

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

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Ninth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
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.
BLAIKIE, Bill, Hon.	Elmwood	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.
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, Hon.	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.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Wellington	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McFADYEN, Hugh	Fort Whyte	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	N.D.P.
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Carman	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
ROWAT, Leanne	Minnedosa	P.C.
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELBY, Erin	Southdale	N.D.P.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WHITEHEAD, Frank	The Pas	N.D.P.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.
<i>Vacant</i>	Concordia	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, December 14, 2009

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: O Eternal and Almighty God, from Whom all power and wisdom come, we are assembled here before Thee to frame such laws as may tend to the welfare and prosperity of our province. Grant, O merciful God, we pray Thee, that we may desire only that which is in accordance with Thy will, that we may seek it with wisdom, know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and for the welfare of all our people. Amen.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 10—The Proceedings Against the Crown Amendment Act

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan), that Bill No. 10, The Proceedings Against the Crown Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les procédures contre la Couronne

, be now read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: Been moved by the honourable Minister for Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade, seconded by the honourable Attorney General, that Bill No. 10, The Proceedings Against the Crown Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Mr. Bjornson: The agreement on internal trade is an agreement intended to eliminate trade barriers and promote labour mobility in Canada. This bill amends The Proceedings Against the Crown Act to enable various orders made against the government of Manitoba under the strength and rules of the agreement on internal trade for government-to-government disputes to be enforced as a court order.

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

Bill 208—The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Ban on Government Cheque Cashing Fees)

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Minnedosa (Mrs. Rowat), that Bill No. 208, The

Consumer Protection Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable member for River East, seconded by the honourable member for Minnedosa, that Bill No. 208, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Ban on Government Cheque Cashing Fees), be now read a first time.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, Bill 208 will amend The Consumer Protection Act to prohibit any fee from being charged to cash a provincial government cheque. It would ensure that recipients keep all of their money regardless of who cashes their cheque and doesn't penalize those people who don't have bank accounts.

It won't cost the taxpayers of Manitoba anything, Mr. Speaker, and it puts money and keeps money in the hands of people who need it most.

I would hope all members of the Legislature would consider supporting this bill.

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

PETITIONS

PTH 15—Twinning

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition.

In 2004, the Province of Manitoba made a public commitment to the people of Springfield to twin PTH 15 and the floodway bridge on PTH 15, but then in 2006, the twinning was cancelled.

Injuries resulting from collisions on PTH 15 continue to rise and have doubled from 2007 to 2008.

In August 2008, the Minister of Transportation stated that preliminary analysis of current and future traffic demands indicate that local twinning will be required.

The current plan to replace the floodway bridge on PTH 15 does not include twinning and, therefore,

does not fulfil the current nor future traffic demands cited by the Minister of Transportation.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Ashton) consider the immediate twinning of the PTH 15 floodway bridge for the safety of the citizens of Manitoba.

Signed by R. McIvor, K. Pudiewich, M. Sersen and many, many other Manitobans.

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

Ophthalmology Services—Swan River

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The Swan Valley region has a high population of seniors and a very high incidence of diabetes. Every year, hundreds of patients from the Swan Valley region must travel to distant communities for cataract surgery and additional pre-operative and post-operative appointments.

These patients, many of whom are sent as far away as Saskatchewan, need to travel with an escort who must take time off work to drive the patient to his or her appointments without any compensation. Patients who cannot endure this expense and hardship are unable to have the necessary treatment.

The community has located an ophthalmologist who would like to practise in Swan River. The local Lions Club has provided funds for the necessary equipment, and the Swan River Valley hospital has space to accommodate this service.

The Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) has told the Town of Swan River that it has insufficient infrastructure and patient volumes to support a cataract surgery program; however, residents of the region strongly disagree.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Health to consider rethinking her refusal to allow an ophthalmologist to practise in Swan River and to consider working with

the community to provide this service without further delay.

This is signed by Esther Nemetchek, Milton Nemetchek, Ann Zinchuk and many, many others, Mr. Speaker.

Whiteshell Provincial Park—Lagoons

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Manitoba's provincial parks were established to protect our natural resources and the environment for future generations.

