

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

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**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.
JENNISSSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
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SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.
<i>Vacant</i>	Elmwood	
<i>Vacant</i>	The Pas	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, December 3, 2008

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

### PRAYER

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### Bill 226—The Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day Act

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa):** I, seconded by the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson), that Bill 226, The Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day Act, be now read for a first time.

#### *Motion presented.*

**Mrs. Rowat:** Bill 226 is in recognition of a memorial day or remembrance day for families who have lost an infant through miscarriage, stillbirth, or at the time of birth or shortly thereafter. Each year, in Manitoba, many families experience the heartbreaking loss of an infant, and during this time of grief families require support, understanding, and, in many cases, financial means to assume funeral costs for their child.

Building awareness within the greater community of the challenges faced by these families is a positive and proactive means of establishing support and understanding within the community, so this bill is asking for government support within this Legislature to support the Infant Loss Awareness Day to be recognized on October 15 of each year. I encourage all members of this House to support this bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Bill 7—The Food Safety and Related Amendments Act

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy (Ms. McGifford), that Bill 7, The Food Safety and Related Amendments Act, be now read for a first time.

#### *Motion presented.*

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Speaker, recent events have underscored the need to work continually to

strengthen Manitobans' food safety system. The Food Safety and Related Amendments Act is an important part of this work. It will provide necessary authority for Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives to work with its provincial partners, its federal counterparts and the industry to ensure the safety of food.

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

### PETITIONS

#### Increased School Facilities—Garden Valley School Division

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

These are the reasons for this petition.

The student enrolment in Garden Valley School Division has risen steadily for the last 10 years.

Since 2005, the enrolment has risen by more than 700 students, from 3,361 students to 4,079 students, a 21 percent increase.

Since September 2007, the enrolment has increased by 325 students, an 8.7 percent increase.

Currently, 1,050 students, or 26 percent, are in 42 portable classrooms without adequate access to bathrooms.

There are 1,210 students in a high school built for 750 students; 375 students are located in 15 portables without adequate access to bathrooms.

Projected enrolment increases based on immigration through the Provincial Nominee Program reveals the school division enrolment will double in the next 12 years.

Student safety, school security, reasonable access to bathrooms and diminished student learning are concerns that need immediate attention.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth (Mr. Bjornson) to consider providing the necessary school facilities to Garden Valley School Division.

To urge the Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth to consider providing the Garden Valley School Division an immediate date as to when to expect the necessary school facilities.

This is signed by Gerald Neufeld, Bev Neufeld, Elma Neufeld 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.

#### **Manitoba Liquor Control Commission— Liquor Licence Fees**

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for the petition:

The Manitoba Liquor Control Commission has substantially raised the cost of annual liquor licences for restaurants, cocktail lounges and other Manitoba businesses.

The MLCC justifies this increase by stating that the cost of an annual licence is being increased to better reflect rising administration costs.

For some small-business owners, the cost of an annual liquor licence has more than doubled. These fee hikes are a significant burden for the business owners.

The decision to increase the annual fee, while at the same time eliminating the 2 percent supplementary licence fee payable on purchases of spirits, wines and coolers, has the effect of greatly disadvantaging smaller businesses. Small businesses which do not purchase liquor from the MLCC in large volumes will not receive the same benefit from the elimination of this supplementary fee. Instead, they are facing substantially increased costs simply to keep their doors open.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister responsible for the administration of The Liquor Control Act (Mr. Swan) to consider working with MLCC to find alternative means of addressing rising administrative costs.

To request the Minister responsible for the administration of The Liquor Control Act to consider working with MLCC to revise the decision to implement a significant annual licence fee increase.

To urge the Minister responsible for the administration of The Liquor Control Act to consider ensuring that the unique challenges faced by small businesses are better taken into account in the future.

This petition is signed by Daswell McLeod, Kevin Sangster, P. Sholdice and many, many more Manitobans.

\* (13:40)

#### **Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day**

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition.

Each year in Manitoba, many families experience the heartbreaking loss of an infant through miscarriage, at the time of birth, or shortly thereafter.

During this time of grief, families require support, understanding, and in many cases, the financial means to assume funeral and monument costs for their child. Unfortunately, the cost of a funeral for an infant that has never left the hospital is usually not covered by private insurance plans.

Affording these children a dignified burial can help parents and family members work through their grief. Heaven's Little Angels, a registered charity based in Winnipeg, exists to help eligible families fund funeral and monument costs for the infant they have lost.

Building awareness within the greater community of the challenges faced by these families is a positive and proactive means of establishing support and understanding within the community. Each of the 50 U.S. states commemorates Infant Loss Awareness Day annually on October 15.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To encourage the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Mackintosh) to consider establishing Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day in Manitoba in order to increase awareness, support and understanding of the difficulties faced by families who have lost an infant.

This petition is signed by Frank Lionetti, Wayne Dare, Marlene Scouten and many, many other Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

### Community Police Offices

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

The background to the petition is as follows:

In the 2007 provincial election, the NDP clearly stated that making communities safer was a priority.

The NDP government did nothing to prevent the McPhillips Street Community Police Office and other offices from closing.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Premier of Manitoba (Mr. Doer) to consider the important role that community police offices can play in making our communities safer.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by C. Raill, M. Raill, J. Raill and many, many other fine Manitobans.

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Mr. Speaker:** I am pleased to table in the House the Auditor General's Report to the Legislative Assembly on Audits of Government Operations in accordance with the provisions of section 28(1) of The Auditor General Act.

**Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Healthy Living):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table on behalf of the Minister of Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sport (Mr. Robinson), the Annual Report for '07-08 of the Manitoba Arts Council.

As well, I will table the Venture Manitoba Tours Ltd. Falcon Lake Golf Course Annual Report 2007-2008.

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to oral questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us from Red River College Language Training Centre 10 adult English as a Second Language students under the direction of Ms. Sandra Schonwetter. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard).

Also seated in the public gallery we have from Elmdale School 50 grade 4 students under the direction of Mr. Cory Dyck. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen).

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

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Federal Coalition Government

#### Government Response

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Yesterday, Jacques Parizeau said that the deal between the NDP, the Liberals and the Bloc Québécois to form a coalition to destabilize the Government of Canada in the middle of an economic crisis brings a smile to the face of many sovereigntists.

What is the position of the Premier of Manitoba on this deal?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, the question is interesting. The bottom line is that we are dealing with the Prime Minister of Canada, Prime Minister Harper. He is the sworn Prime Minister of Canada. We deal government to government, not columnist to columnist or pundit to pundit or backroom boy to backroom boy, as the member, you know, his past career. We deal government to government and we will continue to do that.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is the Prime Minister has just recently invited—in fact, I think today—premiers to a meeting in Ottawa in early '09 to deal with the economic challenges of Canada. We have asked him in the past and we are pleased that he is going to have Aboriginal education and economic opportunities on that agenda. We think that's very, very positive. There are issues such as internal trade that we're very positive about. There are ideas dealing with labour mobility, which we've made a lot of progress in this country on.

I'm going to continue to work government to government. There are lots of columnists, lots of ex-politicians, there are thousands of people around commenting. We will continue to deal in a mature way, government to government, as we've been elected to do, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. McFadyen:** I'm not sure whether the Premier had the time this morning to read the newspaper. He may not know, from his answer, that there's a movement afoot in Ottawa of a proposed coalition between Bloc, Liberal and NDP MPs which is coming to a vote four days from now to topple the government in the middle of an economic crisis and to replace it with a coalition that includes separatists,

a coalition that brings a smile to the face of sovereigntists according to Jacques Parizeau.

Premiers across the country are lining up and speaking, Mr. Speaker, taking positions. What is the position of the Premier of Manitoba in the middle of this important crisis? What's the Premier's position on the NDP-Liberal-separatist coalition that is at this very moment working to destabilize the Government of Canada?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I would caution people to be very knowledgeable about the fact that on Monday indeed there is a very important vote. It's the vote in the Québec provincial election, and I would remind members in this Chamber that anytime a government that is separatist-leaning gets elected in Québec, it sometimes precipitates referendums which are very divisive in this country.

Obviously, the people in Manitoba are not voting in the—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The honourable First Minister.

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, we certainly would want the people of Québec to maintain a federalist government in that vote next Monday.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Only 50 days ago there was an election in Canada, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if the Premier caught it, but in that election 38 percent of people in Québec voted for the Bloc Québécois. Mr. Speaker, 100 percent of Manitobans voted for federalist parties, parties committed to keeping Canada united.

Two of those parties have betrayed those voters. Which side is the Premier on?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, I'm a federalist.

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

**Mr. McFadyen:** What is the Premier's position on the coalition today that is proposing to topple the Government of Canada in order to replace it with a group of parties that Jacques Parizeau says—*[interjection]* Mr. Speaker, Jacques Parizeau who said, and I quote: A weaker government in Ottawa is eminently satisfying. The image must be one of a weak, disoriented government which will become weaker and more disoriented in the future. This is perfect.

Mr. Speaker, he wasn't talking about this Premier. He was talking about his desire for the Government of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, Jacques Parizeau endorsed the coalition. He said it brings a smile to his face. What is the position of the Premier of Manitoba? Every western premier has taken a position strongly in the last 24 hours. What is the position of the Premier of Manitoba?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I was the first Premier in Canada that last Friday—because this House was sitting and question period has media at the end of the question period asking questions, as they should—said I think all four leaders in Ottawa should work together to get a common consensus on how to proceed and move forward.

The bottom line is we work government to government. We're working with and we'll continue to work with Prime Minister Harper. If any members across the way know what's going to happen one day to the next in Ottawa, they should go into another business. Maybe they should be a banker or something else on the stock market.

\* (13:50)

But, Mr. Speaker, there are some premiers who have said have the vote and have predictability early. There are some premiers who have said, cool off and wait until January. There are some premiers like myself who have said all four leaders have got to work together for the benefit of Canada.

Different people have had different views, but the one constant is that most premiers, especially those who have dealt with previous prime ministers, as I have—I'm dealing with a third Prime Minister from different political parties. Some of the prime ministers actually had their own rivalries between each other from the same political party. I've learned a long time ago that when you're representing the people of Manitoba, you represent all the people of Manitoba. You represent all the many people of Manitoba. When the—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, because of the constitutionality of separation, we obviously—I took a different position than my party, national party, on the Clarity Act. I had a public disagreement with a person actually who I nominated at the NDP convention, Alexa McDonough. That's what politics is all about. Members opposite, you know, about two years ago had a leader; they decided to change the leader. That's not our responsibility. If they want to

change their leader in between election campaigns, that's their right to do that. We might try to stir that a little bit, but you know what? That's the responsibility of members opposite. So there's lots of these, you know—[*interjection*] Well, the former Progressive Conservative member has his views on this as well.

Mr. Speaker, I stand for the people of Manitoba. I will be attending the First Ministers' meeting in Ottawa in January, as invited by the Prime Minister. I am pleased that we're going to be discussing—[*interjection*] The Aboriginal critic is again heckling from her seat without being accountable. I would point out—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** The same members before wanted me to rant and rave against Jean Chrétien for not supporting the United States and Britain in the war in Iraq. You know, Mr. Speaker, we kept cool about it. We didn't get baited by members opposite because we know that it's government to government. The Premier of this province deals with the sworn in Prime Minister of Canada government to government, whether it's the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, which we discussed with three prime ministers, whether it's the floodway, which we discussed with three prime ministers, whether it's infrastructure.

We deal with the Prime Minister that's sworn in and we will continue to do that government to government, people to people on behalf of Manitobans.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, I don't know if the Premier got a briefing this morning. If he didn't, he will not know that part of the deal with the separatists is a minimum of half a billion dollars in new spending in connection with the deal with the Bloc Québécois. This will represent a fundamental transformation in the balance of power in Canada, giving a veto to a separatist party in Québec with an agenda to destroy our country, Canada, and the Premier of Manitoba doesn't have a position. The Premier of Manitoba, as he said on CJOB yesterday, said I'm not paid to have an opinion.

This is what he said yesterday on CJOB, that the Premier of Manitoba isn't paid to have an opinion on the unity of Canada. Then what are the people of Manitoba paying him for, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, Mr. Speaker—

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

**Mr. Doer:** Well, we see this great unified team that dumped their former leader having a standing ovation for this leader.

Mr. Speaker, I would point out—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I think we have a lot of guests here that are here to hear the questions and the answers. It's pretty hard to hear. I'm asking the co-operation here. The honourable First Minister has the floor.

**Mr. Doer:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There is only one Prime Minister in Canada, and there is only one economic statement before the House of Commons. There is an economic statement that is contained within a Speech from the Throne that was passed in this Legislature. It was opposed by, dare I say it, the coalition of the Conservatives and Liberals in this House. That's democracy. They choose to vote together most of the time. I don't lay awake at night or stay awake at night thinking about conspiracy theories.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is there is a very important vote for Canada on Monday night. In the past, when a government that doesn't support Canada is elected in the province of Québec, and I know people are forgetting about that, but when they're elected in the province of Québec, often a referendum follows which is very divisive for this country. We have obvious interests in maintaining a federalist government in the province of Québec, but we don't have any say on how the people of Québec are going to vote. They will decide what's in their best interests in the province of Québec.

Similarly, Mr. Speaker, in an issue of minority government, I've dealt with Premier Filmon before in a minority government. It is important for the House, the Legislature or the Parliament, to pass the money bills. Those are issues of confidence. Every time we have a money motion we tell our caucus, even if we have a majority passed by the people of Manitoba, if we're not here to vote and we lose a money motion there will be an election. That's what actually happens after a year or so in terms of a government.

So, Mr. Speaker, I don't know and can't predict. The member opposite seems to be able to predict what's going to happen in the House of Commons. I understand there are rumours about proroguing the

House. There are rumours about dealing with the Governor General. I don't know what the advice is going to be to the Governor General. The member doesn't know what the advice is going to be to the Governor General.

All I know is I'm not a surrogate of any political party. I am the Premier of Manitoba. He should be the Leader of the Opposition for all Manitobans, and we should represent government to government the best interests of all the people of this province, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, all 100 percent of Manitobans who voted 50 days ago voted for federalist parties who weren't interested in a coalition with separatists.

Mr. Speaker, in 1989 and 1990 during the Meech Lake debate, the then-Leader of the NDP said, and I quote: Provincial political leaders cannot afford to remain neutral when there are major national issues that affect the province of Manitoba.

