. The member opposite may or may not know that we undertook this review in consultation with health-care providers, with experts in long-term care, in discussing the very issues that he now cites.

That is, the nature of the individual that resided in a personal care home in 1973 does not bear a very strong resemblance to the nature of the individual that resides in a personal care home today. He cites,

in his question, that acuity levels—that is to say, the degree and the level of the needs of that individual—has really transformed since 1973.

We know that, as options for assisted living and supportive housing increase in the community, as people take a very active role in advocacy, in finding supports for seniors in group living or take advantage of supports so that they can reside in their communities longer, the nature of the resident that exists in a personal care home today has a much higher level of need, a higher acuity; therefore, those staffing guidelines that were very good in 1973 are not good now.

So we announced in November of 2007 an over \$40-million investment to add 400 more nurses, health-care aides and other health-care professionals to Manitoba's personal care homes.

Included in that announcement, Madam Acting Chair, was improved education for those personal care home staff, like training about working with people living with Alzheimer's and with dementia, also rolling out an internationally developed assessment tool across the province to help nurses and other staff ensure residents get the care that they need and make sure that we're monitoring quality across all personal care homes.

We know that there is a need for an increase in the different levels of care, whether it's a personal care home bed that provides that support for people having a very high acuity, or whether it's providing supports for seniors in group living or supportive housing; we continue to make investments across the continuum.

Again, I will investigate promptly the member opposite's correspondence that he speaks of and endeavour to have an answer to him as quickly as possible.

**Mr. Faurschou:** I do appreciate the minister's response, but I didn't catch as to whether the review that was announced was ever tabled or made public regarding the staffing ratios and recognizing the level of attention required currently in long-term care facilities.

**Ms. Oswald:** Certainly, the review was undertaken and completed. Regional health authorities are working diligently on endeavouring to fill that new, recommended staffing guideline. This information isn't secret and I will endeavour to provide it for the member.

**Mr. Faurschou:** I appreciate the minister. I know she is a caring person and wants to see our seniors and those that are requiring intensive long-term care do, indeed, receive that care. I wonder whether her department is undertaking an assessment of all long-term care facilities, regardless of the regional health authority which they are part of, so that she can in fact measure the progress towards fulfilling the recommended level of staffing, and so that we all can be assured that there is attention being made to this very, very important issue. There are two facilities in Portage la Prairie that I will say that I am receiving significant numbers of contacts airing concerns about short-staff situations, individuals that are residents of those facilities lacking in attention, and the situations that are actually detailed to my office really, really are of utmost concern to myself and should be to the minister as well.

**Ms. Oswald:** Thank you very much, Madam Acting Chair, and I thank the member for the question. I'd say first off that when members of the public contact their elected representative I know that the member opposite has the trust of a number of individuals—

**The Acting Chairperson (Ms. Brick):** Order. I just am going to ask members—I'm having a little bit of trouble hearing the minister's response, so, if individuals wanted to make use of the loge, that would be greatly appreciated.

**Ms. Oswald:** Thank you very much, Madam Acting Chair. I just want to begin, as I said before, by saying to the member that I know that he has the trust of the members of his community, and they may come to him with concerns. I hope the member knows that we want to work with him, particularly on any particular casework he may receive.

The member is always encouraged to come to us with concerns that he has, and we will make a commitment to work as hard as we can to make improvements so that he can work with his community to improve situations, and certainly, as a general statement on the subject of long-term care, we know that, of course, providing safe quality care for Manitoba seniors remains a top priority. That is why, of course, that review of the personal care home staffing guidelines took place in the first place.

I can also let the member know that in 2005 new standards were created and new standards were put into law, new standards as well as visits at a minimum of every three years for every personal care home to make sure that those standards are met. The new standards really go a long way to ensure

quality care, requiring personal care homes to meet infection control guidelines, which, of course, is a very dynamic entity. With every month, I would argue, we learn something new about infection control and what we can be doing to mitigate the spread of infections that a year ago we may not even have heard of. So it's very important that we are keeping those guidelines up to date. We want to make sure that we're involving residents and their families in their care, ensuring environments are safe and secure for residents.

Since that time in 2005, we've invested \$1.6 million to help personal care homes improve those services and meet the rigorous standards that were introduced. Also, in conjunction, I neglected to mention that, with the over \$40-million announcement that we made with the PCH staffing guidelines, we also committed to increase the number of unannounced follow-up visits—the pop quiz, if you will, Madam Acting Chair. That, we know, was something that was called on by not only families in Manitoba, but by health-care professionals.

\* (15:20)

We want to make sure that we continue to work on improvements in a legislative context, like bringing in the Protection for Persons in Care Office. In fact, we know that there are amendments to that legislation in flight, as we speak. We'd very much like to see those passed. We also are working diligently to improve the reporting of critical incidences and improving the investigation of those.

So, in a broad scope, Madam Acting Chair, from a legislative framework, from a policy framework, from a building of health human resources framework, we know that we need to work together to build our health-care system to be an even better one. I thank the member for the question.

**Mr. Faurschou:** Madam Acting Chair, the initial part of my question was whether or not the minister is undertaking a follow-up to the investment that she announced and to gauge the progress towards all long-term-care facilities adhering to the staffing guidelines.

I just would like to hear from the minister that she is committed to following up with all RHAs and all the respective long-term-care facilities and, that way, then assuring the House that the investments made are, indeed, getting to the facilities to which they are needed.

**Ms. Oswald:** Madam Acting Chair, I want to provide the member with comfort that, yes, of course, this transition into the new staffing guideline receives regular review and updates. The board chairs and CEOs meet on a regular basis to discuss this and other matters.

Certainly, Manitoba Health, people in charge of long-term care, is speaking regularly with people in the field about the progress that's being made in this transitional time.

The member is quite right; we want to ensure, with these new guidelines in place, that we are working in a timely manner to ensure that these guidelines and other standards, of course, are being met. Personal care homes receive regular reviews and, as I just mentioned, unannounced visits.

We can only improve by way of evaluation in, really, any kind of program that we undertake, whether it's health care or otherwise. So the member is quite right in suggesting, and I can assure him that we receive regular updates on progress and challenges.

We work hard to help regions achieve what it is that they've set to achieve by supporting them in any challenges that they may have.

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West):** A question to the Minister of Finance, there was a recent article with respect to a Canola crushing plant that is being completed in Yorkton, Saskatchewan. It's a Louis Dreyfus \$200-million complex.

The CEO of Louis Dreyfus is quoted as saying that he's building it in Saskatchewan for a number of reasons: supply, work force. But his main reason was the beneficial tax environment, and I quote, the manufacturing and processing sector faces a 28.5 percent taxation rate in Saskatchewan, compared to 33.5 percent in Manitoba, 29.5 percent in Alberta and 41 percent in North Dakota. Then he goes on to say, everybody thinks it's Alberta, but it's Saskatchewan, about where his sector pays the lowest taxes.

I wonder if the Finance Minister can tell me why it is that this particular corporation, with a huge capital contribution to the economy, would look at taxation as being one of the major factors. Why is it that Manitoba could not compete, not only with Saskatchewan but, obviously, Alberta?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance):** If the member would look at the budget papers and check

under the manufacturing section, where we do modelling of the cost of doing business in this jurisdiction compared to other jurisdictions, and we take a look at, for example, cities like Brandon and Winnipeg, he will see in that document that, when you take a look at the internal rate of return or all the costs on the bottom line, Manitoba is by far one of the more competitive cities in western Canada. The cities in Manitoba are by far among the most competitive cities, particularly for manufacturing, both large and small.