In July 2009 the lagoons in the vicinity of Dorothy Lake and Otter Falls in the Whiteshell Provincial Park overflowed, creating concerns that untreated sewage made its way into the Winnipeg River system and ultimately into Lake Winnipeg.

In addition, emergency discharges had to be undertaken at lagoons in the Whiteshell Provincial Park four times in 2005, once in 2007 and once in April 2009.

Concerned stakeholders in the Whiteshell Provincial Park have repeatedly asked the provincial government to develop plans to address the shortcomings with the park's lagoons and to ensure the environment is protected, but the plans have not materialized.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Blaikie) to consider acknowledging that more timely action should have been taken to address the shortcomings with the lagoons in the Whiteshell Provincial Park in order to protect the environment.

To request the Minister of Conservation to consider immediately developing short- and long-term strategies to address the shortcomings with the lagoons in the Whiteshell Provincial Park and to consider implementing them as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, this petition has been signed by Jack Kelly, Florence Kupiak, Helen Kovacs and many, many others.

* (13:40)

Manitoba Liquor Control Commission— Liquor Licences

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

And 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 business owners.

The decision to increase the annual licence fee, while at the same time eliminating the 2 percent supplementary licence fee payable on purchases of spirits, wine and coolers, has effect—has the effect of greatly disadvantaging small 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're 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. Mackintosh) to consider working with MLCC to find alternate means of addressing rising administration costs; and

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

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.

And this petition is signed by Angelina Pelletier, Jen Heinrichs and Cagney Scott and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Education Funding

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

Historically, the Province of Manitoba has received funding for education by the assessment of property that generates taxes. This unfair tax is only applied to selected property owners in certain areas and confines.

Property-based school tax is becoming an ever-increasing burden without acknowledging the owner's income or owner's ability to pay.

The provincial sales tax was instituted for the purpose of funding education. However, monies generated by this tax are being placed in general revenue.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan) consider removing education funding by school tax or education levies from all property in Manitoba.

To request that the Minister of Education consider funding—finding a more equitable method of funding education, such as general revenue, following the constitutional funding of education by the Province of Manitoba.

This petition, Mr. Speaker, is signed by Keith Zdebiak, Donald Reder and John Laporte and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us today, we have the mayor of Chesterfield Inlet, Nunavut, Harry Tootoo and his partner, Lena.

And, also, to inform the House that Harry is my brother, and on behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Manitoba Hydro Bipole III West-Side Location

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): And with the presence of your brother, you can count on extra good behaviour from MLAs today, I know, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure—and I'm sure very direct and candid responses from the government to questions today.

Mr. Speaker, with the reality that Manitoba's economy this year is gonna be flat and hundreds of jobs being lost over the past period of time, we're hearing from many Manitobans who are concerned about the fact that their hydro rates are going up by 15 percent over the next few years after having gone up over the last few years.

At public hearings around the province, hearings which should have been held before the decision was made, we're hearing from experts, we're hearing from regular Manitobans, we're hearing from people from corner to corner across Manitoba, that their decision to spend in excess of more than \$600 million on a much longer west-side power line, driving up rates on Manitoba families, jeopardizing the reliability of our power system, is wrong for Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, the editorial—today's *Free Press* said that this line will be intrusive and destructive. It's not too late for the government to change their position on this decision. Unlike other issues which sometimes come up in this House, this is one that they can still get right.

Will the new minister take a new look at this bad old decision?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): Mr. Speaker, the member knows full well that there has been tremendous consultation on the east side. There was over a hundred meetings. We're in our third round of consultation on the west side. People all through the possible areas up where the line will go have been consulted, and very soon Hydro will determine the—make a selection on which should be the site.

But the member opposite refuses to recognize how important it is to build a line. It—we need it for reliability. We need it for our sales. The members opposite would have us go back to the drawing

board, and he would probably have us not build the dams either, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, the shorter, more efficient east-side line that we favour and that is supported by the experts at Hydro—the engineers, the CEO, all of the experts and environmental analysts who have looked at it favour the shorter east-side line—can be built four years faster than the west-side line. We wanna get it built. We wanna get it built four years faster, and they have an opportunity now to listen.