What has happened over the past 19 years that has caused him to abandon the position of principle that he took during the Meech Lake debate in the late 1980s?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, as a person that was here—and I understand the member opposite is a lawyer. The issue of the Meech Lake proposal and constitutional amendment required unanimous consent from every Legislature in Canada. It, therefore, required a vote in this Legislature, as it did in the Senate of the House of Parliament, the Senate in Ottawa, and the House of Commons.

Mr. Speaker, also, when the Meech Lake Accord was amended or proposed to be amended with the Frank McKenna then-initiative to Prime Minister Mulroney, it also required—the amendments required a vote in this Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, that is the way I believe minority governments should work. At that time, Mrs. Carstairs, Premier Filmon and I worked together as one team in these tough difficult economic times. We don't need three leaders working one way and one leader working another way. We need all four leaders in Ottawa to work together. That's what I recommended on Friday. That's what I'm recommending right now, and that's what we should do in the Parliament. We should work like we did in Manitoba, all leaders together on behalf of the people we represent.

I'm hoping Parliament can do that, all four leaders work together, not leaders fighting each other in the House of Commons every hour, every day, Mr. Speaker.

\* (14:00)

### Government Support for Petition

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

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** That's the first statement the Premier's made today that I agree with.

We're bringing a resolution forward this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, that calls on all members of this House to stand united against the NDP-Liberal-separatist coalition in Ottawa, to use our influence.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will be seeking leave to bring forward a motion that calls for the unanimous voice of Manitoba legislators from all parties to work together to send the message to Ottawa, and the message is this: No, to a separatist coalition. Yes, to having the NDP, the Liberals and the Conservatives sit down in front of the Canadian flag to work out a new arrangement for the economy of Canada.

Will they support it?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** I note the members opposite didn't bring a motion forward in the House years ago when there was a motion to defeat, in the House of Commons, an NDP-Conservative-Bloc motion to defeat the Martin government which affected Kelowna and child care and Kyoto. They didn't move a motion then. They weren't all steamed up then.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that is being dealt with in the House of Commons and ultimately it appears to be dealt with by the Governor General.

I would also point out, Mr. Speaker, that they have one motion in the House. They have an opposition motion in the House on the economy. They actually put that on the Order Paper, and they now want to pre-empt their own motion on the economy with—it's not a motion, by the way. It's not

on the Order Paper. It's something they're going to ask for by leave.

And, Mr. Speaker, we will debate the economy as put on the Order Paper by the members opposite. That is appropriate. You know, there might be a motion tomorrow about what the Governor General may or may not say about proroguing the House, and there might be a motion about when the budget might be presented, or none of this stuff may happen in the House of Commons.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite said at the KAP meeting—I might say quite rudely and immaturely—he started talking about the three-ring circus in Ottawa. Well, I can tell you one thing. We will have that three-ring circus stay in Ottawa. We're going to debate the issues for Manitoba and not bring the circus to this Chamber.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Just to be clear, Mr. Speaker, the coalition which has been proposed will have a fundamental impact on Manitoba.

We have a Building Canada Fund, Mr. Speaker, and if the Government of Canada changes hands, that Building Canada Fund will be under the control of a party that doesn't believe in building Canada, that believes in destroying Canada. These are the things that matter to Manitobans. We will be seeing a transfer of power to parties who have no commitment to an inland port for Manitoba, no commitment to building Canada, no commitment to western Canada; 13 percent of the MPs representing 30 percent of the western population, not a single member of Parliament representing a prairie, rural, agricultural constituency.

Mr. Speaker, just to be clear on the Premier's position on all of this—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Let's have a little decorum, please.

**Mr. McFadyen:** The trade unionists for an independent Québec wrote today that this coalition is a heaven-sent opportunity for sovereigntists.

Is the Premier saying that he's neutral on this issue?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, I would point out again—and I can't deal with the paranoia of the member opposite, but I would point out again there is one Prime Minister in Canada. In fact, there was an

announcement again today on the Building Canada Fund made by the federal government.

Our Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) dealt with—you know, the member opposite wants to presume what's going to happen in Parliament. We're dealing government to government: the Minister of Agriculture on Monday; the minister responsible for the Building Canada Fund on Tuesday, another announcement; Public Safety Minister, today, again, on an issue. The Prime Minister writes us today inviting us to a meeting. It's Prime Minister Harper, Prime Minister Harper who's voted with different people in the past when he was opposition leader.

We are dealing with the government of the day. We are dealing with the sworn in Prime Minister. I'm not dealing with a column in a Québec paper. Everybody in this House are federalists. Every one of us are federalists. Every one of us in this House stands for Canada and for federalism, and to try to presume something else is just quite immature. The deal is when you're Premier you deal in a mature way with the prime ministers elected.

I am not a Liberal. Jean Chrétien was elected Prime Minister before I was elected Premier. Premier Filmon dealt with him. I had that responsibility when I was first elected to deal with him. Later on, there was a kind of—I understand a kind of disunity in the Liberal Party. There were debates about whether he would be replaced before he received his third mandate. You know, we get questions on the floor, do we support Paul Martin or do we support Jean Chrétien? No, we didn't. That decision was made just like your decision was made on leadership. We work with the Prime Minister of the day. It went from Jean Chrétien to Paul Martin. In fact, we met him even before he was sworn in, in Regina a couple of years ago.

Then, Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives, the NDP and the Bloc, all together, voted against Paul Martin. They had a coalition vote against the Paul Martin government. Did it set us back on the Building Canada Fund, on the floodway, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights? Yes, but that's what happened in Parliament. We lived with it. Prime Minister Harper was elected. We dealt with him. We're continuing to deal with him, and that's who we're dealing with. That is the Prime Minister of the day.

The member opposite can quote columnists. He can quote pundits. Some premiers are saying hurry up the vote. Some premiers are saying cool it off. I'm

saying all four leaders should get together. I think all four leaders getting together is the best way to proceed because in a minority Parliament you need to work together. And, quite frankly, with all the economic uncertainty, political parties don't need partisans; they need people working together in the public interest for jobs, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. McFadyen:** It's not pundits that are lining up to offer their view on this issue. The Premier of British Columbia, Gordon Campbell, against the coalition. The Premier of Alberta, Ed Stelmach, against the coalition. The Premier of Saskatchewan, yesterday, strongly against the coalition. Those Canadian leaders who have lined up for the coalition: Jacques Parizeau, Gilles Duceppe, Jack Layton, Stéphane Dion, Danny Williams, Ed Schreyer.

Which side is the Premier of Manitoba on?

**Mr. Doer:** Most premiers said they'll deal with the Prime Minister of the day. Some premiers said have the vote early to deal with uncertainty. Some premiers said have the vote later to cool off. I said all four leaders should get together before this situation happened. I always believe in prevention, Mr. Speaker, rather than a cure.

I know everybody in this Chamber are strong Canadians, Mr. Speaker. You play all the games you want, but that's the bottom line.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to deal with the government of the day—I said that before—in the most mature way we can. We're not surrogates for anyone. We're the government of Manitoba. We represent all the issues in Manitoba, and we will continue to do that.

As I said before, we were invited to a meeting with the Prime Minister. We're going to show up. We're going to be there. There won't be an empty chair from Manitoba, because we have a responsibility to deal with Aboriginal education and economic opportunities. We have a responsibility to deal with internal trade. We have a responsibility to deal with labour mobility. We have a responsibility to deal with financial institutions that have gone wrong right around the world. We have a responsibility to deal with many matters, dealing with pension solvency issues, items, Mr. Speaker, that, quite frankly—and we have a responsibility with trade and agriculture.

You know, I think it's the Member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff) that points out that we haven't had an agriculture question yet in this House, Mr.

Speaker. The words "Jacques Parizeau" have been mentioned more times than agriculture by the Leader of the Opposition. I think he should start talking about agriculture in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

\* (14:10)

### Impact on Economy

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

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Pensioners in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, saw more value wiped out of their portfolios on the day this coalition was announced than on any other day in the history of Canada.

Will the Premier stand up for pensioners and speak out against those who seek to destabilize Canada in the middle of an economic crisis?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** You know, Mr. Speaker, I seem to recall the stock market was at about 14,000 sometime early September, maybe late August, and it's not quite there right now, oil and everything else going into this issue.

Again, dealing with pension solvency, and this is an issue, again, the member opposite has a different position than the federal Conservative Party. After our economic statement was tabled, he argued in this House against dealing with flexibility on pension solvency.

Minister Flaherty, less than a week ago—in fact, a week ago tomorrow, on Thursday—recommended that the federal pension solvency requirement go from five years to 10. That's something labour, workers and business are recommending to deal with the pension solvency issue in the mark-to-market accounting of operational viability of companies fearing increased bankruptcy if we don't have increased flexibility. We supported that idea, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite didn't, so there's an example where a Conservative doesn't agree with a Conservative.

There was also the issue of our recommendation to have pension flexibility at age 71. We argued that the registered retirement savings plan provision of 71 should be changed to deal with the conversion to RIFs. Again, the member opposite took no position on it, and that's a matter that affects pensioners in Manitoba. We supported, or proposed actually, to the Prime Minister that he change that, and I applauded him last Friday when I argued that all four leaders should work together as opposed to the obvious kind

of condition, of conflict, that's going on in the House of Commons.

So there are a couple of examples where the member opposite had a different view than Minister Flaherty on an item that we supported.

**Mr. McFadyen:** The situation in Ottawa is such that there is a coalition involving separatists that is coming together and is proposing to topple the government and destabilize the economy in the middle of an economic crisis, Mr. Speaker.

We have called for the three federalist parties in Ottawa to set aside their differences and sit down as Canadians to try and work on a plan to move the economy forward, Mr. Speaker. To do that, the New Democrats and the Liberals in that coalition have to abandon their axis with the separatists. Every premier in Manitoba has taken a position on the axis that's been formed between the NDP, the Liberals and the separatists.

Mr. Speaker, when the time came 18 years ago for the Premier to take a position on a major issue, he said he couldn't stay neutral; 18 years later, he's trying to stay neutral.

Mr. Speaker, we know he's a strong Canadian. We know he's on the side of Manitobans who are overwhelmingly opposed to the coalition. Why won't he just say so in public?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out the difference, and that's why I proposed last week that all four leaders get together because—[interjection] I think when you're dealing with four parties of the House of Commons, you should try to work together.

Mr. Speaker, whether you like it or not, there was a vote. You could call it the axis event. The anti-Paul Martin axis voted, the Bloc, the Conservatives and the NDP. There were lots of items that we wanted to have done. We supported the Kelowna Accord. We worked hard to have the Kelowna Accord. It was very distressing to us to have a person defeated just a day or two after the Kelowna Accord was agreed to.

Having said that, that's what Parliament did. That was the will of Parliament. We live in a parliamentary democracy. When the Parliament speaks, it speaks with all its members, one way or the other, and we respect that, and Mr. Speaker, whether we respect it or not, that's what the Governor General will deal with. That's ultimately

what will happen. That's who the Governor General decides to swear in.

That is something, again, that the member opposite may want to be the Governor General, but he's not, and, Mr. Speaker, he may want my views on proroguing Parliament. I don't have any authority in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday, we announced Wuskwatim for \$280 million. We announced a doubling of a social housing program. We weren't reading what Jacques Parizeau wrote. We were actually doing stuff for Manitobans. Last week we announced wind power, \$800 million, in the Red River Valley.

We weren't reading what Jacques Parizeau said. If he wants to spend his time reading what Jacques Parizeau's writing, be my guest. We're going to continue to work on the priorities of Manitobans. He can read all the separatist columnists he wants to. I'm not going to bother even reading them, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. McFadyen:** The decisions, the events that will unfold in the coming days in Ottawa will irreparably change the course of relations between Ottawa and Manitoba. We have a situation where we could have a situation, Mr. Speaker, where we have a government that, in the words of today's *La Presse*, a coalition that, and I quote: couldn't care less about the feelings of western Canada. That's what is being written today in the Québec newspapers.

The Premier apparently doesn't care that this is taking place. Going back and looking at the leadership he showed between 1988 and 1990 on issues like Meech Lake, where he actually had the courage and the energy to take a position in favour of Manitobans—he knows Manitobans are against this backroom deal with separatists, Mr. Speaker.

We understand the challenge he faces because his federal party is in bed with the separatists. We understand the problems he's facing because the Canadian Labour Congress is in favour of the coalition. I know he gets a lot of his volunteers there.

We understand he's in a tough spot, Mr. Speaker, but will he answer the question today: Is he the leader of a political party or is he the leader of a province?

**Mr. Doer:** You know, I was reading through the comments of other premiers and, fairly consistently, people, especially those who've had a little experience, have taken the stand that they have to

deal with the government of the day. They've known that changes happen in Ottawa sometimes. As I say, one day we're meeting as a team of first ministers in Kelowna dealing with the Kelowna Accord—we worked six months on it—and the next day the Conservatives, the NDP and the Bloc voted against the Martin government, defeated them. We had a change in government after that.

So, some of us, you know—I know that in Ottawa, and I don't know whether the member opposite knows this, but sometimes voting patterns have federalist parties actually voting with separatist parties. Again, the Martin government was defeated by three parties, the Bloc, the Conservatives and the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, that's what happens, and you can rant and rave about it. Now, I suggest to the member opposite that he should take a view that the government of the day, the government of Manitoba, has to deal with the government of the day in Ottawa. That's how you deal with it. You're not a delegate at a convention. You're not a volunteer handing out a pamphlet. You are sworn in. You take an oath of allegiance in these jobs to be sworn in to represent the best interests of the people of Manitoba.

When you take those oaths of office, it doesn't mean you only wait and deal with an NDP Prime Minister. Goodness knows that might be a long time in coming. You have to deal with whoever's elected. Ed Schreyer dealt on some files with Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Mr. Speaker. Sterling Lyon dealt with Pierre Elliott Trudeau. Howard Pawley dealt with Pierre Elliott Trudeau. Some people dealt with Joe Clark, I guess, over a period of time. Then there was Brian Mulroney who got elected in '84. Premier Pawley dealt with him. There was a CF-18 issue. There was a Meech Lake issue.

\*(14:20)

I want to say that the difference between Ottawa and Manitoba is that in Ottawa they obviously don't get together at the front end of the process. In Manitoba, we created a committee, all three leaders, in a minority government. All three leaders created a committee. We all appointed members to that committee. We had public hearings. We came together on a report. We compromised on what would be in that report. All three of us went down to Ottawa together in a minority situation, working together for the best interests of Manitoba. That's actually the model I think should be used in Ottawa.