I'm assuming that the size of this plant that the member just mentioned is a larger manufacturing facility. I think that would be probably safe to say. When you take a look at the larger manufacturing facility rates of return, it's pretty strong in terms of what we can provide here. So, if the member has some specific information about what the company did get in terms of information from Manitoba, whether they even seriously talked to us about coming here, it's very rare that when somebody is serious about coming to Manitoba that we can't offer them a value package that gives them among the most competitive rates of taxation and costs for doing business of any jurisdiction in Canada. So I would like to know from the member: Did they actually inquire in Manitoba or was this a statement that was made after they'd already made the decision to locate in Saskatchewan?

I note also that the member, in his statement, indicated that the highest taxed jurisdiction was the United States state, which I think is illustrative of how competitive taxation is in Canada generally with respect to the United States, even though the dollar has risen. But I can assure the member, when you take a look at all the costs of locating an industry, particularly a manufacturing industry inside of Manitoba, our research shows—and it's the same modelling that was done under the previous government; it's the same econometric model—it shows that Manitoba is very, very competitive, if not the most competitive of the jurisdictions in Canada.

**Mr. Borotsik:** Well, it's obvious, Madam Acting Chair, that the modelling was not successful in attracting a fairly major corporation, not only the corporation, but the spinoffs with respect to the agricultural community would have been absolutely phenomenal. But the modelling that was shown or researched by Louis Dreyfus obviously wasn't enough to convince them to move to Manitoba.

What the minister also said is the comparables between North Dakota exactly are much higher, but what he didn't commit to was the fact that Saskatchewan and Alberta were still very much lower. There was also another corporation looking at that same Canola crushing plant for Manitoba; it was JRI. They did have discussions with the government, many discussions with this government, and at that time, JRI had also identified Saskatchewan as being their location of this particular plant. Now, it was either one of them or Louis Dreyfus, and I guess Louis Dreyfus was the one that won out.

But JRI, certainly, had the opportunity to talk to the Province of Manitoba. As the minister is aware, the Richardson name is very well known here in Manitoba, and certainly, if there was any desire to stay in the province, it would be with that particular company. But they, again, had identified that the best location—again because of taxation and business-friendly environment—they decided that they would locate in the province of Saskatchewan.

So I go back. For all the modelling in the world, for all of the variables that the minister and his department use, obviously they weren't enough to attract the Louis Dreyfus, and if I could just ask the minister a question I'm at.

New Brunswick has just released a discussion paper, as early as today actually, a discussion paper on its overhauling of its personal and its corporate tax rates. I wonder if the minister has, first of all, seen a copy of the discussion paper—and he may not have because it was just released today—and if he is, in fact, looking at the same possibility of putting out a discussion paper looking at the overhauling of personal tax rates and corporate tax rates here in the province of Manitoba.

**Mr. Selinger:** I am aware of what New Brunswick has done in terms of developing some alternatives with respect to where they're going on taxation. The minister did mention that to the ministers of Finance last week in Montreal when we met to discuss these matters. I haven't actually seen the specific paper because the member will know that—I don't know how he got access to it; I was in committee all this morning. It's true, I did see the member leave the room for an extended period of time. I'm glad to know that he was reading this white paper from New Brunswick, not outside, helping us generate tax revenues inside Manitoba. But I'm sure that I'll get access to that paper very soon.

\* (15:30)

The difference in Manitoba is that we actually just go ahead and reduce taxes. We did it in this budget. We reduced corporate income tax. We eliminated the capital tax on the manufacturers, July 1—about a \$28-million benefit. We did a number of things that are in the BITSA bill that I put second reading in front of the House today that help manufacturers specifically.

If the member will look at the budget papers, when it comes back to manufacturing, just on the tax rates alone, for effective tax rates for a large manufacturing firm, Brandon is No. 1 compared to other cities, including cities like Regina, Calgary, Moncton in terms of New Brunswick, and other cities both in the United States and across the country. That was on page D-29.

When you look on page D-30 and you look at the internal rates of return, which is sort of the whole story, on a large manufacturing firm in a city over half a million, Winnipeg is No. 1. When you look at the internal rate of return for a city under 500,000, Brandon is No. 1. The value package for being in Manitoba is very strong.

The member didn't indicate whether the companies he was referencing had specific conversations with us. I know, when they do, they get a very responsive audience from both the Minister of Competitiveness, Training and Trade (Mr. Swan), myself, the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), if there's an agricultural dimension to it, and we're always ready to work with these companies to show them how Manitoba is the best place to locate. I'd be interested in knowing all the factors that they considered. If the member has further information he'd be happy to table with us, we'd be happy to review it.

**Mr. Borotsik:** I suspect it's a little late to review when they've already got the shovel in the dirt. I think that review should have been done quite a while previous to their announcement and certainly previous to their construction period.

The next question I have—and by the way, I don't believe I got an answer to the last question. I do know that the minister is going to look at the white paper, the discussion paper.

I did ask if he would be prepared to look at a similar type of discussion paper with overhauling the personal and corporate income taxes as well in the province of Manitoba. He didn't answer that question, so perhaps he can answer that question. I

take it from his non-answer that he's not interested in looking at any specific overhauling of the personal income tax, more so than what the tinkering he did with this particular budget.

In the budget that was tabled in this House not long ago, on the operating side, the minister tabled a budget that had a \$2-million surplus. That's based on an almost \$10-billion budget. There was a \$2-million surplus which is running fairly close to the line on that, particularly when the minister has to balance that budget on a positive manner.

With that \$2 million—and I do know that there have been some additional costs incurred through disaster. There have been some fire costs that have been fairly expensive just recently. Does the minister have a contingency built in the budget to cover off any additional fire costs over and above what has been budgeted? If not, the \$2-million surplus, will that be eaten up totally by those disaster costs?

**Mr. Selinger:** First of all, just to go back to the member's comment that I didn't answer his previous question: I actually did answer his previous question. I said very clearly, instead of doing studies, we went ahead and lowered taxes. I just hope the member would have heard that. I couldn't make it any plainer than that. We act, they study. That's the difference. The result is that they have lower taxes in real time, starting this year.

In terms of the issue about the budget, the member will know that within the budget, the department responsible for emergency planning starts with a base budget of about \$16 million. Then there's about \$25 million in the emergency section of the budget, the budget that deals with emergencies, unforeseen emergencies. So a total of about \$40 million that can potentially be available to address disaster situations such as forest fires.

My information to date is that, even with the serious fires that we've seen in Manitoba, the budget allocated for managing those kinds of issues is still adequate at this date to handle those costs.

**Mr. Borotsik:** Thank you for that answer.

The minister likes to compare GDP numbers for Manitoba compared to others as well, particularly with debt-to-GDP. But, rather than debt-to-GDP, one of the more telling variables would be GDP per capita. Can the minister tell me what the GDP per capita is for the province of Manitoba?

**Mr. Selinger:** I'll endeavour to get that information for the member from within my budget documents, if it's there, but I can tell the member that the GDP in Manitoba is growing above the Canadian average, while the transfer payments are growing below the Canadian average. Indeed, the projections for growth in the GDP in Manitoba put us among the leaders in the country.

So, very clearly, the economy of Manitoba is doing reasonably well right now, particularly in comparison to other jurisdictions. That story, we're pleased with. We're never satisfied with it in the sense that we always look for new ways to work with the private sector and other sectors of the community to continue to grow the economy but the reality is we're growing above the Canadian average. Transfer payments are growing below the Canadian average. That moves us forward on our prosperity agenda and builds on the Manitoba advantage that we have.

**Mr. Borotsik:** I think I caught the comment right about the GDP leading the country. I do have some numbers in front of me; they're GDP per capita numbers that were taken in 2007.

I can't really see how this is leading the country. Manitoba is No. 6 in that list. We have Alberta, Newfoundland, Saskatchewan, Ontario and British Columbia ahead of Manitoba. The only provinces that are below Manitoba are Québec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and P.E.I.