Now, the minister talks about consultation. The fact is that it was the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger) that wrote to the board of Hydro two years ago, Mr. Speaker, and only now are these public consultations take place.

Now that the public is speaking up and the experts are coming forward, will they listen to those consultations or is this just a phony public relations exercise?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, we know what the member opposite's position is on the heritage park. The member opposite, if he had his way, would slash the size of the heritage park to about—to 80—by 80 percent. He should listen to what other people are saying about the importance of preserving the boreal forest for environmental reasons, out of respect for First Nations.

But the member opposite talks about the engineers, and I have a lot of respect for engineers. In fact, I have a brother who's an engineer. I respect them. But I would hope that those engineers who are speaking now would talk to the sales department, Mr. Speaker. It is in the sales—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, it is in the sales department that we have to be ensured that we have the right information.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, I'm a little perplexed that the minister seems to be saying that the sales department is responsible for deciding where to locate transmission lines. That's what she's saying. You know, it's almost as surreal as the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger) making decisions about where to locate transmission lines.

The engineers have said that the line that the NDP have selected runs risks of being knocked over because of its proximity to the existing lines. It cuts east to west across the width of the province of

Manitoba, making it more susceptible to outages from weather events, Mr. Speaker. They've said, of course, that it's gonna cost a minimum of \$640 million more—that's \$2,000 for every Manitoba family—and that it's gonna take four years longer to build, not to mention the 40 megawatts of lost energy which could close coal-fired plants in Minnesota and Wisconsin. If they cared about greenhouse gas emissions, if they wanted to back up the talk in Copenhagen with action, they'd want to close coal-fired plants in Minnesota and Wisconsin instead of keeping them running.

Mr. Speaker, this decision is wrong on every count. It hurts the environment; it increases greenhouse gas emissions. Will the minister listen to the experts and to regular Manitobans who are united on this decision?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, we listen to all Manitobans, and when we did those hearings and those consultations on the east side, we listened to the people on the east side, and we listened to our—to the people in Minnesota and Wisconsin where we have sales. The member opposite probably would not have any sales. There is about \$20 billion at risk here if we do not have the lines to deliver the energy.

* (13:50)

The member opposite talks about closing down coal plants. Well, Mr. Speaker, they need electricity to be able to close down those coal plants. The member opposite does not get it. He doesn't realize that we do need line—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Wowchuk: —in order to deliver—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Wowchuk: —power to our customers—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Wowchuk: —and that's why we're doing consultation on the west side right now and they will—Hydro will determine where the west-side line will go, Mr. Speaker.

Diagnostic Services of Manitoba Review of Mismanagement Allegations

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, on Friday the Minister of Health brushed

aside some very serious allegations from a whistle-blower about unsafe patient care in Manitoba labs.

She said that the whistle-blower's allegation was unfounded and that, and I quote—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mrs. Driedger: —and I quote: ". . . the facts did not meet the allegations and indeed no patient harm was done." End quote. In essence, she is calling the whistleblower a liar.

Mr. Speaker, can this Minister of Health tell us who exactly told her that there was no unsafe patient care at Manitoba labs?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): Once again the member, I think, is being selective in the quote that she's reading. I said, in specific reference to a very disturbing allegation concerning a specific patient in the—in the whistle-blower's case.

Naturally that was the very first place that the investigation began. Medical doctors reviewed the issue of the allegation. It was of great relief to discover that at that time the allegation and the facts that were presented did not match the facts that were discovered at that time, that that particular patient was found to not have harm done to them.

But, as I said on Friday, the rest of the allegations are going to continue to be investigated by a respected independent doctor, and we're going to work to assist in any way that we can with that investigation.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, a horrendous misdiagnosis was made in one case, and we're just talking one case for the moment. A patient was sent home with a diagnosis of a benign lesion by pathologist X.

Pathologist X ignored the whistle-blower's consultation letter that said the lesion was invasive and malignant. That pathologist X sent the patient home anyway.