We are in an economic crisis and we don't need one party here and three parties there, and two parties here and two parties there. We need everybody to roll up their sleeves and work together. That's what I recommended last week.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite doesn't know who's going to be in government a week from now, two weeks from now, four weeks from now, a month from now. I expect it's going to be Prime Minister Harper because he is the Prime Minister of the day. He is the person we're dealing with next month at the First Ministers' meeting.

I don't know what's going to happen in Ottawa. I can't predict what's going to happen in a prorogue motion. All I know is the Premier of Manitoba has to deal with the Prime Minister of Canada. The Prime Minister of Canada is sworn in by the Governor General, based on either votes in the House of Commons or the votes in the election campaign.

That's how we operated in a minority government here in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker and that's how I would recommend the people in Ottawa operate. Government to government, sworn in to do that, we'll uphold our oath of office.

#### Government Response

**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 talks as though he is a bystander in what is transpiring today in Ottawa. He acts as though he is an irrelevant bystander in what is taking place in Ottawa.

Five days from today, Mr. Speaker, there will be a vote. In the coming days, there's an opportunity for cooler heads to prevail and for the federalist parties to work together.

He is the most senior NDP leader in government in Canada today. He has a role to play. If he picks up the phone this afternoon and calls 11 NDP members of Parliament and tells them to come to their senses, he can shape the future of what happens.

He's not irrelevant, as he said three days ago, Mr. Speaker. He's got the power to have an impact on events in favour of Manitoba. Instead, he's remaining neutral and choosing to be a bystander. If he doesn't have the fight left in him anymore, why not hand it over to the Deputy Premier (Ms. Wowchuk) so that she can stand up for Manitobans and twist the arms of New Democrats and bring

about a new, Canadian, strong coalition to fight for Canada in Ottawa?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Again, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that yesterday we announced a \$280-million proposal for Wuskwatim while the member opposite was reading Jacques Parizeau. The day before, we announced, as the member opposite was going through his separatist columnists—the day before that, we took a position on social housing as the member was preoccupied by somebody else in la belle province.

Mr. Speaker, we are not bystanders. We are going to the next First Ministers' meeting, proposing that an infrastructure agreement be very, very substantial for Canada, including the existing Building Canada Fund. We have already proposed and will continue to propose that it have major public works, including sewer, water, roads, highways, housing, Aboriginal communities, recreation centres, centres of excellence.

We are not going to stand by when we talk about Aboriginal people. We believe that we have to have Aboriginal economic opportunities. We'll be articulating that with the Prime Minister at the First Ministers' meeting in January that he's called, Mr. Speaker. We will not have an empty chair or an empty head when we go to Ottawa. We'll have ideas, programs and proposals.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is the leader—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** The leader is sworn in and is responsible to be Her Majesty's Leader of the Official Opposition in this House. He is not a Conservative delegate. I am not an NDP delegate. We all have roles in this Legislature given to us.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to deal with the Prime Minister of Canada, Prime Minister Harper, and we will continue to push in a very effective way.

As a matter of fact, the member opposite always bemoans how well we do in terms of federal-provincial relations. He actually thinks that's a negative. We go there and we're effective, because we're effective on behalf of Manitobans whether it's the floodway, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, whether it's health-care funding, whether it's post-secondary education funding.

We will continue to be effective because the reason why we're effective is we put the people of Manitoba first, not our partisan political *[inaudible]*

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

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

### Gaelin Ross Death Investigation

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, I'd ask for leave to pose a question and two supplementaries.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the honourable member have leave to put his question and two supplementary questions? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, Gaelin Ross was a two-year-old baby that died.

There was a Dr. Charles Ferguson, a very well-known pediatrician that in essence was quoted in a news article, Mr. Speaker, in which he indicated, and I quote: says categorically that the two-year-old was murdered; a very strong allegation.

What I'm looking for from the Minister of Justice is a commitment in recognizing that there is a need to get down and find out what actually had taken place with regard to Gaelin Ross.

Would the minister not agree that there is indeed a need for an independent inquiry into the death of this 28-month-old child?

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I am very happy to reply to a question that deals with a matter of importance to this Legislature, Mr. Speaker.

The matter that the member raised yesterday and that has been the subject of numerous articles has been looked at by the Medical Examiner's office and has been investigated by the RCMP, and I understand the RCMP is reviewing their investigation on this matter.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, we have a Child Advocate, Billie Schibler, who also expressed concerns in regard to staffing shortages, makes reference to the number of bruises. I had indicated yesterday in excess of 40 bruises on a baby girl.

I'm wondering if the Minister of Justice or the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Mackintosh) has had any contact with our Child Advocate or if there

has been any correspondence from our Child Advocate with either one of those two departments.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, it would be inappropriate for investigators to comment on specific marks or other matters of that kind in a public forum. The RCMP is open to any information that may be brought forward.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Whether it is the Child Advocate's office or a well-known pediatrician in Manitoba who has raised very serious concerns and allegations in regard to a two-year-old baby that died, Mr. Speaker, that there is a need to ensure that justice will, in fact, prevail, that there is a need to ensure that what is right is, in fact, done.

I would argue and I would ask the Minister of Justice to acknowledge that there is indeed a need for an independent inquiry into this matter.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, the RCMP, the Chief Medical Examiner's office have both looked at this matter. The RCMP undertook a comprehensive review. There've been many comments in the paper talking about murder, talking about homicide, talking about accidental and talking about undetermined. Those have all been scattered about.

There's a lot of respect for Dr. Ferguson. There's a lot of respect for the Child Advocate. There's clearly a lot of interest in this matter and, as I indicated earlier, the RCMP is reviewing the investigation as a result of these matters that have been raised.

**Mr. Speaker:** As agreed, this now ends question period.

\*(14:30)

### Speaker's Ruling

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

Prior to routine proceedings on December 1, the honourable Member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu) raised a matter of privilege regarding the information provided to the House by the honourable Minister of Labour and Immigration (Ms. Allan) on November 28, information that the honourable Member for Morris indicated was purposefully misleading, in conjunction with a letter the honourable member tabled from the Department of Labour and Immigration. The honourable Deputy Government House Leader (Mr. Ashton), the honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), the honourable Official

Opposition House Leader (Mr. Hawranik) also 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, and second, has sufficient evidence been provided to demonstrate that the privileges of the House have been breached in order to warrant putting the matter to the House.

The honourable Member for Morris indicated that she was raising the issue at the earliest opportunity, and I accept the word of the honourable member.

Regarding the second issue of whether sufficient evidence has been provided, as I had previously advised the House on the similar type of matter of privilege raised on May 5 of this year, the parliamentary authority Joseph Maingot, advises on page 241 of the second edition of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*: allegations that a member has misled the House are, in fact, matters of order and not matters of privilege. Therefore, it is not in order to raise these types of issues as matters of privilege.

In addition, it has been ruled on numerous occasions in this House that a member raising the matter of privilege must provide specific proof of intent to mislead. Providing information that may show the facts are at variance is not the same as providing proof of intent to mislead. Also, as ruled by Speaker Dacquay, without a member admitting in the House that he or she had a stated goal of misleading the House when putting the remarks on the record, it is virtually impossible to prove that a member had deliberately intended to mislead the House. In the words of the federal Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs in its 50th report, "intent is always a difficult element to establish in the absence of an admission or a confession."

I would also like to remind the House, as I had ruled in 2004, twice in 2005, twice in 2006, once in 2007, and on two previous occasions in the current year, it is not the role of the Speaker to decide on questions of facts. House of Commons Speaker Milliken similarly advised the House of Commons on February 19, 2004, it is not the role of the Speaker to adjudicate on matters of fact, as this is something that the House itself can form an opinion on during debate.

In addition, it has been asserted by the Official Opposition House Leader (Mr. Hawranik), that the Speaker stated in the House on May 12 that the Speaker would not necessarily be bound by precedent. The interpretation of the May 12 ruling as applicable to the current issue is not correct, because the ruling on May 12 dealt with the specific issue of comments being made outside of the Chamber and with the ability of members to raise concerns about comments that are hurtful, intolerant or racist, and not with the issue of whether a member had deliberately misled the House. The Manitoba precedents and rulings are very clear on the issue of deliberately misleading the House, as are the procedural authorities Joseph Maingot, *Beauchesne*, and Marleau and Montpetit.

I would therefore rule, with the greatest of respect, that the matter raised is not in order as a prima facie case of privilege.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### Vera Hockin

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose):** Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to rise in the House today to recognize a very special member of my constituency. Mrs. Vera Hockin, from Neepawa, has dedicated much of her life to the service of others and has been a member of the Royal Canadian Legion Ladies' Auxiliary for the past 39 years. Recently the Ladies' Auxiliary awarded Mrs. Hockin with a Meritorious Award for dedication and service.

Mrs. Hockin is a remarkable lady and truly deserves this recognition. A farm wife and mother of three, she joined the Ladies' Auxiliary for friendship and fellowship, but she ended up having a profound impact on those people she encountered through her work there.

Mrs. Hockin's roles in the Ladies Auxiliary have included president, vice-president and second vice-president. She served as the pianist, playing for initiations and penny parades and was in charge of many events. She also spent time taking in over 290 meetings, making huge batches of soup and baking scores of desserts.

Mrs. Hockin is a selfless and humble member of the community. Her actions are an inspiration to us all.

One year, instead of accepting flowers for her birthday, she arranged for the money that would have been spent on them instead be donated to the local

hospital. Many of the ladies at the legion followed suit and now a donation of \$250 is made to the hospital in Neepawa every year. This is just one example of the many kind-hearted things Mrs. Hockin has done for others at her own expense.

Mrs. Hockin was also involved with other organizations, and was a member of the Eastern Star for 54 years. She played piano at over 1,100 funerals and served on various committees with the United Church.

It is my great pleasure to acknowledge the achievements of this outstanding citizen and to congratulate her on the recognition of them with the Meritorious Award. People like Vera, who give unconditionally to their communities, are truly the heroes of Manitoba. Thank you.

*Mr. Doug Martindale, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

#### Aboriginal Youth Achievement Awards

**Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson):** On October 30, 2008, I had the privilege of attending the 15th Annual Aboriginal Youth Achievement Awards hosted by the Anishinabe Oway-ishi.

A tribute that began in 1994, these awards recognize the outstanding achievements of Manitoba's Aboriginal youth who exhibit high standards of excellence, dedication, leadership and accomplishments in a variety of different fields. These awards are unique in that the recipients are chosen by committees that consist of Aboriginal youth from the community.

I would like to recognize the award recipients in the House today for all the members. They were: Christen Crate, Tyson Wade Cook, Virden Garth McKay, Amy Smith, Chas Sakayigun, Gaitten "Gator" Beaulieu, Michael Champagne, Amanda Worm, Channing Lavalley, Dustin Henry, Jacquelyn Fontaine, Chantelle Chornoby, Brandon Wood and Stephanie Kent. These 14 individuals have demonstrated leadership, self-motivation, hard work and dedication. They are literally an example for all of us.

The Aboriginal population in Manitoba is very young. Thirty-six percent of the Aboriginal population in Manitoba is under the age of 15. Watching these young people and listening to their stories of hard work, struggle and ultimate success to achieve their dreams was enlightening. They are a resource that we must harness, appreciate and

encourage as they grow up to become leaders of tomorrow.

I wish to extend my congratulations to each of the award nominees and the recipients. I commend the organization for its hard work and dedication to the youth of our province. Thank you very much.

### **United Nations International Day of Disabled Persons**

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East):** I rise to recognize today as the United Nations International Day of Disabled Persons. Today we recognize disabled persons in an effort to create a better understand of disability issues and gain support for the rights, dignity and well-being of persons with disabilities.

This year's theme is entitled, "Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Dignity and justice for all of us." To recognize this year's theme, presentations were held this morning here at the Legislature to discuss some of the issues impacting persons with disabilities. Approximately 10 percent or 650 million people around the world live with disabilities and it's important that we recognize the valuable contributions they make to our community.

Although some progress has been made, persons with disabilities still struggle with issues of accessibility, relative income and other barriers. This is why advocates of the disabled community are calling on the government to act more quickly on the issues outlined in their own provincial strategies seven years ago.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

The United Nations works to reaffirm that all human rights, including those of disabled persons are universal, indivisible, interrelated, interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Despite this, persons with disabilities still face discrimination and stereotyping, both in and outside of the workplace.

Mr. Speaker, it's up to every Manitoban to help make this province more accessible for people with disabilities. People with disabilities are a part of our community, and they should not be limited in their efforts to achieve their fullest potential, both personally and professionally. Thank you.

\* (14:40)

### **Parent-Child Coalitions**

**Ms. Sharon Blady (Kirkfield Park):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about an exciting new development

in my constituency of Kirkfield Park. A new Parent Centre will be opening up at Sansome Elementary School early in the New Year. This is an initiative of the St. James-Assiniboia Parent-Child Coalition and the St. James-Assiniboia School Division.

Parent-child coalitions have been developed by Healthy Child Manitoba to promote and support community programs and activities for children and families. These programs seek to reflect the needs of the community in which they are based. Parent-child coalitions support programs and services for families with young children with an emphasis on activities that involve both parents and children. Activities are based on several core principles, including positive parenting, nutrition and physical health, learning and literacy and community capacity building.

The goal of the Parent Centre at Sansome is to allow families to build connections with their neighbourhood. It came about as parents with young children had been asking for a place to drop in and meet with other parents over coffee while having their children play in a safe environment. Significantly, this is a completely free resource for families to use, and it is the first Parent Centre located in Kirkfield Park.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be part of a government that works to implement such progressive programs. Parent-child coalitions and parent centres recognize the importance not only of children in Manitoba but of supporting families as a whole. Children grow to be healthy adults when their parents are supported by their communities and their government.

I would like to congratulate the St. James-Assiniboia Parent-Child Coalition and St. James-Assiniboia School Division on the success of their new project, and I would encourage all families in my constituency of Kirkfield Park to make use of this great new resource. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **Mental Health Bill of Rights**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Today, on United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities, we must particularly recognize that thousands of Manitobans are affected by mental illness every day.

On May 3 of this year, Mr. Speaker, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities became international law for ratifying nations. Canada was one of the signing nations.

On December 2 of this year, Manitoba Liberals introduced a first-in-Canada mental health bill of rights, calling for individuals with mental health disorders to be treated with compassion, dignity and respect at all times.