New Brunswick probably is looking at trying to change that with a new tax regime, but Manitoba right now—in 2007, I'm sorry—with a population of 1,186,000 people, our 2007 GDP per capita was \$40,942 per person. We're sixth, not leaders in the country. We're sixth.

Now, I appreciate that the minister does say that we have the highest percentage increase in GDP. Perhaps he could tell me what the projection is for percentage growth in GDP for the 2008 fiscal year.

**Mr. Selinger:** The member will have noted in the budget that we gave a forecast. I believe it was in the order of 2.7, 2.8 real growth in GDP in the budget.

All the forecasts for the entire country, as well as the world actually, are showing less overall GDP growth than the previous year but, relative to other jurisdictions, Manitoba's GDP growth is, once again, projected to be among the leaders in the country.

That was put into the budget, both the speech and in the budget papers as well. The member has

that documentation available to him. He knows that, because we've discussed this before in terms of what's happening inside the province. That's the information we've put on the record, and I think the member's aware of that already.

**Mr. Borotsik:** Yes, the member is aware of it and knows what the projections are in the budget. I do know that the minister does have a fairly reasonable handle on his department and looks at the projections on a probably daily, if not weekly, basis.

We've recognized in the country the Finance Minister, Mr. Flaherty, has just identified that there's been a substantial reduction in the GDP growth over the last quarter in Canada.

Does the Minister of Finance suggest or could he give any projections as to whether those 2.7 or 2.8 percent—and there are different numbers that are used by different organizations, but we'll assume it's a 2.8 percent projected growth of GDP—does that seem to be a reasonable number going forward into the 2008 fiscal year, seeing that there has been quite a substantial reduction in the Canadian GDP?

**Mr. Selinger:** I was actually present when the federal Minister of Finance discussed the quarterly numbers where they showed a slight decline in Canadian GDP growth. The federal minister attributed that to some of the labour disruptions going on in the auto sector in Ontario, as well as some of the broader manufacturing challenges in eastern Canada.

\* (15:40)

Generally speaking, Manitoba, at this stage of the game, looks relatively on track to meet the projections going forward. The GDP growth is illustrated in the budget under the economy papers on page A-4, and it's broken out at the bottom of that page by various sectors. So, when you look at '08, they are projecting GDP growth. It looks like about 2.7, 2.8, as I indicated to the member. At this stage of the game we've had no strong evidence to suggest that it will be less than that, but we track that on a regular basis. The major challenges for the Canadian economy were occurring mostly in Ontario and Québec as the press conference rolled out and explained that. The federal minister himself was actually quite optimistic about the capacity of the Canadian economy to continue to be resilient and rebound from the surprisingly disappointing first-quarter growth, but he had very specific explanations

related to specific activities not occurring or occurring in eastern Canada.

**Mr. Borotsik:** I wonder if I might ask a question of the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald).

She just announced 40 new seats for the nursing programs in the Winnipeg region, but there were none of those seats made available to Brandon University.

I wonder if the minister—and she did mention that there were going to be, I believe it was 70 more that are going to be announced at some point in time. Can she tell me how many of that 70, if that is the number, will be allocated to the Brandon University nursing program?

**Ms. Oswald:** I can let the member know that during the election campaign we committed to adding 100 more seats to nursing over the next four years. So I guess that would be another 60 that we will be adding. We intend to be adding into a variety of jurisdictions across Manitoba where nursing education occurs. I can confirm for the member that, of course, that will include Brandon. We have not landed on the precise number yet. We're working with our educational institutions to find out what the best possible complement of seats will be for the nursing program.

I can let the member know that we are now training about three times, just about three times as many nurses as were being trained prior to us taking government. We know that in the '06-07 year there were some 3,100 nurses, 3,115 actually, enrolled in training, compared to about 1,100, 1,123 specifically, in 1999. We were able to actually surpass our previous commitment for nurses training and enrolment which had been at 3,000. So that was a very positive thing. It's a good goal to shoot for this time, too, I think, to try to surpass our commitment this time.

I think it's also worthwhile to note that Brandon and nursing education has seen a sizable increase since we have been in power. I think, if my numbers are correct, Madam Acting Chair, that in 1999 there were seven nurses that graduated from Brandon University, and the number that graduated last year was 77, which is 11 times more, I think. I happen to know that, in fact, sitting so close to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger). We know also that last year from Assiniboine Community College we saw 122 graduates of LPNs, which is double the number, which was 60, in 1999.

So, yes, I can assure the member that as we go forward on our commitment to expand those seats by 100 over the course of the next four years, we will certainly be committed to adding those seats to Brandon and doing it in a very planful way.

**Mr. Borotsik:** Well, thank you, after that wonderful paid commercial from the Minister of Health.

The fact of the matter is that there are nursing shortages in all regional health authorities. There are, certainly, nursing shortages in the Brandon Regional Health Authority. There are nursing shortages in the two adjacent health authorities to Brandon, and quite dramatic shortages. It has been noted in numerous jurisdictions that, if nurses take their training close to their home towns, chances are that those nurses are going to stay in those rural areas, which is very important and very vital to the health care that's going to be provided to our citizens in the future.

I think it's important that we expand in the rural areas, not just simply in the urban areas. All 40 of the new seats, it seems, have gone to the city of Winnipeg. None of those—whether they had been allocated on a per capita basis, we could have received some of those 40 seats. I do appreciate that there are more graduates now but it seems that that's not enough.

Of the 60 seats that are remaining over four years, can the Minister of Health give me some better understanding as to what part of those four years that these seats will be made available? Is it like the Kyoto commitments? Is it going to be the 70 seats in the last year of their mandate or can we expect some additional seats to be expanded next year and then the year after that?

**Ms. Oswald:** Notwithstanding the member opposite's need to be snide on this subject, it would be equally as tempting for me to ask him how many nurses his party committed to train during the last election? If he just wanted to go on the record in the spirit that the member opposite, himself, has created, you know, maybe we could talk a little bit about what their plan was to restore the thousand nurses that they fired during the '90s.

I can tell you, Madam Acting Chair, that the answer to the question that this member, that the Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau), and that all members on the opposite side who chirp with reckless abandon about nurse training, when they went to the Manitoba public and presented their best

ideas, they could not muster one idea to commit to train one nurse.

So, having said that, I can say to the member opposite that we have committed \$3 million and 40 seats so far. Yes, those seats are located in the city of Winnipeg where we know that some 70 percent of health care, in one respect or another, is given, but we also know of the importance in providing health care to rural environments. I wholeheartedly agree, actually, with the member when he acknowledges that the recruitment and retention of health professionals, whether it's nurses, actually, or doctors or health-care aides or technologists, it is much more challenging for rural environments and northern environments than it is in an urban centre like Winnipeg.

We need to be working to build that complement and to be recruiting as well, and so I do not disagree with the member that we have to ensure that we make those commitments to training. I can say to the member what I said before, though, because it's a truthful answer, and that is we continue to be in discussions with our educational institutions, with our colleges of nurses, registered, licensed, practical, psychiatric and so forth, on the best possible complements of nursing programs going forward, including LPN to RN programs.

We want to make sure that we are working as hard as we can to invest and meet the needs of those individuals, so I will commit to the member that we continue those discussions with our partners in Advanced Education. Our commitment was in public that Brandon University and Brandon and the surrounding area would receive nurse-training support. We are going to work on that as quickly as we can in the planful and balanced progress going forward in our mandate, and we are indeed committed to bring those seats to Brandon as was said a year ago.