So proper treatment was withheld for a year, never given, and then this patient experienced a massive recurrence of cancer. He is now at risk from metastases, additional reoccurrences, and worse.

So I'd like to ask the Minister of Health to please explain how she could possibly say, and I quote: ". . . no patient harm was done." End quote.

Ms. Oswald: I informed the House on a specific allegation that was made in the pathologist's report,

that review from medical doctors was done to make those determinations. But I want to assure the House and the member opposite that an internal review and indeed an external review of the entire—the entire allegation, top to bottom, will be done, not only by an independent doctor but from a pathologist outside of the province of Manitoba, to ensure that all of the allegations that are being made are thoroughly reviewed, that any issues of patient safety, should they come forward, will be reported immediately.

Our record on this is very clear, as indicated by doctors on a national level, that we will swiftly inform the public should those concerns present themselves, and we will make available resources to any patients that have concerns, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, this Minister of Health on Friday made a number of comments basically inferring that this whistle-blower was a liar.

Mr. Speaker, over the last three days—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, over the last three days, I have heard from three lab technologists and one pathologist. All have said that the whistle-blower allegations are absolutely true and that the comments made by this Minister of Health are dead wrong.

They feel that there is an attempt to cover up the truth about the mess at Diagnostic Services Manitoba. In fact, Mr. Speaker, this Minister of Health has covered up the death about Brian Sinclair and how he died in an emergency room after waiting 34 hours for care.

Why is she now attempting to cover up the mess at our Manitoba labs, and why is she not being more forthcoming, Mr. Speaker?

Ms. Oswald: And, once again, this review is going to take place to look at all of the allegations from the doctor that has come forward.

I would recommend to the member if she has information that she believes is critical to this investigation, I would encourage her and welcome her to share that information with Dr. Macdonald, as any individual within Diagnostic Services Manitoba has been invited to do, any citizen that would have information that would substantiate any of these allegations or help Dr. Macdonald and the external pathologist to do this review.

I welcome her bringing that information forward. We're going to continue to work with Dr. Macdonald.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order. The honourable minister.

Ms. Oswald: We're going to continue to support this external review and do as we've done in the past, put patients first.

We're not worried like the member opposite about getting our picture in the paper. We're worried about patients.

Bill 208

Government Support

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Bill 208 stems from a conversation I had with a gentleman in my constituency office who wondered why he had to pay a fee to cash his provincial disability cheque, and I didn't have a good answer for him, Mr. Speaker.

So, as a result, I've introduced Bill 208 today and would like to ask the Minister of Family Services if he'd be willing to support the bill which prohibits fees from being charged to cash provincial government cheques.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs): As members will know, this is an issue that has been debated very recently in this House, and, indeed, this Legislature was one of the first, if not the first in Canada, to put in place a system to make sure that the cashing of government cheques did not result in unfairness to the recipients of government monies.

And, as a result, a new system was put in place so that the Public Utilities Board would review, after hearing from stakeholders, the amount that could be charged.

It's very important, by the way, that we not put in place any system, as the member appears to be proposing, that would result in Manitobans not getting the cheque cashed at all because in some communities in Manitoba, unfortunately, there are no banking facilities and we rely on retailers to provide that valuable service.

Mrs. Mitchelson: But government cheques are guaranteed by the Province of Manitoba as long as individuals have the proper identification, Mr. Speaker. I would think it might be important and this government might think that it be very important for

them to be able to keep every penny that they receive from the government of Manitoba.

So I would ask again, Mr. Speaker: When the most vulnerable people within Manitoba society have to pay a fee up to \$13 on a \$500 cheque, which may not seem important to the minister or to many in this House, but it's very important to those that are living in the kinds of situation that our vulnerable Manitobans are, will he consider today passing Bill 208?

Mr. Mackintosh: Manitobans are rightly suspicious, Mr. Speaker, when members opposite get up and purport to claim an interest in the well-being of many Manitobans who have fallen on hard times, because we know the record of members opposite, and the member in particular, when it came to assistance for the most vulnerable.