The Liberal bill includes the UN convention's recommendations that individuals with mental illnesses should be given equal treatment under the law and the right to have family members or a circle of friends supportive of their decision making. The convention also includes the right to health, right to work, right to live in the community, right to an adequate standard of living, all of which are addressed in the Liberal bill.

The UN convention was among the fastest to become international law. It is my hope that the provincial NDP government will follow suit and fast-track Liberal Bill 230 to implement aspects of the UN convention in Manitoba and to improve the overall health and well-being for some of Manitoba's most vulnerable citizens.

Second, I want to mention the Democratic Republic of Congo is the site of the world's worst ongoing humanitarian crisis with over 4 million killed in a 10-year period. An estimated 1,200 people die each day as a result of the conflict, more than half of whom are children.

Many Manitobans have families and friends who are affected by the conflict in the Congo. We saw many yesterday outside the Legislature, raising awareness of the crisis and looking for support. We have a responsibility to offer help and support in these times of crisis. My thoughts and prayers are with those in the Congo and their families and friends here. We need, as individuals and as a Legislature, to do what we can to end this tragedy.

### House Business

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to confirm with the House the period of time under which translation services will continue to work, whether it's until the orders of the day commence or if it just concludes after question period.

Je voudrais savoir si la traduction continue après la période des questions à l'Assemblée législative ou est-ce qu'ils partent après que le leader du gouvernement annonce l'ordre du jour. C'est quelque chose de très important à déterminer aujourd'hui. Je voudrais vous le demander.

### Translation

*I would like to know whether translation continues after question period in the Assembly or whether they leave after the Government House Leader announces orders of the day. This is something that very much needs to be determined today. I would like to ask you that.*

I would like to ask, through you, Mr. Speaker, to clarify the issue of the French translation for all members of the House in the circumstance where a member may want to do a member's statement or a matter of another kind prior to the introduction of orders of the day. I'm just trying to clarify for all members of the House the situation in that regard. So if I could beg the indulgence of the House, through you, Mr. Speaker, to determine precisely what the translation service is in that regard as we go forward today prior to orders of the day.

**Mr. Speaker:** Translators stay in the booth until the call of orders of the day. They're in the booth and then, I guess, if a member requests, we can make arrangements after, if the member requests. We could try that, but it's only until I call orders of the day.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Monsieur le président, je voudrais vous remercier pour votre avis dans cette situation. Vous nous dites que le service de traduction continue jusqu'au commencement de l'ordre du jour. Après l'annonce de l'ordre du jour ou au commencement de l'ordre du jour?

### Translation

*Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you for your advice. You are telling us that translation continues until the beginning of orders of the day. After announcement of orders of the day or at the beginning of orders of the day?*

In other words, just for purposes of clarification, translation services continue right until the Government House Leader announces orders of the day, except in instances where there's a separate circumstance or just before orders of the day; just to clarify that, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** They're in the booth until I call out orders of the day.

**Mr. Chomiak:** I thank the House and I thank you and the translation services for your indulgence. There have been instances where individuals have wanted to engage with translation services and, as you can see, as I was making my comments, I did

deal with some language matters. I'm glad that you've clarified that for all of us in the House in order to determine this matter and to assure us specifically when translation services occur. That is helpful because there are instances, I think, when members wish to utilize translation services and there are times when—it clarifies that they were able to know exactly when that is. Just for purposes of the Legislature, je voudrais vous remercier encore une fois pour les services de traduction ici à l'Assemblée législative. C'est quelque chose de très important pour tous les Manitobains et pour tous les députés ici à la Chambre. Merci pour votre service et votre connaissance de ma question. Merci, Monsieur le président.

### **Translation**

*I would like to thank you once again for the translation services here in the Legislature. This is very important for all Manitobans and for all members of this Chamber. Thank you for your assistance and your knowledge regarding this question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Just to clarify for the House, I need to ask the honourable Government House Leader, because I don't believe he was up on a point of order, or were you up on a clarification on the procedures of the House? I need to put something on record here.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was clarification on the proceedings of the House.

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay. I thank the honourable member for that.

### **MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I thank the honourable Attorney General and Government House Leader for the comments just made on the important issue that he was discussing.

Mr. Speaker, in accordance with rule 36(1), I move, seconded by the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Hawranik), that the regularly scheduled business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely, the need for the Premier (Mr. Doer) to stand up for Manitoba and to condemn the formation of a coalition among Liberal, Bloc Québécois and New Democratic parties in Ottawa, and to call on all New Democratic Party

members of Parliament to oppose the proposed separatist coalition.

\* (14:50)

**Mr. Speaker:** Before recognizing the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, I believe I should remind all members that under rule 36(2), the mover of a motion on a matter of urgent public importance and one member from the other parties in the House is allowed not more than 10 minutes to explain the urgency of debating the matter immediately. As stated in *Beauschesne* citation 390, urgency in this context means the urgency of immediate debate, not of the subject matter of the motion. In their remarks, members should focus exclusively on whether or not there is urgency of debate and whether or not the ordinary opportunities for debate will enable the House to consider the matter early enough to ensure that the public interest will not suffer.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I am pleased to advance the reasons why we would ask to have the matter debated as a matter of urgent public importance. The regularly scheduled business of the House of this afternoon was to be an Opposition Day motion. I know there's been some discussion between House leaders with respect to that motion in light of the very recent developments in Ottawa, which will have a direct and concrete impact on the province of Manitoba and the interests of our province.

Mr. Speaker, the reason for the urgency is that just three days ago it was announced in Ottawa that three of the party leaders in Parliament had arrived at a deal to attempt to govern the country. That deal has obviously given rise to much debate and discussion in terms of its implications for Canada, but also its implications for Manitoba over the couple of days since that coalition was announced. The urgency relates to the fact that the decision-making process among all parties in Ottawa at this very moment is one that is fluid. It is one that is evolving, not just day-by-day, but minute-by-minute.

We believe it's important and urgent that legislators in Manitoba take a position on the issue and that that position be conveyed at the earliest possible opportunity to federal members of Parliament who are, as we speak, considering their positions with respect to the proposed coalition government in Ottawa.

On Monday, as we understand it, there is a vote to take place in the House of Commons, a scheduled

vote that will be a matter of confidence and that scheduled vote, it is what is driving some of the urgency in terms of the positions that could be taken by those who have a role to play in the unfolding developments in Ottawa. Notwithstanding the comments of the Premier, who has chosen to remain neutral on the issue of the separatist coalition, we believe that opinion in Manitoba does matter, that historically, opinion in Manitoba has mattered.

At very many important times in the history of our country, Manitoba leaders have stood up and taken positions that have had a profound and direct impact on the direction of our country of Canada. Just as recently as the period leading up to the ultimate failure of the Meech Lake Accord, leaders in Manitoba came together to speak with one voice in response to the values and wishes and desires of Manitobans, which were virtually unanimous in raising concerns about the language of the Meech Lake Accord at that time and the need for further public consultation and the need for a new constitutional accord at the federal level. At that time, all parties came together in a united way. It was the then-Leader of the Liberal Party, who, after the 1988 election, declared that Meech was dead. That set off a series of debates and discussions that ultimately led to a consensus among party leaders that we had to come together as one, as a Legislature, regardless of party affiliations, and stand up for what all of us believed would be—what all of the legislators of the time believed would be in the best interests of Canada.

The current Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) played a key role in that, and the reflections of others who were part of those discussions including former Premier Filmon, members of his staff, and others who were part of the Liberal delegation were that the opposition leader—the NDP leader at the time—was a constructive player and not one who sat on the sidelines and remained neutral through these developments, but one who stood up along with other party leaders in Manitoba to speak out in Manitoba's interest.

Mr. Speaker, the reason for the urgency of the current matter is that we believe, contrary to the Premier's statements the other day, that he does have a role to play in the current debate that's taking place in Ottawa. We take Jack Layton at face value when he said he regularly consults with the NDP leader in Manitoba. We take it at face value when the NDP leader states that he has put his full support behind Jack Layton and the federal NDP caucus for the great

work they're doing in Ottawa, which is what the NDP leader said quite recently.

So, Mr. Speaker, we believe the Leader of the NDP, along with the Leader of the Liberal Party, and other members of this House all have separate roles to play, but those roles would be aimed toward a common objective that the Leader of the NDP is uniquely well-positioned to influence New Democratic Party members of Parliament today who, we believe, have hastily entered into a coalition that is clearly not in the best interests of Canada.

When we have separatist leaders like Jacques Parizeau saying this is a great day for separatism, when we have the trade unionists for an independent Québec saying this is a heaven-sent opportunity for sovereigntists, when we have a Québec-based newspaper saying that the Liberal-NDP-Bloc coalition couldn't care less about the feelings of western Canada, and when we have a situation where members of all federalist parties are raising alarm about the prospect of the separatist party having a veto over all major government decisions for the next year and a half, then what we have is the need for action, the need for those who have a view on this matter to stand up and make their voice heard.

Mr. Speaker, developments in Ottawa are moving quickly, as we speak, and it's important for legislators in Manitoba to put their views on the record, to state their case clearly whether they are in favour of the coalition or against it. We know we have very clearly said we are opposed to the separatist coalition. The Liberals have said they're in favour of it. What we can't discern is what is the position of the government of Manitoba currently on this critical national issue that is going to have a lasting impact not only on Canada but on the province of Manitoba.

The Premier (Mr. Doer) is not a bystander. He is not somebody who, to use his own words, is irrelevant, though he said yesterday on radio, I'm not paid to have opinions, Mr. Speaker, but we respectfully disagree. We believe the Premier personally views this coalition with concern. We simply are asking him to make his voice clear, to add his voice to the debate, and to use his influence over the coming days through the voice of this Legislature united to influence the events today taking place in Ottawa.

Other premiers across the country have stood up throughout western Canada, which stands to be the most badly damaged by this potential coalition,

Mr. Speaker. Western premiers have spoken with one voice, with the notable exception of the province of Manitoba. Premier Wall stood up for the people of Saskatchewan against the coalition government because he recognizes correctly, Mr. Speaker, that it's not in the interests of Canada and not in the interests of Saskatchewan. Premier Stelmach, two days ago, stood up on behalf of the people of Alberta and said it was his position that this coalition was contrary to the interests of the people that he represents, and the premier of British Columbia, Premier Campbell, said the current government deserves the opportunity to carry on and introduce a budget and get on with the business of governing the country and moving us through the economic crisis.

\* (15:00)

So, Mr. Speaker, pensioners, working people, Manitobans who are concerned about their jobs and their incomes are looking for leadership; they're looking for stability. They don't want the government to change horses in mid-stream, in the middle of an economic crisis. They don't want a government that's going to destabilize Canada in the middle of an economic crisis.

That's why it's important for all Manitoba legislators to stand up, to speak for Manitobans, 100 percent of whom voted for federalist parties only 50 days ago, Mr. Speaker. That is why we believe this matter is urgent. That's why we believe it's appropriate to deal with it today. That is why the other business of the House, much of which is important business, can afford to wait for just a period of time, so that we can deal with the current, immediate, urgent, national crisis that faces Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, this, I find, bad tactics on the part of the opposition—bad timing. Just yesterday, we agreed in the House to discuss the most important issue of the day—the economy—on an Opposition Day which is supposed to follow.

Now the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) stands up and says something that happened in Parliament four days ago, of which we had three days to talk about and said nothing, is more important now, Mr. Speaker. This is one of the most incredibly misfitted motions that has ever seen the floor of this House. The member is asking us, in his own words, to interfere with a potential coalition—a potential coalition.

His own party's leader is Prime Minister of the country. The Premier said he's dealing with the Prime Minister of the country. The Leader of the Opposition says, stand up about this, quote, potential coalition.

There is no coalition. Parliament is sitting. We don't sit in Parliament. There will be a vote on Monday. On Monday, there be a meeting with the Governor General. Does the member want us to interfere?

That's the first point, Mr. Speaker. Parliament has jurisdiction; we have jurisdiction. The member wants us to stand up to their jurisdiction.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the motion is flawed; the motion is dangerously flawed. The motion calls on the Premier to deal with members of the New Democratic Party. It doesn't call on the Premier to deal with members of the Conservative Party; he doesn't call on members to deal with members of the Liberal Party.

The motion calls on the Premier to deal with members of the New Democratic Party, which goes to the core of the problems with the Tories—the dissident Tories, the find-a-conspiracy Tories, Mr. Speaker, there's-a-conspiracy-everywhere Tories, they-don't-get-it-that-Manitobans-like-to-work-cooperatively Tories.

The motion itself asks for the Premier to only talk to members of the New Democratic Party. Mr. Speaker, the motion is not only flawed; it's not urgent. For three days, we've sat in this Legislature. You know what we just finished debating? An economic statement in the budget.

Members had a chance to talk about—*[interjection]*—in the Throne Speech, I might say, an economic statement in the Throne Speech. Members had a chance to talk about that. They had a chance for three days. They said nada, nothing, anything.

Mr. Speaker, the key issue in Ottawa and in Manitoba's economy, what's holding up discussion of the economy is the quagmire in the House of Commons, which is dealt with by the House of Commons, by the rules of the House of Commons. Not only do we not have constitutional jurisdiction to influence that, it's not our jurisdiction. This motion is out of jurisdiction, thoroughly. Three days of Throne Speech debate and members opposite did not mention this issue, did not say it was of urgent public importance.

Today, the day when they have their own motion—the motion brought forward by members opposite to deal with the economy—they want to set it aside to ask the Premier to talk to members of the New Democratic Party.

I smell, Mr. Speaker, a bit of a conspiracy bias on the part of members opposite. It's one reason why Tory times are tough times. It's one of the reasons why voters reject the narrow-minded extremist views of members opposite. Members opposite don't seek to unite; they seek to divide. Members opposite don't seek to speak for all Manitobans; they seek to speak to a narrow branch of Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, we have dealt with three prime ministers. We will continue to deal with the Prime Minister. Whether or not a coalition is formed is not within our power. It is not the jurisdiction of this Legislature for us to determine what members of Parliament do to their rules and their part of it, and, I daresay, if Parliament were to say the Manitoba Legislature must do this and must do that. It would be unconstitutional and not within their jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, this phony separatist issue that members opposite are raising; the separatists were formed from Lucien Bouchard's alliance and marriage with Brian Mulroney. It was your Prime Minister that started this whole mess. It was the Bloc that was created by Brian Mulroney's brainchild of bringing a separatist into the government. It was the separatists that stood with Stephen Harper to defeat the Martin government. Where were you then? Where were you standing up for Manitoba then? You were running maybe for Parliament, maybe running for leadership, maybe running for whoever you're running. Not only is it not timely, it's phony.