**Mr. Borotsik:** I just would like the Minister of Health to recognize that I didn't start the snide remarks. I didn't expect a history lesson when I asked a simple and honest question as to when those seats would be allocated to another jurisdiction. I then got a history lesson as to what happened prior to 1999. That's not what I was asking, and I didn't need to have those answers, quite frankly, because I'm sure I would have heard about the hallway medicine the way it was going to be stopped by this government, how there would be no hallway medicine, and how that would be improved upon.

\* (15:50)

However, I do have a question to the Minister of Competitiveness, Training and Trade. His Premier is currently in Mexico doing, as I understand, negotiating trade with a NAFTA partner with the government of Mexico. The minister's title is Competitiveness, Training and Trade, and, seeing as it's a trade mission, if you will, and I understand that, as the Deputy Premier had indicated this morning or early this afternoon, there were a number of Manitoba businessmen and business people that were travelling with the Premier (Mr. Doer). I wonder why the Minister of Competitiveness, Training and Trade is not part of that delegation.

**Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Competitiveness, Training and Trade):** Well, I thank the Member for Brandon West for the question. I would like to put some comments on the record about the NASCO meeting that the Premier's attending as well as the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Lemieux).

I think it's a real plus that the head of our government here in Manitoba, the Premier, is joining the Mexican president, Señor Hinojosa as well as the Governor of Guanajuato, Governor Ramirez. They've been asked to actually open the annual meeting of the super-corridor coalition. North America's SuperCorridor Coalition is NASCO.

I think it's quite wonderful that Manitoba has the prominence on the international stage that our Premier can stand with not only a governor in a sister state of Mexico but also the President of Mexico to work on what I think is a very, very important trade initiative. Certainly, I support the Premier being there.

And it is disappointing that members opposite are so incredibly inconsistent on this file. It was just a couple of weeks ago, of course, that the Leader of the Opposition stood up and pledged, as I recall, from reading *Hansard* and from hearing him, to do whatever needed to be done to help advance inland port and trade issues, and yet the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) today, other members have put negative comments on the record in committee as they've tried to find things to talk about as they waste hours and hours of Manitobans' time. I think it's actually quite shameful, and inconsistent.

Manitoba has been a key member of NASCO for many years. Manitoba has a leadership position and

in fact it's very important that Manitoba be a leader. We are certainly facing competition. There's no doubt we're facing competition as to where an inland port should go. I've been very pleased to have the chance to speak to federal Minister Emerson on more than one occasion. He's acutely aware of trade issues and he's very interested not just in the east-west trade across Canada, he's also fascinated by the prospect of trade north through the Port of Churchill. He is acutely aware that Manitoba has a competitive advantage being at the northern terminus of a highway which runs through a very populous area of the United States and into Mexico.

Winnipeg certainly has an advantage of trade corridors going in all four directions and we certainly understand the important role that the Province, our private sector has in supporting and reinforcing our global competitive advantage.

I also want to add that it's pretty—I would say pretty insulting to the Business Council of Manitoba who are also with the Premier in Mexico. It's also pretty insulting to Mr. Lorenc of the Mayor's Trade Council who's also with the Premier in Mexico. They see the value of trade. We see the value of trade. I don't expect the Member for Brandon West is as unreasonable as some of his caucus colleagues so maybe I could, just in a friendly way, ask you to perhaps have a discussion with your colleagues and make them understand the importance and the value of trade to Manitobans.

**Mr. Borotsik:** Madam Acting Chairperson, I can assure the Minister of Competitiveness, Training and Trade that members on this side are very, very cognizant of the need for trade.

As a matter of fact, it was members on this side that supported the NAFTA free trade agreement when members on that side were speaking against that particular arrangement that was made between Canada, United States and Mexico. So I wonder why it is that there's this epiphany now that trade is so important to the Minister of Competitiveness, Training and Trade, when, in fact, they didn't agree with opening trade corridors with the U.S. and Mexico, but now, all of a sudden, they see it as being most vital, as we do.

Make no mistake. Manitoba particularly, Canada especially, its quality of life depends on exports. Eighty percent of what we produce in this country is exported. Most of those exports, about 80 percent of that 80 percent go to the United States, so it's so vitally important to open up trade corridors.

We recognize that. We recognized it back in the early '90s, when NAFTA was being negotiated, when this minister and this government were speaking against it. So don't lecture us as to the importance of trade. We know that, have always known it and will always understand that.

Now I find—and I do congratulate the minister—that he does, in fact, now realize just how important that trade is, but it's not only trade between our foreign neighbours; it's also trade between our interprovincial neighbours. As we've seen recently, unfortunately, we're losing in that battle as well right now.

The Minister of Competitiveness, Training and Trade probably doesn't have much effect on the negotiations with interprovincial trade. I know that they're continually suggesting that it's a federal requirement and it has to be done on a federal basis.

Well, I'm going to tell the minister right now that I've had some experience at that level. To get a federal standard agreement is going to be very, very difficult. If we don't do some bilaterals right now, we will be left behind as we have been before.

The minister also has talked about the importance of the inland port. Make no mistake. The members on this side of the House recognize the absolute vital importance of the development of that inland port.

What we would like to see is some action on that port. What we would like to see is an agreement that would be signed, called the Building Canada Fund, so we can, in fact, take advantage of some of the opportunities that are before us right now from the federal government and develop the inland port.

The minister should not lecture. What the minister should do—and I have a lot of respect for the Minister of Competitiveness, Training and Trade. I know he's new to his portfolio; I know he's bright. I know he's trying his best to make sure that he puts Manitoba on the right track.

Can he tell me now how close we are to developing that inland port? We do have competition in Saskatchewan and Alberta; I would hate to lose that opportunity for Manitoba.

What is the minister doing right now to make sure that we do secure the inland port for Manitoba?

**Mr. Swan:** I'm certainly sorry if the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik) believes that I have been lecturing him on trade. I was actually putting to

him a number of unfortunate comments that a number of his caucus members, including his leader, have chosen to put on the record.

I also have respect for the Member for Brandon West and I expect that he will, perhaps, speak with his caucus members and educate them on the value of what we're doing.

Certainly, in terms of the inland port, we believe that that is not just for government. It's for government and private industry to move ahead.

I've had the opportunity to meet with Minister Emerson to remind him of the competitive advantages that Manitoba has. I've also had a chance to meet with Minister Ambrose, along with the Minister for Science, Technology, Energy and Mines (Mr. Rondeau). Again, we have put forward Manitoba's case for being the primary inland port in western Canada.

I'm also aware, of course, of the Manitoba International Gateway Strategy. That group which is comprised of some leading business individuals in Manitoba have commissioned a study. We await that study. We hope that it's going to contain some very clear guidelines as to how we can best move forward.

Of course, I've met with individuals that are involved with the Mayor's Trade Council. We believe that that document has a pretty good framework for how we could move ahead with promoting the inland port.

So there are a lot of things moving on a number of fronts. Certainly, my colleague, the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Lemieux), meet regularly on this. As well, as you've heard in this House, the Premier (Mr. Doer) is very engaged in this file, and we do hope to move forward with our business community.

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East):** Thank you very much, Madam Acting Chair. I just have one question and some information that I'd like to share with the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald).

\* (16:00)

Not a constituent, but an acquaintance of mine heads a software company, primarily dealing with electronic medical records. They are a Manitoba-based company. It just recently came to their attention—and they've had communication and we have written letters on their behalf. I'll share with the minister, also, when I'm finished my comments, a

letter that was sent to her predecessor, Tim Sale, from our Health critic, the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), at the time. I don't believe there was ever a response that came back to that letter, and I do know that the company itself did not receive a response.