Mr. Speaker, I have never seen a more disingenuous resolution in my life. Not only does the resolution talk about only the Premier (Mr. Doer) talking to one group of people; it's divisive. We have a history in this Chamber that Ottawa ought to emulate, and that is working together on national issues. We're not in the middle of the country, in the middle of the political spectrum and in the middle of most debates by accident. In fact, in FPTs Manitoba is looked to almost exclusively to be a mediating force in this country. Now we have an extremist junior leader—I should say we have an extremist leader of a party that will do anything to get a headline, anything to get name in the paper.

Mr. Speaker, I was in Wasagamack last week at this time with a community where there's a hundred

people dealing with issues of fast-yeast brew. You know, that's more important to the First Nations than playing parliamentary or legislative tricks in this Chamber to try to score political points.

The windmills that came down this week, the economic statement, the economy that all Manitobans care about is far more important than the member trying to get on the front page of a newspaper or a blog, as a surrogate for an issue that's being dealt with in Ottawa. Parliament is sitting as we sit and the member is saying we should tell Parliament what to do? I daresay members of the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party would be offended by us telling them what they should do on their own parliamentary procedures.

Mr. Speaker, this isn't an urgent matter of public importance. This is a matter of parliamentary procedure. This is a matter of political divisiveness on the part of the member of the opposition. He had three days to bring this matter about. We're going into an Opposition Day motion where the members could talk about anything they want and what do they choose to talk about yesterday? The economy. Today they say they want to talk about Parliament. I daresay that seems to me to be a bit disingenuous. Today is an Opposition Day. They wanted to talk about the economy. Maybe they're afraid to talk about the economy. Maybe that is the issue. Maybe they're afraid of the economic development that's occurring in Manitoba.

All I can say is, Mr. Speaker, we are supposed to go into an Opposition Day motion on the economy that was brought to us yesterday and I agreed to yesterday, and now the members are standing up and saying they want the Premier (Mr. Doer) to talk to New Democratic Party members.

That is the problem with the motion and with members opposite. They like to play games, but they don't want to get to the main issue. They don't want to deal with the everyday needs of Manitobans. Rural Manitobans, there hasn't even been an agricultural question. They've forgotten about rural Manitoba. The north—the north—they can't even find the north on a map.

Everyday working issues of men and women of Manitoba are being set aside while the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) wants to play political gamesmanship in this Legislature, a Legislature that has been noticed across the country and has been known for some time to be a unifying force, a Legislature that has every spectrum of Manitobans

represented in it, a Legislature that has Manitobans from every part of Manitoba, and the Leader of the Opposition wants us to stand, wants in his very motion—in his very motion to direct the leader, the Premier (Mr. Doer), to talk only to New Democrats. Even in the nature of the motion it's typical Tory divisiveness: divide and conquer, attack. It's the Bush strategy. It's bush-league strategy. The member talked about the access. We're trying to find nexus. We're trying to find harmony. We're trying to find the Manitoba way, which is the way of working together, not the Tory way of divide and conquer.

\* (15:10)

Mr. Speaker, the member ought to be ashamed of this resolution. Not only is it wrong in intent, it's three days late. It's not urgent. It deals with parliamentary procedure. The members have an Opposition Day, which is coming up in a few moments, Mr. Speaker, on the economy. I daresay it's an attempt by members opposite to cover up their failings, their inability to articulate any meaningful issues in this Chamber, and their inability to deal with the everyday needs of Manitobans. I daresay, I've been here since 1990, and in '99 they couldn't believe they lost the election, and then 2003 they thought we were just lucky, and in 2007 when they went down more seats—I suggest you pay attention to what Manitobans are saying and deal with the day-to-day needs of Manitobans and not play divisive games that are more at home in Ottawa than in the Manitoba Legislature.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** I ask for leave to speak to this issue.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Leave.

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay, the honourable member has leave.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, to indicate that the Manitoba Liberal Party believes that the economy and the future of the economy of Manitoba are matters of great urgent public importance and we are very concerned about the direction of the current New Democratic Party government, we believe that where there are concerns that the economy might be affected by issues that are happening in Ottawa these can be part of the debate. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay, on the matter of urgent public importance brought on by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) I thank the honourable members for their advice to the chair on whether the motion proposed by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition should be debated today.

The notice required by rule 36(1) was provided. Under our rules and practices, the subject matter requiring urgent consideration must be so pressing that the public interest will suffer if the matter is not given immediate attention. There must also be no other reasonable opportunities to raise the matter.

I have listened very carefully to the arguments put forward, however, I was not persuaded that the ordinary business of the House should be set aside to deal with this issue today. Although this is an issue that many members may have a concern about I do not believe that the public interest will be harmed if the business of the House is not set aside to debate the motion today.

Additionally, I would like to note that there are other avenues for members to raise this issue which includes questions in question period, members' statements and grievances. Therefore, with the greatest of respect, I must rule that this matter does not meet the criteria set by our rules and precedents, and I rule the motion out of order as a matter of urgent public importance.

#### House Business

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

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

**Mr. Hawranik:** I know the rules in terms of the rule book, Mr. Speaker, that we can't challenge your decision on a MUPI. However, there's still an opportunity for the government to deal with this particular issue, and I would seek leave of the House to substitute the existing Opposition Day motion that's on the Order Paper today with another Opposition Day motion which would compel the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba to urge the government to unequivocally state its opposition to the proposed separatist coalition.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Is there leave of the House for the House to deal with an alternative official opposition motion than the one that is listed on the Order Paper? Is there leave?

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** No? Leave has been denied. Okay, leave has been denied.

The honourable Government House Leader, you're up on House business?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe we should deal with the opposition motion that was tabled yesterday in this Legislature dealing with the most important issue facing Manitobans, and that is the economy.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

#### OPPOSITION DAY MOTION

**Mr. Speaker:** As previously announced, we'll deal with the Opposition Day motion that is brought forward by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Carman (Mr. Pedersen),

WHEREAS Manitoba is a diverse and beautiful province whose citizens take tremendous pride in its history, its culture and its plentiful natural attractions; and

WHEREAS Manitobans have watched their neighbours in other provinces enjoy prosperity and security as a result of those provinces' prudent financial practices and their strong efforts to help their businesses and industries thrive and be globally competitive; and

WHEREAS, regrettably, over the last nine years, Manitoba has failed to fulfil its potential, thanks to this government's ongoing failure to articulate a long-term vision aimed at making Manitoba grow and prosper; and

WHEREAS this provincial government's time in power can be characterized as one of missed opportunities and the failure to build Manitoba's economy and protect its finances; and

WHEREAS, while Manitoba remains the only have-not province in western Canada, the provincial government continues to act like a will-not government; and

WHEREAS, despite receiving unprecedented levels of funding from the federal government over the past nine years, the provincial government has not moved aggressively to pay down debt; and

WHEREAS, at a time when Manitobans would like to see the Province's finances improving, the Province's total debt has grown to nearly \$20 billion, including Crown corporations, representing \$16,600 for every person in Manitoba;

WHEREAS Manitoba's total debt is now 30 times higher than the balance of Manitoba's savings account, the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, due to the provincial government's poor planning and inaction;

WHEREAS, as a result of the provincial government's failure to plan for these tough economic times, Manitoba's savings account only has \$670 million unallocated and available for use to support government services for Manitobans; and

WHEREAS, according to the Conference Board of Canada, consumer confidence in Manitoba is at an all-time low; and

WHEREAS the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development is predicting the worst recession since the 1980s, which it predicts will lead to growing unemployment in Canada; and

WHEREAS Manitoba experienced the lowest private-sector employment growth in Canada from 2003 to 2007 and remains uncompetitive in attracting and growing businesses; and

WHEREAS single taxpayers in Manitoba without children start paying taxes sooner in Manitoba than in any other jurisdiction in Canada, and Manitobans continue to pay the highest income taxes west of Québec; and

WHEREAS Manitobans are still waiting for the provincial government to provide them with an economic update, akin to the updates provided in British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan, an update that tells them about the state of the Province's finances today and, just as importantly, how the provincial government plans to deal with the coming financial storm;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to consider acknowledging that, under its stewardship, Manitoba has failed to fulfil its potential over the last nine years; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to consider releasing an economic plan for the Province that reassures Manitobans that they have a plan to deal with the immediate economic crisis as well as a long-term

economic vision for the Province that will make us competitive with our western neighbours.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there agreement of the House that the Speaker accept the motion, as printed? Is there agreement? As printed? *[Agreed]*

Okay, it's been moved by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, seconded by the honourable Member for Carman (Mr. Pedersen),

WHEREAS Manitoba is—dispense?

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**Mr. Speaker:** Dispense.

*WHEREAS Manitoba is a diverse and beautiful province whose citizens take tremendous pride in its history, its culture and its plentiful natural attractions; and*

*WHEREAS Manitobans have watched their neighbours in other provinces enjoy prosperity and security as a result of those provinces' prudent financial practices and their strong efforts to help their businesses and industries thrive and be globally competitive; and*

*WHEREAS, regrettably, over the last nine years, Manitoba has failed to fulfil its potential, thanks to this government's ongoing failure to articulate a long-term vision aimed at making Manitoba grow and prosper; and*

*WHEREAS this provincial government's time in power can be characterized as one of missed opportunities and the failure to build Manitoba's economy and protect its finances; and*

*WHEREAS, while Manitoba remains the only have-not province in western Canada, the provincial government continues to act like a will-not government; and*

*WHEREAS, despite receiving unprecedented levels of funding from the federal government over the past nine years, the provincial government has not moved aggressively to pay down debt; and*

*WHEREAS, at a time when Manitobans would like to see the Province's finances improving, the Province's total debt has grown to nearly \$20 billion, including Crown corporations, representing \$16,600 for each person in Manitoba; and*

*WHEREAS Manitoba's total debt is now 30 times higher than the balance of the Manitoba's saving's account, the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, due to the provincial government's poor planning and inaction;*

*WHEREAS, as a result of the provincial government's failure to plan for these tough economic times, Manitoba's savings account only has \$670 million unallocated and available for use to support government services for Manitobans; and*

*WHEREAS, according to the Conference Board of Canada, consumer confidence in Manitoba is at an all-time low; and*

*WHEREAS the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development is predicting the worst recession since the 1980s, which it predicts will lead to growing unemployment in Canada; and*

*WHEREAS Manitoba experienced the lowest private sector employment growth in Canada from 2003 to 2007, and remains uncompetitive in attracting and growing business; and*

*WHEREAS single taxpayers in Manitoba without children start paying taxes sooner in Manitoba than in any other jurisdiction in Canada, and Manitobans continue to pay the highest income taxes west of Québec; and*

*WHEREAS Manitobans are still waiting for the provincial government to provide them with an economic update akin to the updates provided in British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan, an update that tells them about the state of the Province's finances today, and, just as importantly, how the provincial government plans to deal with the coming financial storm;*

*THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to consider acknowledging that, under its stewardship, Manitoba has failed to fulfil its potential over the last nine years; and*

*THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to consider releasing an economic plan for the province that reassures Manitobans that they have a plan to deal with the immediate economic crisis, as well as a long-term economic vision for the province that will make us competitive with our western neighbours.*

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, I want to firstly thank the Government House Leader (Mr. Chomiak) as well as the Opposition House Leader (Mr. Hawranik) and members of the third party for their agreement that we would set aside time today to debate this motion.

\* (15:20)

While we're disappointed, of course, that we weren't able to get the agreement of parties to deal with the current unstable situation in Ottawa, which will have a very significant impact on the economy, not only of Manitoba, but the entire economy of Canada. We are pleased, today, Mr. Speaker, to be able to address the issue put forth in the motion.

Mr. Speaker, the request of the official opposition is most importantly summarized by the final paragraph of the motion, which is to call on the government to consider putting forward a forward-looking economic plan with a transparent and open financial statement that will give Manitobans a clear picture of where we stand today and a clear picture of where the government intends to take us in three, four, five years and beyond in terms of this government's vision.

The reason, Mr. Speaker, that this has become so urgent is, we know, as a result of the global economic crisis, much of which was created as a result of reckless decisions around the world on the part of financial institutions and the governments to build up debt that was unsustainable, debt that was built up on the bet that future property value increases could be used to pay off that debt. As a result of those reckless debt increases where individuals were betting against the future conditions, we find ourselves today in a global credit crunch as well as an impending economic crunch, an economic crunch that will have a direct impact or may have a direct impact on the lives of regular Manitoba families from all walks of life.

Currently, we know that the situation south of the border is severe, that the financial system, both in the United States and globally, is under considerable stress, that urgent steps are being taken by governments in the United States, in Great Britain, under the Labour government there, which has presided over that economy since 1997 and with other governments around the world who have overseen periods of massive buildup of debt which has led to the current crisis in financial markets, that those efforts are under way to try to stabilize those markets.

We do know, Mr. Speaker, that, in the context of this global economic and financial crisis, Manitoba is not immune to what is taking place beyond our borders, that the financial infrastructure of Manitoba is impacted by it, that businesses operating in Manitoba tell us that they are impacted by what is going on. I had the opportunity, and I would like to

thank Charles Loewen and others in leadership positions at Loewen Windows, to tour their plant in Steinbach last week. We heard from them about their challenges within the current global situation.

What we heard, Mr. Speaker, was that markets for their products, in the case of Loewen Windows, for windows in higher-end housing developments and commercial developments both, through Canada and the United States, that market is being negatively impacted. That, in turn, is having a negative impact on Loewen Windows, and the result has been, regrettably, decisions by the company to lay off some of their workers over the last period of time. We know that Loewen Windows isn't the only company that's struggling, and we know also that they're struggling not because of the excellence with which they do their work and not because of the quality of their products because we know they do both excellent work and produce great products and that their workers and employees work extremely hard and very efficiently. We know those things, but they're being impacted by what's going on around us.

The problem they're facing in this downturn is that steps were not taken within the Province of Manitoba to prepare the policy framework that would be necessary to help them get through these difficult times. Most specifically, Mr. Speaker, what companies and employers are saying in Manitoba today is that because of our high tax load compared to other jurisdictions, because of the fact that we have a payroll tax introduced by the NDP government in the 1980s that continues to be in place today and which has been eliminated by other provinces around Canada during the years of bounty, over the last eight years, or scaled down, as a result of that payroll tax and a combination of other taxes and fees and charges and other ways this government nickels-and-dimes individual Manitobans and companies around the province, that they are struggling more today than they would have been otherwise, and that is having a negative impact on their ability to employ Manitobans who are looking to companies like Loewen to put bread on the table and to put a roof over the heads of their families.

So we see that as one microcosm, one example of what's happening. These are not partisan issues that are simply being brought forward by members of this House. These are issues that have been brought forward time and time again over the last nine years by members of the business community in Manitoba who have asked the government to move aggressively, to use the massive infusions of bailout

money from Ottawa that they've received over the last nine years to invest in the infrastructure of our province, to invest in making our taxes competitive and, also, Mr. Speaker, to prepare a framework that would ensure not just that the government would be there to skim money off of these companies in good times, but would be there to support those companies in difficult times.

That is the fundamental failure of the last nine years, Mr. Speaker. A story of missed opportunities. The government will talk, I'm sure, about reductions in the small-business tax, and we welcome those reductions. However, in the overall picture of taxes that are charged to companies, we know that this has a negligible impact on the major employers operating in Manitoba. Companies that employ large numbers, not even large numbers of people, companies that employ anywhere from eight people up get caught in the payroll-tax scenario. They get caught paying the high rate of corporate tax, which is not in line with what it is in other provinces. They have to deal with the array of red tape and other taxes, charges, fees, which they have had to confront from this government on a range of issues.

We see, Mr. Speaker, the increase in hydro rates caused in part by the government's reckless mismanagement of Hydro. We are seeing increases in MPI rates on commercial vehicles that was just released the other day, which is, again, going to have a negative impact on companies like Loewen and their ability to employ people. We see increases on fees and services on licences, on other areas across the board under this government. A lot of these nickel-and-diming of fees and charges and taxes that have been loaded up on the Manitoba economy are, today, doing what we had been concerned that they would do, and that is having a negative impact on the ability of Manitoba companies to employ Manitobans.

The mining industry, Mr. Speaker, just last week, came out and said, that over the last 10 years, that Manitoba has gone from being one of the most competitive jurisdictions in Canada for mining to being the least competitive jurisdiction in Canada for mining. They pointed to the fact that the tax on mining companies in Canada today, 18 percent. In Ontario, it's almost half of that at 10 percent. That's why companies, when they're looking at where they are going to invest, where they're going to prospect, are going to places like Ontario and other places. They're talking about the red tape that's been put in place by this government. The difficulty in obtaining

permits. We know that there's an obligation to consult, but this obligation does not mean that there is an obligation to bring industry, investment and job creation to a complete and total standstill in Manitoba, which is what is happening to the mining industry—6,400 Manitobans who rely for their jobs on the mining industry, the second most important primary industry in Manitoba, the lifeblood of the northern economy, and Manitoba is tenth out of 10 in terms of competitiveness. This government has put those 6,400 jobs at greater risk than otherwise would have been the case.

We know about agriculture. We've had a great amount of debate in this House about what this government is doing to the agricultural economy, another cornerstone of the province of Manitoba's economy. They have come in with heavy-handed regulations to punish agricultural producers. Another one of our great industries, hydro, which they're taking down the wrong path according to the financial experts and the engineers.

These are just a few examples, Mr. Speaker. It's agriculture that's being targeted by the government. Mining where we're tenth out of 10. We can go through the list of industries that, today, as a result of their lack of planning, as a result of their lack of foresight, as a result of the anti-business attitude that is evident by their policies who are being hurt, so I call on all members to support the resolution and call on the government for a true and open financial statement and a plan for the future of our economy.

\*(15:30)

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay, before recognizing the honourable Minister of Finance, I'd just like to remind all honourable members that speaking time for all members is 10 minutes. For an Opposition Day motion, it's 10 minutes.

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance):** I'd like to just start by reframing the cause of the international fiscal crisis. The member fundamentally misunderstands the cause of the crisis—the members opposite. It was because of massive deregulation in the United States. The specific area of deregulation that caused the problem was in the subprime mortgage market, where a policy of letting mortgages out to people that weren't able to sustain them was put in place which had, attended to it, a great deal of moral hazard. Those subprime mortgages were let out to people that did not have sufficient financial resources or income from

employment to pay those mortgages but were put out there on the hope that the rising price of houses would pay for the balloon payments that were structured into those mortgages. As they moved along and as they moved toward the stage where they had to make the balloon payments, the housing market started to go down, and the increased cost of paying the mortgage was not worth it when the house was going down in price. In addition, those mortgages had a non-recourse element to them where the person could walk away from the mortgage itself without having to put any of their other assets at risk. That was the building block No. 1.

Massive deregulation and lack of oversight by regulators in the American marketplace—a policy supported by members opposite through every fibre of their body; they believe in deregulating everything. They believe in a laissez-faire, we-don't-care approach to the marketplace. Now, when the chickens come home to roost, they try to redirect the analysis of this problem away from their own failed policies of the 1990s.

Secondly, those failed policies of the 1990s on deregulation were exacerbated by taking those mortgages and bundling them up and tranching them out into what they called CDOs, or collateralized debt obligations, and selling those off to investors all over the world, with ratings by the bond rating agencies that were also not regulated by the policies of the member opposite. So people thought they were buying A-rated, CDO, blue-chip products, subprime mortgages. The people selling those products had no interest other than collecting their fees on selling those products and ensuring that the mortgages were solvent, that they were stable and reliable financial products.

So then the risk was spread through the CDOs throughout the world. Many people bought these products without understanding that the credit rating didn't accurately portray the risk inherent in buying that. That was exacerbated even further, Mr. Speaker, by these things called CDSs, or credit default swaps, which were a form of unregulated insurance. Unregulated insurance in that there were no capital reserve requirements to be put behind those swap products. They were leveraged at 30 and 40 times. Leveraged at 30 and 40 times what the actual risk was so that the marketplace had no sense of whether the companies that were selling these highly leveraged insurance swaps could actually make good on them if they were ever called upon to do that. AIG was the prime example of that.

*Mr. Rob Altemeyer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

So the members opposite just fundamentally misunderstand the problem. It was a problem of deregulation multiplied by CDO products, exacerbated by default swaps, none of which were regulated. This risk was spread around the entire world with ratings on them by unregulated bond rating agencies. When the whole market started to collapse in the United States, it triggered multiple risk throughout companies around the entire developed world. The members opposite, because they fundamentally deny that, have no sense of how to solve that problem.

In the face of that kind of irresponsible deregulation, which was, as the member opposite has failed to acknowledge, the type of approach he took to venture capital investment funds in Manitoba, particularly labour-sponsored ones where they didn't regulate them properly, but what they did is they went and they tapped those resources of hardworking people of Manitoba to pair up with their failed investments, \$35 million of failed investments under the members opposite when they were in government. They started bringing down these labour-sponsored venture capital funds because they didn't properly supervise what was going on in there as the government regulator. Of course, we've brought legislation in to correct those failings and now have put that misdirected, misguided and under-regulated situation under a better set of legislative tools.

So, in Manitoba, how have we been managing this situation as it goes forward? Well, first of all, we provided an environment in Manitoba where retail sales have stayed among the strongest in the country. We've had an economic outlook which, even though the overall growth rate for the globe is going down, including the growth rate in Canada, including the growth rate in Manitoba, our relative position remains among the strongest of the Canadian provinces.

We're in the top half for sure. Last year, we were No. 1. This year we're in the No. 2 or 3 position and, going forward, we project to be among the leaders in economic growth in the country, even though the overall growth rate will be lower.

What's our competitive position among provinces? Well, our competitive position has always been that the cost of living is among the top three among all the provinces in Canada, all things under

methodology the members opposite developed when they were in government.

But even magazines called *MoneySense* magazine, when they look at Canadian cities, have ranked Canadian, Manitoba cities—Winnipeg, Brandon and Thompson—as among the most competitive, among the most affordable, as among the best cities to live in this country. We rank in the top 20.

We're the only province that has three cities in the top 20 in this country. An independent study, done by KPMG in 2008, showed that Winnipeg had the lowest, total, effective tax rate of 102 cities and 10 countries, 20th-lowest effective tax rate. Winnipeg had the third-lowest, effective, corporate income tax rate of 102 cities studied. Winnipeg had the third-lowest business costs among mid-sized Midwestern cities, ahead of most cities but very competitive with cities such as Oklahoma and Edmonton and Calgary.

Winnipeg's cost-effective industries were in the R&D sector, the software sectors: biotechnology, electronic product testing, advanced software. All of these areas were areas where we were extremely competitive.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, the members as usual put biased information on the record and then try to make that the dominant reality when they know very well that the competitive position of Manitoba has improved dramatically over the last nine years. In part, that's because of the entrepreneurial energy of the businesses, but also the policies we've put in place to support them.

Our manufacturing sector has done very well compared to other jurisdictions. Our Advanced Manufacturing Initiative has helped them adapt new, lean, manufacturing techniques, ideas they themselves have had but we've helped them spread those ideas to new industries. Our Manufacturing Investment Tax Credit—70 percent refundable—has allowed them to have money up front to invest in new technology, new buildings, new equipment. Under the members opposite, there was no refundable portion in that tax credit at all.

Our corporate tax rates have been moved from being the highest in the country, when the members opposite were in office, down to 13 percent. In our economic update statement in our Throne Speech, we said we'd take it to 12 percent.

Members opposite don't like to hear about this, but they had among the highest small-business tax rates in Canada when we came into office. They are now the lowest. We will keep them at the lowest.

I can't believe we're down to two minutes because I've just begun to elaborate the many things we've done. It's shocking but the good news is many of my other colleagues will pick up where I've left off and talk about some of the things we've done.

The members opposite talk about debt. Our debt costs are half of what they were. They used to be 13 cents on the dollar; they're now 6.5 cents on the dollar.

Our debt-to-GDP ratio has declined by a third, from about 32-plus percent to about 21 percent and change. Members opposite never acknowledged that. They voted against every single measure we've taken to reduce debt in this province. They voted against it every single time.

Our property taxes have been the slowest actuals, practically zero growth in property taxes on a net basis, the lowest rates in the country. The members opposite have voted against every measure we've taken to reduce property taxes.

In our economic update in our Throne Speech, Mr. Acting Speaker, we've giving greater guarantees to small-business-start programs. We're appointing an innovation council; we're improving pension regulations to increase the ability for companies to stay solvent and fund those pension plans.

We've doubled the Community Enterprise Investment Tax Credit to \$10 million from 5. We've increased the Feasibility Studies and Technology Commercialization programs. We committed to \$4.7 billion of spending in infrastructure for roads, water, sewer, hospitals, schools, recreation centres, all of those things which had fallen into a deficit, which had gone downhill under the members opposite.

\* (15:40)

In addition, we've increased our support for people to move out of social assistance into rewarding work. We've provided more supports there and we've provided more supports to people in apprenticeship programs. Mr. Acting Speaker, we've taken an approach which believes in the aspirations of Manitobans and supports Manitobans to be able to make a gainful living in this province, have higher

disposable income and a decent quality of life, all things which the members opposite only have the dimmest idea of what to do about.

**Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Carman):** I am certainly pleased to stand and support this resolution put forward today to consider releasing an economic plan of the province that reassures Manitobans that they really do have a plan both in the short-term and the long-term.

I must say I certainly thank the Minister of Finance for that long history lesson and analysis on the subprime mortgage in the U.S. because that is the very reason why we're bringing forward this motion, is because this resolution—because Manitobans want to be assured that Manitoba really will survive this and not have a subprime crisis in Manitoba. But this government refuses—they used, actually, the Throne Speech. It was just a rehash of re-announcements from the budget. Before the budget, there were so many re-announcements in there and it really doesn't give Manitobans any picture as to how will we survive through this economic downturn that's worldwide. It's going to have effects on Manitoba, there's no doubt about it. It will have effects here.

*Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

But there is no reassurance from this government. In fact, what they do instead is they bring in a bill like Bill 38 so that they don't have to balance budgets on a yearly basis. Now they just go with once every four years, and that does not give Manitobans any clear picture of where our financial position is, unlike everyday Manitobans who have to balance their budgets every year and every day. In fact, this government has been on a financial windfall for the last nine years. It's called transfer payments and equalization. That's what it's called, and that's what caused the financial windfall for this province. It's a false windfall because this is not going to continue. It cannot continue and it should not continue. Manitobans should have pride in being able to work towards becoming a have province and not be proud—Manitobans are not proud of being a have-not province. Apparently this government is.

But we would like to see some long-term planning. How will they come through this financial meltdown that the world is in right now?

This government has built up debt rather than lowering debt. The debt has risen over the past nine years. At the same time as other provinces are

lowering their debt, this Province has—it talks about their rainy day fund, the savings account at \$670 million. They'd like to use a larger number, but we always like to just talk about the unallocated portion of the rainy day fund. But, given their penchant for spending, I firmly believe that this government will spend that in one year, and we will be by the end of fiscal year 2010, I think that account will be empty just given the rate that they spend, and assuming that there's going to be lower transfer payments coming. Now, the government doesn't want to release a financial statement telling us any projections on transfer payments, so Manitobans can only assume the worst as to what's going to happen here.

This government has been coasting for the past nine years. When you have windfall money coming in, you tend to get careless and not pay attention to the real financial criteria, and we see that's happened. It's unfortunate. When we look to the West, we see how provinces like Saskatchewan has reduced their debt where Manitoba's has grown. In the meantime, they're so much more productive economy in Saskatchewan compared to ours not in any part, I am sure, that's due to a much easier tax regime in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan was a have-not province until recently, and there are fundamentals that have changed out there. Yes, they have oil revenue, and they have potash and uranium. We have potash, too, but the mining sector here is being beaten down and not able to expand. The oil revenue that we do have in southwest Manitoba keeps being driven into southeast Saskatchewan or North Dakota.

So it's not so much that we don't have the resources. We have the resources here, we have the abilities here. What we're lacking, and it's from this government, is we're lacking the will to do better because they've been living like a welfare state off federal transfer payments, and they will continue.

As I said, we have a mining tax that's not competitive with other regimes. We now have the introduction of Bill 6, another moratorium. I would've never guessed this government would bring in another moratorium. But here they are. They're going to put a moratorium on all development on the east side. The very people on the east side who need economic development, they're going to put a moratorium on them so that they can't have economic development.