Anyway, they have some concerns that they're not being fairly treated as a Manitoba company. There's an RFQ that has been issued that closes on June 20, and they weren't even informed that Manitoba Health and Manitoba eHealth were looking at a new initiative called the Physician Integrated Network. They have significant concerns that no Manitoba company has been involved or has been approached by Manitoba Health, and I just received another e-mail this afternoon that some of the requirements through the RFQ have some reference to Workers Compensation, but Workers Compensation references to Workers Compensation in British Columbia, not in Manitoba. There's a difference of procedures between the two different provinces, so they're really questioning how this RFQ has been developed, why Manitoba companies are being ignored, them specifically.

I do know that they have contracts with about 300 doctors in the province of Manitoba, and they indicate that their programs are serving those physicians very well. I just wanted to raise it here. I was looking at writing the minister a letter today about this, but I felt, given we had the opportunity in concurrence, that maybe I would just table this information with her, and she could look into it. The reason they've come now is that it's getting very close to the deadline for the RFQ. They just want to make sure, as a Manitoba company, that they're being treated fairly and are given every opportunity to participate in a process that might provide some work for a Manitoba company. So I just thought that it would be important to share that today and make sure it was brought to your attention. I've shared everything with you, all of the e-mails, just so that you can, you know, have a chance to look into it and maybe get back to me or respond directly to Max Systems.

**Ms. Oswald:** I thank the member for bringing the concerns of her constituents and therefore her concerns to my attention, and I appreciate her tabling the details that will afford me the opportunity to investigate more fully. Thank you.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Madam Acting Chair, I just want to thank the minister for that commitment.

**Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina):** To the Minister of Health. During Estimates, I asked her, regarding the representation for the Central Region on the RHA and the southern part of the province, according to the numbers that we had there, is underrepresented, and I was just wondering if she'd had an opportunity to look into that.

**Ms. Oswald:** Yes, I can assure the member that, certainly, I have begun the process to evaluate the context of policies and historical evolution of membership on boards. I think that the member raises a very interesting point about a very vibrant and growing region, and I can assure the member that research and our commitment to get back to the member about progress on this is in flight. I hope to get some details to him soon.

**Mr. Dyck:** Why, thank you, Minister, for that answer. The other part I just wanted to pursue was the area of people who are awaiting personal care placement. I know that, I think a week or two ago, I talked to her about the 25 people who are in Boundary Trails at the present time who are awaiting placement, and, out of an 80-bed hospital, it's creating some real problems. Again, as the minister referred to, it is a growing area and so we're just finding that the personal care facilities within the area are just not adequate to be able to even accommodate the people that are out there, and again, a growth region. So, consequently, I'm just wondering if the minister would be able to respond to some of the concerns that the area has.

**Ms. Oswald:** I thank the member for raising the question. He and I are in agreement that when people are ready to receive care in a personal care home environment, of course, they want to be making that transition along with their families as smoothly as possible, and that any extended stay in a hospital situation is not only not the greatest situation for the hospital itself and the utilization of those beds, as the member points out, but it's also challenging for a family. So we want to ensure that we're working as diligently as we can and as well as we can to not only be providing as many options as we can, as we've spoken of before about supportive housing environments or supports for seniors in group living, but also doing what we can to build our complement of people being able to reside in personal care homes.

So, again, I appreciate the thoughtfulness with which the member cares for his constituents in this regard and will remain committed to work with the

region to ensure that the throughput of those families is expedited and that they're able to land in an environment that's appropriate for them.

**Mr. Dyck:** Well, thank you, Madam Acting Chair, and again, thank the minister for the answer, but it's a perfect segue into, of course, into Tabor Home, which I do have to ask, and again specific to that, with that facility it would help to take some of the pressure out of Boundary Trails.

So I'm just wondering if the minister could update the community as to where they are at with the replacement of Tabor Home facilities, the personal care home within the area. As I indicated, it would really assist the community in being able to take some of those 25 people awaiting placement in Boundary Trails, putting them into a facility that is specifically designed for personal care people, and just wondering if she would be able to respond to that.

I know as I've indicated previously, our personal care homes—and I know I've said that the length of stay that people have, for instance, in Salem, which is in Winkler, or Tabor in Morden, is of short duration. They're there approximately two years. So, you know, the turnover is rapid but we do need the facility. I'm just wondering if you could update me please.

**Ms. Oswald:** Again, I thank the member for the question and his continued advocacy. He knows I would be disappointed if he didn't ask me about this subject, and I say to him that, of course, the people that are working at Tabor Home, and the professionals and community members that have advocated for expansion are arguably among the best in the province. They care very deeply about this facility and we do want to work with them.

The member knows that, in the context of capital development and investments that we can be making, we do have a number of competing requests from all members of the House, not just members on that side, and we do know that we want to work with the region as best as we possibly can to see this project go forward. I know that the member has raised issues concerning safety and security, and we share those concerns and want to ensure that appropriate evaluations and improvements in that respect are made in a timely manner. So, again, we will continue this dialogue with the member opposite and work in the context of the budgetary environments in which we live, and we will continue to work with the

community to try to make that dream become a reality.

\* (16:10)

**Mr. Dyck:** I thank the minister for that answer, and I know as well that she's been out there and looked at the facilities and knows the need that's out there.

But I just wanted to add that the staff there, under the circumstances, are doing just a wonderful job and continue to care for the people in a wonderful way. So I just wanted to thank them for what they are doing as well.

I'm going to now turn it over to my colleague from Turtle Mountain.

**Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain):** There has been some considerable discussion about a new regional facility going up between Neepawa and Gladstone, and I'd just like to get the minister's perspective on that particular situation that's developing.

If that particular facility does come to fruition, I'm just wondering what the impacts could be on some of the existing facilities such as Carberry, and I guess Elkhorn might be impacted as well. So I'd just like to get the minister's perspective on her thoughts of that regional centre going forward and what implications that may have for some of the neighbouring and existing facilities and their ongoing operations into the future.

**Ms. Oswald:** Just as a point of clarification. The member is, of course, talking about the quite well-known proposal for the hospital in the middle of Minnedosa and Neepawa that is proposed to perhaps land in Franklin. That's the one you're talking about, of course?

**Mr. Cullen:** Yes, that's correct.

**Ms. Oswald:** Certainly, we have received a more formal proposal now and are currently reviewing it. Part of that review, of course, is exactly the nature of what the member is talking about and that means, should a new hospital be constructed, set between Minnedosa and Neepawa—a current proposal, as I've said, is in Franklin—what would be the best possible options for facilities that exist? Would facilities appropriately be transformed into long-term care environments? Would there be settings that might be more appropriate for a primary-care type of health centre? Would there be environments that would be appropriate for centres of excellence, sort of like what we see with rehab in Rivers? So those kinds of

discussions are under way in finding the best possible scenario as these evaluations are done.

We know that this is an exciting proposal that's come forward, really being championed by doctors in the area who have a very definite passion for seeing health care expanded and be even greater in rural Manitoba. They have been very articulate and powerful advocates for this project. I've had the privilege of meeting with some of them who, of course, had much to add in person to the dialogue, and we know that we need to take the item under very serious consideration and are committed to do that in partnership with the region.

But I can say to the member that the questions that he is raising now are certainly the kinds of things that are under review and discussion right now, and no final commitment or decision on any of the above has been reached at this time. But, if the member has some insights to offer on these subjects, we would be more than pleased to hear what he has to say about how we can work together to build and improve health care in his region.

**Mr. Cullen:** I appreciate the minister's response. I'm assuming now that you have a formal proposal that you're reviewing, you will be consulting with the respective RHAs in that area. I guess the question that the public will have is how long will it take for you to undertake this review process. I wonder if you could be specific in terms of a time when your review will be complete, so that you will be reporting back to the public.

**Ms. Oswald:** I can certainly commit to the member that discussions are already under way. We are not dragging our feet in seeking information. We know that the Assiniboine Regional Health Authority certainly sought the opinion of an external group of experts at Meyers Norris Penny to do some financial analysis, which has been shared with folks in the region. We're going to be paying close attention to that, as well.

We know that we have to be not only looking at a singular, capital, infrastructure investment and construction, we also have to be looking at the complement of health human resources as well and how best a facility, such as that, could be staffed and could be maintained.

So there are—as I know the member knows—a huge number of moving pieces to this particular project, potential project. Also, in the context—as I just said to his colleague, the Member for Pembina

(Mr. Dyck), that we also have to be looking very closely at our budgetary environment and competing interests, many of which, I should say, are very, very good ideas that have to be done in a thoughtful and planful way.

I'll say, quite frankly, to the member opposite that I cannot cite for him a specific date today on which these deliberations and discussions will be complete, but that we will endeavour to move as swiftly as we can in also doing our due diligence to make decisions about this project.

**Mr. Cullen:** Madam Acting Chair, I again appreciate the minister's response.

In looking at that particular facility, I wonder if the RHA has provided the minister with a larger perspective on the whole RHA, how this particular component might fit into the rest of the RHA and the existing facilities, basically on a broader scope.

We have a lot of facilities in that particular region. Basically, we're operating in a crisis-management mode there; we seem to be just running from one situation to the next, in terms of chronic shortages of doctors, nurses and lab and X-ray technicians.

So I'm wondering if the RHA is part of these discussions with the minister, looking at the broader terms in how these facilities can be managed and how we can get better use out of the facilities and the staff.

Just so the minister is aware, a number of the MLAs from the western side of the province met with the senior management of the RHA last fall. The indication from the senior management was that there was very little active planning for the future going on within the RHA. That was quite disturbing for us. We felt that there should be some ongoing discussions with the public to see how these facilities could be better utilized, how the public could be better served and how the resources could be better utilized in that area.

So I'm just trying to get a sense from the minister if there's a broader discussion going on within that particular region.

**Ms. Oswald:** We continue to have ongoing discussions with all the regions on a regular basis and, certainly, the Assiniboine Regional Health Authority would be no different from that.

We do know that there are some unique challenges that exist in the ARHA in the context of

numbers of facilities. They have a rather unique complement of facilities for population; that is true. I certainly don't disagree with the member that the challenges that exist for the recruitment and retention of health human resources are greater in rural regions than they are in urban centres, but, in fact, we know that, when it comes to competing for doctors and nurses and other health-care professionals it's a national competition and an international competition.

\* (16:20)

We know that we have to be working very closely with not only the ARHA, but all regions to ensure that patient safety is a priority and that we continue to have discussions with them concerning vacancies of nurses, concerning the desire to attract more doctors. Of course, we have short-term, medium and longer-range discussions about planning, whether it's about bringing emergency medical services and educational programs for paramedics, as we announced some months ago for the first time in Manitoba, to be sited not only in Winnipeg but in rural Manitoba, where needs are even greater for EMS staff, whether it concerns providing education for technologists or education for nurses. We want to be expanding into regions, whether it pertains to how best to build a centre of excellence, as would be the case for rehab in Rivers.

So we are in planning and development conversations and meetings with the regional health authority all the time. I know the member is also aware that we're very interested in what the health advocacy groups such as the one from Killarney that the member opposite facilitated a meeting—this is a bad sentence that I'm not ending. He helped us have a meeting between the Killarney group and our office, which was a very thoughtful meeting talking about planning and improving and how we can work together.

So the answer is yes. We're in discussions about looking at plans to improve care in the region and, as the member so rightly cites, the recruitment and retention of health-care resources is the No. 1 challenge that we speak of most often.

**Mr. Cullen:** Certainly, retaining and recruiting the staff is a huge issue for us, and I do thank the minister for taking the time to meet with the group from Killarney. They certainly raised some concerns they had with staff issues there and it leads me to a question. Does the minister have a record of the number of nurses that are currently working in

administration? I guess what I'd like to have is a perspective of where we were 10 or 15 years ago in terms of the number of nurses working in administration versus kind of the front-line workers, just to see where we've evolved over the last 10 to 15 years.

I think it might be interesting to have a look at that because that, certainly, from the public's perspective, is quite a concern that we're hiring more nurses but a lot of them are moving into the administration side of things so we're not dealing with the public on the front line. So, if the minister has some kind of information in that regard, I think it would be very beneficial.

The other issue that's coming forward with communities is actually the competition. I recognize that we are in competition with other countries and other provinces, but now we have a situation where communities are involved in competitions for individuals. As a result of that, some communities who have funds set aside or have great foundations are able to pay, you know, fairly substantial bonuses for staff. Other communities maybe aren't so lucky to have those resources available, so what we're finding is a real competition there between our local communities. I'm not sure that's where we want to go or where the government wants to go, and I'd appreciate the minister's comments on that situation that's developing.

**Ms. Oswald:** I thank the member for the questions. First of all, concerning transition of nurses in their professional careers from being front-line nurses to taking administrative positions, at my fingertips I can tell the member I don't have that statistical analysis and will endeavour to seek it out. I can say that, of course, our commitment in educating and recruiting nurses has been to bring nurses to front-line care. We know that we want to provide as many opportunities as we are able for nurses to be trained in a variety of environments so that we have a nice broad spectrum of professionals providing care at the bedside. We want to ensure, on the recruitment front, that we are recruiting aggressively nurses that are going to be providing that care on the front line. We know, in addition to working to ensure that nurses are compensated in a competitive way on a national stage, that we also want to make sure that we have our nursing recruitment and retention fund in place to provide opportunities for our nurses to expand their education, for nurses to relocate and for Manitoba Health to support them in that regard.

One thing that the member may or may not know, which was somewhat interesting actually, is when the recent external review of regional health authorities was completed, one of the statements that was made in it—it was more than a statement; it was a criticism, really, of government—that we had, in fact, endeavoured to take out too many managerial positions, administrative positions, if you will, and that it was causing pressure in the system. The recommendation was actually to increase that administrative support and this, of course, would, as the member cites, perhaps ring a pretty false note with the Manitoba public when it's being recommended to us to increase the bureaucracy, if you will. I think that the right answer, if I may say humbly, is probably somewhere in the middle, where people that are in leadership roles in our health-care facilities can have some more help and some of that pressure can be relieved, while always maintaining a full focus on developing the complement of human resources to be at the bedside where our Manitoba families need their help the most.

Concerning the second part of the member's question, and I may have touched on it somewhat, about communities choosing to offer incentive to health-care professionals, as I've said before, we do live in a very competitive environment nationally and internationally. We know that while we are committed to see the remuneration for our doctors and nurses and other health-care professionals be a very competitive one nationwide, we know that municipalities have endeavoured to, you know, whether it's—I'm trying to think of the name of the—what some of the Chambers of Commerce have done—chamber bucks or other kinds of incentives. The municipalities are engaging in this kind of competition, which on one level works, on another level does not work. We know that there are collective agreement issues with nurses, for example, that would preclude government from offering any incentives outside of that agreement. We need to be cautious about that. What our goal needs to be is to be increasing those numbers so that municipalities don't have to compete so aggressively with one another. We need to continue to make rural environments attractive places to work by bringing diagnostic equipment, for example, outside the city of Winnipeg, by bringing technology outside the city of Winnipeg, so that these are vibrant and attractive places to work for health-care professionals. Certainly, that's what we're committed to do.

\* (16:30)

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Madam Acting Chair, can the Minister of Health tell us how long she has known that the breast cancer mortality rate in Manitoba is the highest of all Canadian provinces?