We've seen it in agriculture. They've beaten down agriculture, and for all their howling about ag

questions, they really don't want to answer any questions because all they can do is put moratoriums on, more regulations. We've got the drainage police. We're now going to have food inspection police. If you want to encourage agriculture, it's not happening in this province because all they want to do is regulate it out. I really don't understand where they expect food to come from if you don't support agriculture.

The wind farm proposals, again, it's just absolutely incredible. If it gets a little stale, then just re-announce the same program. Don't worry, it's not going to happen anyway, but it sure keeps the presses running, and they can get some good presses out of all this. They're absolutely amazing at the ability to manage the press and yet do so little.

The tax regime. If you're going to be competitive with other provinces, all you have to do, and see how we're not competitive—of course we won't talk about the payroll tax, the fact that you're going to tax successful companies. You have small companies starting business in Manitoba, but the price of success in Manitoba is to have a payroll tax. The message in Manitoba is don't get too big, otherwise you'll pay a payroll tax, and in the world economy, if you can't compete, you're going to go elsewhere, and that's what this Province just thrives on doing. It's very unfortunate that they have that type of attitude.

The basic personal exemption again just shows how uncompetitive Manitoba is. This government feels that by raising the minimum wage they can help people. But what they actually do, every time they raise that minimum wage they're actually taxing back because our personal exemption is so low in this. If you would raise the minimum wage and raise personal exemption, you would actually have net money in your pocket. But this government does not like people to have net money because they have such a penchant for spending.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in Manitoba our personal exemption, and it's \$8,034—

**An Honourable Member:** It's going up to \$8,134.

**Mr. Pedersen:** Pardon me. It's going to go all the way up to \$8,134. That's just incredible here because—well, we won't want to compare Saskatchewan that will be at \$12,945. Can you imagine how much more money that would put in and particularly into low-income people? This would be a tremendous boost to low-income people—to all people, but especially low-income people. But, you

know, when you have, as we've seen—this government just cannot spend the money fast enough. They're grabbing service fees from every different department, from every different walk of life for Manitobans right now, and the only way that they will continue on this is to continue to tax.

\* (15:50)

What we're asking out of this resolution is, we're asking for an economic plan for the province that reassures Manitoba that they will be able to deal with the current economic crisis, both in the short term and in the long term. Obviously, that has not happened. They refuse to give us an economic plan. I think they're hiding. We are going to find out several years down the road how much farther in debt we are and how much they're in deficit, despite the Minister of Finance's (Mr. Selinger) assurances that we will not be in deficit.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The member's time has expired.

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** Madam Deputy Speaker, it certainly gives me pleasure to stand up and, after that speech we just heard, raise a few issues and correct a few comments that the member opposite put on the record.

The member opposite is wondering where the economic statement is. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would ask him to listen and to go back and read the Throne Speech—the Throne Speech that we just voted on yesterday, and the member opposite voted against, voted against because he does not believe in the kinds of decisions that we are making to stimulate the economy. Over \$4 billion in four years for infrastructure, that's a significant amount of money. I think what the member opposite does not agree with is that infrastructure money will be distributed across Manitoba. It will not be like the Conservatives who in their time had a map that did not include northern Manitoba.

Our government is different, Madam Deputy Speaker, and that's because, if you look at our caucus you will see that we represent all parts of this province. We represent rural, we represent urban and we represent the north. One of the items in the Throne Speech that is very important to me, and one I wanted to see was that this government was going to make a commitment to improve roads into single access communities.

In the area where the member lives, he has very good roads, very good roads. Yes, he'll complain that the pavement might be a little bumpy, but if you go to northern Manitoba you will see that this is very different. Of course, they never go to northern Manitoba so they won't recognize what this means to go into communities that are winter roads or very poor roads. That is an opportunity for economic development, economic stimulus. Our government is committed to that.

The member opposite talked about the revenues on potash that Saskatchewan had. Well, we might have those revenues, Madam Deputy Speaker, but he forgets to mention that under his party's administration, when they were in government, what did they do to our potash? They sold it off to a French company—sold it off to a French company, and it's been sitting idle. I want to give credit. We've been taking steps to bring that back so that we can develop it, but that's Tory economic development. Sell off the potash. Sell off the telephone system. Balance your books on the telephone system. That's Tory economics.

I also say, Madam Deputy Speaker, the member opposite talked about oil. Manitoba does not have nearly the oil that Saskatchewan and Alberta do, but I want to give credit to our Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mines (Mr. Rondeau) for the taxation system and the changes that he has made to ensure that the oil industry, the small industry that we have here develops. In fact, the decision that was announced just recently to help with greening the environment and getting rid of carbon dioxide going into the ground is going to increase the amount of oil production in this province. That, along with our hydro development, a contract which was just released yesterday, the second wind farm, one that the members opposite never thought about, and other issues are going to help this economy. We will stimulate the growth.

I'm quite surprised that the members opposite would vote against the budget such as we have here and then say there's no economic statement. They choose to say there is no economic statement because they don't want to read it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I see the member opposite talking—fearmongering—that we're not going to be able to balance the budget. Well, I challenge the member to watch us. Through our fiscal management, we have been able to put over \$800 million in the fiscal stabilization plan, and that

money will help us carry through the next couple of difficult years. With the economic activity, you will see, and I hope we will see, growth in this province.

The members opposite, I'm quite surprised as representatives of rural Manitoba and ones who say they continue to speak up for farmers, Madam Deputy Speaker, did not include anything about agriculture in this Opposition Day. You see, you talk as though you believe in something and you support something, but on the other hand, they don't ask questions about it. You know, they kept asking. I looked back at the records of what members opposite said through many of the difficult times our farmers have been facing because they have been facing difficult times, particularly in the Interlake during BSE.

What did the members opposite say? They said, give some cash advance for the farmers. You know, Madam Deputy Speaker, there have been several options. There's a targeted advance. There's a cash advance. Now what do they say? Oh, they need cash. They don't need an advance. Well, you just keep changing their mind about what it is that they want.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I think everybody in Manitoba will look at what this government has done and in every aspect of it, whether you talk to the business community, whether you talk to economists, they tell us that Manitoba is moving along steadily. No, we are not having the peaks and valleys of other provinces, but we are continually moving steadily along.

I find it quite ironic that at the federal level, they believe that by giving tax breaks, this will stimulate business, but when we have reduced taxes on small business, they say, oh, well, that's not good. So why is it okay for the federal Conservatives to give tax breaks and that's going to stimulate the economy, but the tax breaks that we have made for businesses, the reduction in taxes that we have given for low-income people, the reduction in school taxes, those aren't good for the economy? Can't have it both ways, Madam Deputy Speaker. Either you believe in reducing taxes or you don't, and you can't say the federal government is doing the right thing and the provincial government is doing the wrong thing.

The other point, Madam Deputy Speaker, that I just must speak on and that is the members opposite continue to talk about the payroll tax in this province. Well, I find it passing strange that during their 12 years of office, Gary Filmon, when he was

running for office to become Premier of this province said, we will eliminate the payroll tax.

**An Honourable Member:** In five years.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** In five years, we'll be done. Well, that's quite interesting. Here we have 12 years went by; nothing happened with the payroll tax; NDP came back into power; we have to remove that payroll tax. You know, that just makes no sense from the—you cannot say on one side of your mouth that you want payroll tax removed. Then, when you have the opportunity to do it, you don't do a thing. And then when you come back to opposition, let's remove the payroll tax again.

I think the taxes and the steps that we have been taking, Madam Deputy Speaker, have been fair. And on the farming side, I want to say to members opposite, there is the biggest agriculture budget that we have ever had in this province. We have put more money into support for our farmers, and I say, are all the programs working to the best of their ability? No. We always have to keep changing, but what did the members opposite do? They voted against support for farmers. They voted against infrastructure investment. They voted against everything in this Throne Speech and then they come and take their Opposition Day and say they want to talk about the economy.

\* (16:00)

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would welcome to say some things about the economy, because, you know, once in a while, it's okay to give somebody opposite credit if they do something right instead of just saying there's nothing right here because, sooner or later, nobody will believe you because it cannot all be wrong when you look around this province.

We are facing some difficult challenges and we will work through them. I hope that the members opposite can help work through those. They're talking about co-operation in Ottawa. I would say maybe the members opposite should think about some co-operation in this House and give some ideas, rather than going out to the media constantly and saying: There's nothing good in this Throne Speech; there's no economic stimulus here. Madam Deputy Speaker, that is not true. I would ask them to rethink what they are doing. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West):** Madam Deputy Speaker, the more I see the ministers of this government—this Crown—get up and talk about the

economy, the more I am distressed for the future of this province.

Fiscal management and the NDP is an oxymoron. Manitobans know that; Manitobans know that the NDP are not good fiscal managers. I heard the Finance Minister (Mr. Selinger) stand up and say that he has given his economic statement. I've heard the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) say the same thing in the Throne Speech.

Going through the Throne Speech line by line, there was nothing new other than what's already been restated from the original budget that was tabled in this House. There is nothing new. There is nothing but rehashed ideas, rehashed monies being spent, announcements being re-announced and re-announced and nothing new coming forward.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to give them a little lesson. I heard the lesson from the Finance Minister on what was the cause of this global crisis, this credit crunch that we're now finding ourselves in, the subprime mortgages that were put through in the United States with the lack of regulation.

I heard the lesson that the Finance Minister—in fact, I think he even blamed the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) in this House—he blamed him for the global credit crisis. That's how lost that they are on that side of the House, but what I'd like to do is give a little lesson of my own.

What happens is with a budget—the budget, Madam Deputy Speaker, when you table a budget, it's a guideline. I've done hundreds of budgets for hundreds of different organizations or different properties. It's a guideline and it's a window at that point in time, okay?

When you take the budget and you put it forward, there are different variables that are affecting that budget. You don't have the opportunity to have the crystal ball, so you put your numbers on that budget, dependent upon what that time line is at the present time.

The variables have changed. We recognize that there have been changes in the financial world out there—the real world, okay? We recognize that revenue streams have changed. We recognize that the revenues that were put into that budget are going to be affected, probably in a negative fashion.

So there are very smart people in the Department of Finance. They should be and probably are now sitting down, working their numbers and saying, this

is where we are now at this window in time. All we're asking is would they please come forward and tell us where we are there.

The expenses are the same thing, Madam Deputy Speaker. They raised the expenses by 6.2 percent, budget-to-budget in the budget. Now the problem is, if you don't get the revenues coming forward, you can't make those expenses.

As a matter of fact, I heard with my own ears the Finance Minister say: We have to moderate expenses. Good for him. He's actually taking some action, but he won't tell us what that action is. Maybe he doesn't know what that action is. Moderate expenses—what does that mean exactly, Mr. Finance Minister? Will you tell us how you're going to moderate, where those expenses are going to be reduced and ratcheted back? That's what we're asking for—that economic statement.

So we've got revenues. We've got expenses, but there's something else and I asked the question the other day. We've got substantial investments in pension funds. As a matter of fact, this government has been taking great glee in saying that they went to the markets a year ago and borrowed \$1.5 billion—\$1.5 billion.

In fact, the Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson), the Minister of Finance, they've all stood in this House and said: Isn't it wonderful that we are now going to borrow the \$1.5 billion that was an unfunded liability on the books? We're going to bring it in and we're going to put it into a pension account.

Now that happened a year ago. They're paying money on \$1.5 billion. They're paying interest on that. It's over a period of 30 years. They're paying interest, and they brought that money in and they invested it; \$1.5 billion of our money that we have to pay for over the next 30 years is now sitting in an account somewhere and we asked a simple question: How are the investment portfolios performing? How are they performing? You know the answer I got, Madam Deputy Speaker? Well, investment portfolios throughout the world aren't performing very well. Well, please tell us how well they are not performing. It's an open book. Manitobans have the right to know. But no, there is no economic statement coming forward.

Do you know what I heard the other day from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger)? Well, we'll

wait until there's another budget that we table next year. Well, it's not good enough. Other provinces aren't doing that. Other provinces are standing up in their Legislatures and they're saying to their people in their provinces, here's where we're at, and here's what we have to do in order to make it work.

Saskatchewan came forward. You know what they did? They retired debt and they reduced taxes. As a matter of fact, this coming year, they said, in order to stimulate the economy in our province what we're going to do is we're going to reduce personal income tax. We're going to raise the basic personal exemption. Listen very carefully, we're going to raise the basic personal exemption by \$4,000. We're going to take it to almost \$13,000 which means every man, woman and child in Saskatchewan who pays taxes, for the first \$13,000 that they earn, they don't have to pay. They said 80,000 people would be taken off the tax rolls in Saskatchewan. What's that going to do? It's going to generate economy. People are going to have money and they're going to be able to use it to spend. They're going to be able to use it to generate more economy. That's what economy is. It's not sitting on your hands and saying, oh, we have to ask the federal government for more money because if we don't ask the feds for more money we're not going to be able to generate economy in Manitoba, 'cause that's what we do here. But, no, Saskatchewan stood up and said here's what we're going to do.

Alberta stood up and they said to the people of Alberta, here's our current fiscal situation. They said, our \$8.5-billion surplus is now a \$2-billion surplus, but we have to start ratcheting back or we're going to go into deficit. They said, we're not going to do that, so what we're going to do is we're going to start ratcheting back and not spend that additional \$2 billion the way we said we were going to do it in the first place.

B.C., the Premier of British Columbia stood up and put forward a 10-point plan, a 10-point plan on how to deal with the fiscal instability that's going on in the markets right now. The first thing he said was, we're going to be a deficit-free zone and he showed the people of British Columbia how he was going to achieve that.

Our Finance Minister, what does he do? He changes the legislation, says that it's going to be a deficit-free zone and does a summary budget and spends money based on how much the Crown corporations bring in. It's a smoke and mirrors, 'cause it's a deficit budget, and I wish he would simply

stand up and tell us the honest truth that it is, in fact, a deficit budget. That's all we're asking. That's all we're asking. If you want to run a deficit, that's fine. That's the NDP ideology, anyway. If you want to run a deficit, that's fine, but just tell us that you're running a deficit. Don't hide behind summary budgets. Don't hide behind the Auditor General. Don't hide behind Bill 38.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, we have some serious problems fiscally in this province right now. We've got B.C., Saskatchewan, Alberta telling us what it's all about, but you know what? I even asked a simple little thing: Where are we now? Where are we in this window of time? How have the adjustments been made on the budget that was put forward some nine months ago? I said, at the very least, would you please table the second-quarter financial statements so that we can see if we're on-line with revenue, if we're on-line with expenses? That's pretty simple to do. I asked the Finance Minister: Have you got the second quarterlies? He said to me, you will receive them in the normal time frame. You will receive them in the normal time frame, December 23. All right?