**Ms. Oswald:** Madam Acting Chair, certainly there's no question in conversations with the Canadian Cancer Society and in conversations with our partners at CancerCare Manitoba that, when it comes to increasing rates in Manitoba of cancer or working diligently to, as Dr. Dhaliwal would say, lessen the burden of cancer on Manitoba patients, we are in conversations all the time with rates and statistics and what we can be doing, more importantly, to ensure that we are doing the best possible job with our partners in providing opportunities for Manitoba women and men to be able to take this battle head on, if they're in it, or, more importantly perhaps, prevent it from occurring in the first place. It's why we have received good advice from the experts that led us to our announcement yesterday and earlier this fall to be investing in more screening here in Manitoba to ensure that individuals that exist in that important target population have access to those screens and to timely care after that.

I note with interest that Stats Canada, I think, released a report today called *Cancer Survival Statistics*, wherein it talks about survival rates of people that have been diagnosed with cancer and treated with cancer. These are people that were diagnosed a decade ago. I don't have the study in front of me, but as I understand from my notes, and treated and measured over time for survival rates, we see in fact Manitoba as having the highest survival rate, slightly over the national average. Now this is very positive, of course. We like to be in a position here in Manitoba where we can rank in any category that's positive when it comes to beating cancer. But we also know there is much more work to be done, whether it's a mortality rate, whether it's improving access to screening.

I know the member shares the concern, my concerns and the concerns of many Manitobans that we work to ensure that we provide the best possible care for women and men living and battling cancer here in Manitoba.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Certainly, the mortality rates that have just come out are the highest of all the provinces in Canada, and that is very, very disconcerting to me and I'm sure to a lot of other women. What I would like to ask the minister is,

knowing that the mortality rates are the worst in the country, why didn't the minister add more breast screenings to the budget last year when the budget was brought down? I believe, if I'm correct, that only 2,500 screenings were added.

The research is pretty definitive that says breast screenings will save lives and bring down mortality rates. Considering that we have the highest mortality rate in the country, why didn't the minister fund a year ago more breast screenings instead of waiting to make a grand announcement on the eve of a world conference? Why didn't she announce those 10,000 screenings a year ago in the budget?

**Ms. Oswald:** Madam Acting Chair, I can say that I know, in conversations with our medical experts at CancerCare Manitoba and taking good advice from people with the Canadian Cancer Society and continuing to work on our cancer strategy, our Manitoba framework for which we have been supported enthusiastically by people who work very diligently every day with people living with cancer—we want to make sure that we are broadening our services across the spectrum.

I know that the member opposite is acutely aware that everything that we can be doing on the healthy-living side is so important. It's not something that appears statistically in a very rapid way. We don't see the results as quickly as some other things that we can measure in health care. Yet that doesn't mean that we shouldn't be investing in issues across the spectrum, like promoting improved nutrition, active living and smoking cessation. We know that we will see the benefits of that as a society.

Secondly, I know that the member opposite is also very aware that, when we talk about a single death as a result of cancer here in Manitoba, that is the most important statistic to any given family, the loss of their loved one. They can equally as passionately advocate for more supports to be brought forward for that particular kind of cancer.

I know that the member opposite and I have had a conversation concerning one of her own constituents, or the constituent of the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson)—I can't remember specifically—concerning the loss of a loved one on colorectal cancer. It was part and parcel to that discussion, research and recommendations from the experts at CancerCare Manitoba that we were able to make investments and go forward on phase 1 of colorectal cancer screening.

I know that the member opposite is also aware that, within the context of continuing to increase availability of beds for radiation, continuing to improve access to drugs, continuing to do what we did yesterday—I don't think that the member opposite, at least I hope I'm not hearing her criticize government for taking the opportunity, when the eyes of the world are on Manitoba and Winnipeg for this conference, taking the opportunity to announce the availability of more screens.

I'm certain that, as a nurse, the member opposite is aware that one of the single greatest challenges is public awareness. Having an opportunity to be able to have these discussions and to augment the number of screens that we'll be doing by 10,000, which Dr. Dhaliwal cited yesterday, was setting the stage for Manitoba, in fact, being No. 1 in Canada for breast health, bringing us up to and, perhaps, even over that 70 percent benchmark, a benchmark that no other jurisdiction in Canada is reaching as of yet.

We know there are other provinces that are ahead of us now but, of course, it would be irresponsible, I believe, if we didn't use this opportunity where public awareness here in Manitoba will be at its highest, perhaps more so than all year long, to make an announcement that talks about augmenting that screening and other resources, such as patient navigation, which is so important not only to the individual battling cancer but to their families.

We know that, across the continuum, within the context of a cancer strategy, we need to be building our resources on all fronts, together with our partners.

**Mrs. Driedger:** I agree with the minister that it is critically important that everybody take every advantage right now, on the eve of a world conference on breast cancer, to certainly get out there and do what is necessary; public education is a big part of it.

\* (16:40)

I am, however, very critical of the government that they did not make that announcement of 10,000 screens a year ago in their budget and, instead, seem to have scaled back that announcement to only 2,500 when, in fact, CancerCare in 2005 was asking this government to do 8,000 more per year, but this government would not fund it. In 2005 this Minister of Health would have known that more screens were needed, and with more screenings we could improve

our mortality rates in Manitoba. They didn't do anything with this information in 2005 after CancerCare did their community assessment. They wanted the mortality rates brought down, and they asked the government to fund 8,000 more screenings.

So I want to ask this Minister of Health, because I am very concerned and I am cynical right now, about this big announcement right now that should have happened sounds like somewhere within the last three years, when now the Canadian Cancer Society had to come out and write a letter begging this government and challenging this government to increase the number of screenings and also to put forward a breast health strategy.

I want to ask the minister, because this government would have known in 2005 that our mortality rates were going up and she wasn't doing enough screening: Why did she ignore CancerCare at that time, when that was part of what they were already saying was needed then? This government had three years and the big announcement only came at the end of three years and on the eve of a big conference. Why did they ignore all of the evidence and the requests for more breast screening back then? Because we know that will save lives.

**Ms. Oswald:** Of course, we don't ignore the advice that we get from experts in the field. We don't ignore the voices of women in Manitoba that are breast cancer thrivers and survivors. We don't ignore the voices of husbands that come to speak to us because they've lost a loved one. The member opposite, I think, is quite unfairly characterizing government and its commitment to cancer and battling cancer on a number of fronts in an unfair way, if I can say respectfully.

We know that we have made a commitment to increase the number of screenings, which Dr. Dhaliwal says, not me, Dr. Dhaliwal says it will bring us to set the stage for Manitoba being No. 1 for breast health in Canada. We haven't been sitting on our hands since 2005. We haven't been sitting on our hands since 1999 when it comes to working with families and with people that are living with cancer.

The member opposite is acutely aware that when we came into office in 1999, we know that immediately it became clear that the wait time for cancer radiation therapy was dangerously long. While politically unpopular, to say that we were going to pull up stakes and send people out of the province to get their radiation therapy, that's what happened nearly immediately. The member opposite

knows that today we don't have to do that anymore. We have the lowest wait time for radiation therapy in the nation. That is a fairly dramatic and profound change from the state of affairs that existed a decade ago.

The member is also aware that, over the course of our time in government, we've worked very hard to ensure that we bolster our cancer strategy and screening programs on a number of fronts. We know that we were the second jurisdiction in Canada to announce a colorectal cancer screening program, first to get it on the ground. We know that we were the first province to implement a prostate cancer awareness campaign. We know that since the Manitoba cervical cancer screening program was launched in October of 2001, we've had a 60 percent uptake. Concrete, preventative, life-saving action of over 500,000 women.