\* (16:10)

Ministers of the Crown have tabled second-quarterly financials. The Minister of Competitiveness, Training and Trade (Mr. Swan), tabled the financials for Manitoba Lotteries the other day. We had another minister table the second-quarter financials of another corporation, but the Finance Minister obviously doesn't have them and is incompetent, or has them and is hiding behind them. All we've asked is, please table the second-quarter financials so we can see them now, as opposed to 23 days from now. The minister said, and I quote again: We'll do it in the normal time frame.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, what we're dealing with right now is not normalcy. This is not a normal time financially, not only in the globe, but also in the province of Manitoba.

So let's not just deal like we would normally do. Let's take some initiative and do something a little out of the ordinary, and actually be proactive and put the financials forward so we can see—and we'd love to help you. We'd love to help you because Manitobans deserve a good fiscal plan going forward.

The worst part that we have here is that I do disagree on a number of circumstances. I do disagree

with a number of issues with the Finance Minister. I disagree with him on taxation. I honestly believe that Manitobans are becoming less competitive because of our tax regime. Saskatchewan and New Brunswick have done a complete—

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The member's time has expired.

**Mr. Borotsik:** Oh, I'm sorry. I've got so much to do with debt and with taxes.

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** I think it's obvious after the last few comments from members opposite why they wanted to substitute another motion for consideration today. Because, you know, if you ever want to see the difference in this House you could look at the half-hearted approach of members opposite on probably the most pressing issue of the day, the economy of Manitoba. You know what? I know why they're half-hearted about this, somewhat dispirited I might suggest, and that is because, you know, a lot easier to huff and puff like they did earlier in question period in an attempt to change a motion that—how long ago was it they submitted this motion? I mean they would much rather look to Ottawa for some form of inspiration and some sort of vision because we all know, and we saw the Member for Brandon West that—you know, this is an opposition that is completely devoid of any vision when it comes to the economy of this province.

Now I know it's difficult for them to deal with this because, you know, they're still stuck in the '90s. But this government has balanced the budget every single year that we have been in office since 1999. We've not only balanced the budget, we've built up the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. I dare it, by not selling off a Crown corporation like members opposite did in the 1990s. What we've done is we've seen some of the most balanced growth in any period of history in this province that's reflected not only in the economic numbers, but we have now got a growing population thanks to immigration and in-migration and the growth of population in this province. You know, we have 1.2 million Manitobans who are all proving that the vision for this province, not just our government's vision, but the vision for this province that we share with so many Manitobans is clearly working.

*Ms. Marilyn Brick, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

Now I want to, you know, just wonder what planet members have been on the last number of

days, because in their statements, they're either into a sort of—you know, I appreciate the challenge of the Member for Brandon West being the opposition Finance critic. You know, I thought we were into Finance Estimates here. You know, that's one of the toughest jobs and it used to be probably something that all the Tory members would want. But it's pretty tough to get up and attack a government that's got a record of successive balanced budgets. But what strikes me about it—no, just over the last number of days, look at some of the initiatives we have seen announced that clearly recognize that we, as a provincial government, get it when it comes to the economy.

I want to know, for example, we said a number of weeks ago that our first priority in the economic slowdown, even though we have not been as impacted as other jurisdictions, would be to increase infrastructure spending. I was very proud of our Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Lemieux) when he announced just a matter of days ago, an additional \$45 million for highway construction in the province of Manitoba. Now I want to put on the record, by the way, just how significant that is.

Now, first of all, we have a \$4-billion, 10-year plan, and I want to credit Manitoba Vision 2020, Transport Vision 2020. In fact, the number of members in this House under the leadership of the Member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) put forward a vision that said we need, and I believe it was \$3.2 billion over 10 years. Well, we went above and beyond that at \$4 billion, and we've again gone above and beyond it. We are building highways in every part of the province, every single part of the province.

Now, I want to put in perspective what that means, by the way. In the first three years of that plan, we have already spent nearly as much as the Conservatives spent the entire decade of the 1990s. You know, I love when members opposite try and play the divide-and-conquer approach; they always do with issues. We see it earlier in question period on a national scale, but we see it here in the province.

I'll never forget when the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) in the election got up in the Arthur-Virden constituency and said he was going to cut highways funding in northern Manitoba. By the way, their definition of northern Manitoba is north of the Riding Mountain National Park.

I've got news for them by the way. If they go further north than that, the Earth is not flat. They won't fall off the edge of the planet. Maybe just sometime, they should spend a bit of time in northern Manitoba—as they define it, north of Riding Mountain National Park—to see how much is happening and how much we are an important part of this province.

But you know what? Here are the numbers. In the 1990s, they spent \$1.4 billion on highways. In the first three years of this highways' program, we've spent \$1.2 billion. And, yes, more is going in northern Manitoba, the 25 percent commitment, but do the math here. We've actually virtually tripled the spending on infrastructure over what they spent.

So what that means by the way—northern Manitoba—yes, we're getting more focus. Not hard when you consider the 1990s. The members opposite spent about 5 percent of the capital budget in northern Manitoba; we spent 25 percent.

But let's put it on the record that, under the NDP, every single region of this province is getting more spending on highways than under the Conservatives.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

They can talk; they can huff; they can puff. The bottom line is you want highways, anywhere in Manitoba—north, south, east, west or right here in our capital region—it's the NDP that has the proven record, the proven record in terms of investment.

I want to talk about other announcements. I saw today—actually, I was pleased to see the president of Manitoba Hydro in the building, Mr. Speaker. I was joking when he walked by. It was that sort of wind movement that was coming because we've just seen the announcement of, again, another major project in this province—300 megawatts in terms of wind power.

Put in perspective, the Wuskwatim dam is a very important investment for Manitoba Hydro. That is 200 megawatts. You add it up—by the way, we had another announcement of a contract for Wuskwatim. You add already the investment through our pride and joy here, Manitoba Hydro. We have got a significant investment in energy in this province.

It's interesting. I love the members opposite new-found converts to raising issues in regard to mining. But again, if they actually came up north and saw what has been happening—I know our Minister

of Mines (Mr. Rondeau) responded in question period, I think, very well in terms of that.

We see right now in fact a softening of metal prices, but they should maybe come up to my constituency and visit Wabowden and see what's happening with the Bucko mine which is a major investment.

We're going to see mining for the first time since the 1970s in Wabowden, Mr. Speaker. You know what? The strength of the mining industry should never, ever, ever be underestimated—the major investment in Vale Inco that is taking place, the tremendous exciting deposit at the Lalor mine in the Snow Lake area.

I think the very encouraging signs in terms of potential for gold, uranium, precious metals. Mining is very much an important part of this economy.

Maybe they attended the reception at the mining conference. If they had stuck to some of the working sessions, they'd find out—don't give up on our mining industry, no matter what the world price is right now. We have a long-term future and Manitoba has an excellent reputation nationally and internationally as a place to do business in terms of the mining industry.

But, you know, I love their silence on the farm economy. I was joking earlier, when they were getting up in question period. I think the only farm in the question period today was sort of the farm-team approach of members opposite. Clearly, they've been—and I want to acknowledge—I think it was the Member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff) who said, the bush-league approach here. They're so anxious to be surrogates of what's happening in terms of Ottawa.

We had Farmer Appreciation Day there yesterday. Our Deputy Premier (Ms. Wowchuk) got up and talked about the importance of farmers and the farm sector in our economy. The Leader of the Opposition got up and it was like he got his marching orders from Ottawa. I know he almost became a federal candidate, Mr. Speaker. But, you know what? Last I heard, he's an MLA, we're MLAs.

\* (16:20)

I said from my seat the other day, and I know the Premier (Mr. Doer) acknowledged this: What goes on in Ottawa stays in Ottawa, and you know what?

Focus in on the economy. That is the real concern for Manitobans.

Now, I just want to, in my concluding remarks, Mr. Speaker, one of the differences between us and the members opposite, quite apart from the fact they're stuck in the 1990s, or is it the 1890s? I'm never too sure. They're certainly stuck in the past. They don't get that the solutions that we're going to find, in whatever the situation is with the economic downturn, are going to be co-operative solutions. Every region, that's the first part. Men and women, people of all backgrounds, all sectors of the economy, business and labour, you can't get a maximum benefit in this province, in any situation, good or bad or indifferent, if you have division.

Their approach on the economy has always been one of division. We saw it again today. They're completely devoid of any vision, Mr. Speaker. I would suggest that, if you want to see proof of it, it's this half-hearted, half-thought-out, half-baked, half-witted attempt to put forward some sense that the Conservatives care about the economy. They're more concerned about what's happening with their federal leader right now than they are about the Manitoba economy. That's why I oppose this resolution—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** I rise to speak to this opposition resolution, and with considerable concerns. We all expected that there would be a real economic statement at about the time of the Throne Speech, and we didn't receive it. We didn't get an update of any real substance on projected revenue changes, projected changes to expenditures, Mr. Speaker, adjustments to the budget, sector-by-sector projection.

The result is that it's very disappointing. It's very difficult to plan. It's difficult to know how well or poorly Manitoba may actually be doing. A lot of hot air coming from the other side of the Chamber doesn't alleviate the concern that many Manitobans have that, in fact, there are some serious problems in our economy.

I am hearing about numerous—in one call, about 300 businesses in Manitoba going bankrupt. It doesn't speak to an economy which is healthy all over the place, and certainly raises concerns that there may be some emerging problems on the horizon that we should be well preparing for and that the Throne Speech should've provided much better

projections of the changes that are happening, assessment of the situation. Indeed, a Throne Speech, by its very nature, is not an economic statement, and we should've had a separate and detailed economic update with projections and with some plans, budgetary plans, in terms of what this government is going to do.

The Throne Speech did deal with some plans for spending on infrastructure. This is a good thing in general in times of economic downturn, although we're watching very carefully in terms of how this is rolled out. There are some who see that the economy, in terms of infrastructure, is still fairly hot and that the new spending should've actually been directed to some other critical areas of the economy. But we lack the sector-by-sector projections that we should've had in order to know what was happening with enough specificity and enough detail that we could've had good plans.

We may be in for some significant surprises and that will be a problem going into some major surprises, if indeed that comes forward in terms of the fact that the Throne Speech could've been heading in the wrong direction, given what is happening in the economy, and what needs to be done.

There are, I would suggest, needs to understand that the nature of the economy is changing. I would suggest there is need to understand that the government should have been looking at opportunities for making sure that costs in health care were better managed. I would have expected, for example, a major push on preventing illness and keeping people well in order to manage costs, because we know that keeping people healthy during a depression or a recession is going to be very, very important because the last thing we need is skyrocketing medical expenses at the same time as we've got other costs going up and revenues going down. So, certainly, I would have expected that this government would have provided us a lot more detail in terms of where they were going to save dollars, and where they were going to prevent illness.

For example, we have an epidemic of diabetes which is occurring in Manitoba at the moment. This epidemic is acknowledged on the Web site of the government, but they didn't even mention diabetes in their Throne Speech, in spite of the fact that it's a significant element in the escalating costs that we're seeing in health care. This epidemic is not just occurring here; it's occurring elsewhere. In fact, the

United Nations recognizes that there's an epidemic in diabetes that needs to be addressed. Yet the Throne Speech was totally silent on this major epidemic of a major illness occurring right now here in Manitoba. It was as if the NDP were sort of out to lunch when they wrote this Throne Speech. They forgot about some major elements which should have been there. It's very difficult to understand how they could draft such a Throne Speech with such major gaps in it, which are vital, and which need to be there.

One would have expected also, given a recession and the potential problems with mental illness, stress and so on, that there would have been a section on the prevention of mental illness in addressing this area, but, sadly, that was completely lacking as well. There was no attempt to make significant changes to the regional health authorities. Of course, we have had yesterday many who came from Virden, in large numbers, here because their emergency room has been closed for months, and this government has done nothing about it. Why wasn't there some attempt to change the management structure, the way that RHAs work so that, in fact, we can get a better health-care system? It was sadly, sadly lacking.

Also lacking was direction in terms of—we know we're heading to an economy where it is a green economy, where products and services which are environmental are going to be much more in demand. We see this in terms of the cars that people are buying now, the report just in the last 48 hours that Toyota is having increasing sales with fuel-efficient cars and other car manufacturers, like Chrysler and GM, are having decreasing sales. If you're not with the change in the economy, your company is, and your business is, in trouble. I've seen this as I go around the province, that businesses which are ahead of the curve in terms of what's happening with the environment are growing. Those which are behind the curve are having trouble.

There are clearly major opportunities in terms of ecotourism in Manitoba, but these were not addressed in terms of any real plan to how to build the economy in terms of ecotourism, and many other areas in this province. This was sadly deficient. We are, as Liberals, going to support the opposition resolution, because we believe that the absence of a real economic statement and the absence of a plan to address the situation is poor.

\* (16:30)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hour being 4:30 p.m., pursuant to rule 24(14), I must interrupt the debate to put the question on the motion of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen).

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

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

#### Voice Vote

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

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

#### Formal Vote

**Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Official Opposition House Leader):** A recorded vote, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** A recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

\* (16:50)

Order. The question before the House is the motion moved by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen).

#### Division

*A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:*

#### Yeas

*Borotsik, Briese, Cullen, Derkach, Driedger, Dyck, Eichler, Faurschou, Gerrard, Graydon, Hawranik, Lamoureux, McFadyen, Mitchelson, Pedersen, Rowat, Schuler, Stefanson, Taillieu.*

#### Nays

*Allan, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Blady, Braun, Brick, Caldwell, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Jennissen, Jha, Korzeniowski, Lemieux, Marcelino, Martindale, McGifford, Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Reid, Rondeau, Saran, Selby, Selinger, Struthers, Swan, Wowchuk.*

**Madam Deputy Clerk (Bev Bosiak):** Yeas 19, Nays 31.

**Mr. Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

\* \* \*

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader):** I wonder if there is leave of the House to call 5 o'clock.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it the will of the House to call it 5 o'clock? *[Agreed]*

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

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Wednesday, December 3, 2008**

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