We know that, though, it was politically unpopular, but, together with the leadership, I might say, of the member opposite, Denis Rocan, we embarked on a journey of implementing a smoking ban in Manitoba. These were not jolly times for politicians, but we know that today, as a result, we are seeing fewer Manitobans smoking. There isn't a doctor in Manitoba that will not tell you that this is a good thing when it comes to issues of dealing with cancer.

We know that we've worked very diligently to ensure that we bring state-of-the-art technology; first in Canada to have the Gamma Knife. We're going to be the first to have the Cyber Knife or the Artiste, which is actually the Cadillac model of the Cyber Knife.

We know that we've worked very hard to ensure that we've increased oncologist positions at CancerCare Manitoba from 37 to 43. We know that the Cancer Advocacy Coalition most recent report card shows that Manitoba publicly funds the third-most cancer drugs of all the provinces.

These are fairly substantial investments, Madam Acting Chair, and while I will concur with the member that the more screening that we can do, the better off that we're going to be, to characterize that we have been ignoring cancer or our commitment to cancer is wholly unfair and I think improper.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** I have several questions so maybe, given the time, if ministers could be fairly brief if possible.

My first is to the Minister of Competitiveness (Mr. Swan). I received word recently that at the Elie Dow Chemical plant, that the equipment there, which is fairly expensive and is being prepared for shipment to South America—I know that the predecessor of the minister had indicated that he was looking at measures that could be taken to make sure that the taxpayers' interests were protected and that the equipment would stay here for opportunities here.

Can the minister provide an update?

**Mr. Swan:** Yes, I thank the Member for River Heights for that question.

I'm not aware of discussions within my own department about the choice that may be going on at the Dow Chemical plant in Elie. I don't have any knowledge that my department has had any role in that.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Well, I would hope that the minister will look into that because I understand that this action, if it were taken, would have to be taken fairly urgently.

My question to the Minister of Health is just for a brief summary update of the provincial approach, plan, strategy, with regard to two important diseases: diabetes and renal disease.

\* (16:50)

**Ms. Oswald:** I thank the member for the question.

Certainly, the member, not only in his current profession, but his previous one—or he probably has them at the same time, technically—is very aware that ensuring that we're working with our partners in the regional health authorities, with doctors in family practice and, arguably, with professionals outside of health care, like teachers in a classroom, we need to be ensuring that we are hearing their voices and doing all that we can on the prevention front for chronic disease such as diabetes. Also, working diligently to be making investments and improving what we can be doing on the treatment side.

I know that when we look at the Manitoba population, that we have a fairly good account that the Aboriginal population is disproportionately affected by diabetes. If we ever want to get into a discussion about gaps in health care, really, this is one of the No. 1 places that we need to begin, is by

talking about how we can be working together, not only within the context of our government, but in partnership with the federal government to be doing everything that we can.

We know that a regional diabetes program framework released by Manitoba Health in 2002, provides an opportunity to implement 29 of 53 recommendations. Implementation of the 24 recommendations coming out of Diabetes Strategy is ongoing with a variety of our stakeholders, including, of course, the RHAs who have a very important leadership role and a voice to put forward on this subject.

We've also been working collaboratively with the federal government and Aboriginal groups to be addressing diabetes on a number of fronts, including the Manitoba First Nations patient wait-time guarantee, to establish and implement a wait-time guarantee for the prevention and treatment and care of diabetic foot ulcers in Manitoba First Nations communities.

There's also an intergovernmental committee on First Nations' health, chronic disease and diabetes, an action plan involving the identification of specific priorities in addressing diabetes and chronic disease, broadly, by building on programs that exist and creating more at a grass-roots level.

The diabetes integration project helps improve the way that First Nations people in Manitoba are receiving diabetes care and treatment. Of course, we know that Manitoba has served as a leader in the area of the renal disease prevention project in the Island Lake communities.

While we have been in the context, recently, of conversations about Jordan's Principle, and about the inability of governments to come together to solve problems when it comes to health care, I think when we look at dialysis in that region, we can see that it can actually be done. Governments can come together and can work through issues of jurisdiction, of planning, of capital construction, to ensure that health care can be brought to communities that have not previously had such access.

I also know that the member is aware that one of the most important things that we've been able to engage in, in partnership with the federal government, is the Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative, a community-led, grassroots-level kind of

partnership that enabled communities to really take ownership and take command for their own health, and the health of their communities, knowing that a one-size-fits-all kind of framework for prevention is not the way to go in Manitoba and probably not in any jurisdiction that I can think of right now, but letting communities take leadership and use supportive funds to develop programs that might concern healthy eating or might concern smoking cessation or increasing physical activity. This has been one of the important projects that we have engaged in together.

But, concerning working with our folks in regional health authorities in developing dialysis across Manitoba, our commitment, of course, has been very robust in this area. We will continue to make those investments, not only of the capital kind, but in building our complement of health human resources as well.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I know the minister is aware that I've been concerned about bone and joint health. I would ask the provincial approach to, in particular, shoulder, elbow, ankle, wrist health and surgeries that are needed, who has the overall responsibility for making sure that things work provincially?

Is the minister looking at setting standards for how these conditions are treated?

**Ms. Oswald:** The member and I have had this conversation a couple of times and I appreciate his continuing contribution to the dialogue.

We know that, when we came into government, we made, as a priority, taking on the challenge of reducing wait times for life-threatening illnesses, such as cancer and cardiac care. I've spent some time in the last few minutes, speaking about cancer.

We also know that we are very strong across the nation when it comes to timely access to cardiac surgery as well. That was a priority of government and, of course, continues to be. We've seen some very significant improvements in that area.

On the direction of first ministers, of course, we continued on with working very hard to ensure that those quality-of-life surgeries, surgeries like hip and knee, could be accessed in a more timely fashion. In partnership with the federal government and in accessing monies that were brought forward for the

federal wait times projects in the big five, we know that we have seen very significant movement of bringing down wait times in those areas identified by the first ministers when they discussed that accord.

There certainly was a fair bit of debate at the time that those priorities were identified, that there would be other surgeries—doctors and health-care professionals suggested, I think they called them Cinderella surgeries, people that would not be invited to the ball—and, therefore, that wait times would increase.

While we have seen in some jurisdictions in Canada this become more of a problem than in others, we do know that, in Manitoba, we are seeing more of a challenge in some particular areas with the loss of a specialist. I can think of, in particular, foot and ankle surgery. We have been successful in recruitment in that regard. The member points out that shoulder surgery may, in fact, fall into that particular category as well.

We know that the responsibility of monitoring wait times and aggressively working to bring wait times down certainly falls not only in regional health authorities, in particular the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, but also in partnership with our wait-times task force and the expert leadership that exists with Dr. Luis Oppenheimer who has worked very expertly to provide guidance not only in ensuring that the system is reformed, like we've seen happen at Concordia Hospital with the two-operating-room model and the utilization of clinical assistance, but also what we've been able to see, if I can say humbly, a change in doctor behaviour in terms of how they relate to their own wait list and how they centralize and share a wait list.

**The Acting Chairperson (Ms. Brick):** Order. Given that the Official Opposition House Leader (Mr. Hawranik) has tabled a list, indicating that the minister to be present for concurrence on June 5 is the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Mackintosh), it is necessary to confirm on the record whether the questioning of the ministers of Finance, Health and Competitiveness, Training and Trade is now concluded.

**Mr. Gerrard:** All, but the Minister of Health.

**The Acting Chairperson (Ms. Brick):** Is that agreed that we are finished with the Minister of

Finance and the Minister of Competitiveness, Training and Trade? *[Agreed]*

We will then have the Minister of Health and the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Mackintosh) and, I guess, one other minister yet to be named. Thank you.

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

**IN SESSION**

**Mr. Speaker:** The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

**Wednesday, June 4, 2008**

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