I'm pleased to tell the House that almost—*[interjection]* Mr. Speaker, I'll address the question if the members—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Mackintosh: —I don't know why they asked a question, but I'll attempt to answer it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to tell the House that almost two-thirds now of employment and income assistant recipients now benefit from direct deposit. But for those who do not have access to banking, as in 23 northern communities, it's very important that we not put in place legislation that will stop retailers from honouring these cheques.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

* (14:00)

Mrs. Mitchelson: But the minister has just made my point. The most vulnerable within our society, Mr. Speaker, don't have bank accounts and they can't use those services. We're talking about the poorest of the poor that have to stretch every dollar they've received from government. Why would government want to give them money with one hand and take it back in another?

This will not cost the taxpayers of Manitoba a penny. Will the minister today consider passing Bill 208 and ensuring that the most vulnerable Manitobans can keep every penny that they receive from this government?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Legislature carefully considered this issue just a few years ago; I think three years ago.

The Public Utilities Board made its first pronouncement on this one in 2007 after hearing from the Society of Seniors, the Consumers' Association, from those that cash the cheques and those that have their cheques cashed, and the concern was that we had to put in place a system—this was shared by both the Public Utilities Board and the Legislature—to ensure that Manitobans who rely on government cheques indeed can get the cheques cashed.

Now, if people spend over 10 percent of their cheque at that place, there can be no fee at all, and there are also, according to the Public Utilities Board after their careful consideration listening to stakeholders, a balanced approach.

But, Mr. Speaker, the fees are controlled in Manitoba, and we have to make sure that these cheques get cashed in all of the communities of Manitoba.

Western Economic Partnership Agreement Government Strategy

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Carman): Mr. Speaker, the Western Economic Partnership Agreement was signed by the British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan governments as a result of a joint Cabinet meeting held in Calgary in September of 2009. Manitoba was not present and, therefore, left out of this important partnership of western Canadian governments.

Mr. Speaker, where does the new Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade stand on western economic partnership?

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade): Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for the question and, certainly, we work with a number of different jurisdictions on a number of different partnerships. And we've certainly demonstrated leadership in a number of areas, including the Pan-Canadian agreement on internal trade, which is the final piece of the puzzle that was brought forward with the legislation today.

So there are a number of different partnerships that we have worked on, a number of different partnerships that we'll continue to work on, and we'll continue to advance Manitoba's interests with a—with those partners that come to the table, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Pedersen: Mr. Speaker, the Western Economic Partnership Agreement included commitments towards harmonizing trucking regulations, accreditations and even towards harmonizing government procurement. The agreement also contained a commitment to create a co-ordinated gang data base by the end of 2009. Manitoba is left out again.

The leadership campaign is over—it's why they couldn't go before. When will this government actively pursue entry into the Western Economic Partnership Agreement?

Mr. Bjornson: Mr. Speaker, and, again, we have a national agreement on internal trade, and we'll continue to work with all partners. We have federal, provincial and territorial meetings—as the member should know—where we have an opportunity to represent Manitoba's concerns at those tables, and we'll continue to work with all partners.

And we don't just look to the west. We look to the north; we look to the east; and we look to the south, and we are prepared to work with all partners to advance Manitoba's interests, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Pedersen: Mr. Speaker, they have to do more than look. They need to participate, and among the many benefits derived from the Western Economic Partnership Agreement, the combined three western provinces will be better able to negotiate with the federal government and with other Canadian regions from a position of strength in numbers, such as Ontario and Québec are doing right now.

Why would Manitoba not want to be part of this regional strength—or would this run contrary to Manitoba's pleading for more equalization money? Does your strength come from pleading poverty or from pleading from a point of strength?

Mr. Bjornson: Mr. Speaker, you know, our strength comes from working with the people of Manitoba through the Premier's Economic Advisory Council. Our strength comes from working with the—all those leaders who have stepped forward, who have answered the call for the CentrePort initiative, and that's not just western Manitoba. That's northern Manitoba; that's eastern Manitoba; that's western Canada; that's northern Canada; that's eastern Canada; that's the United States.

We'll be working with all those partners to advance the CentrePort initiative—[interjection]

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Bjornson: —and we'll be working on behalf of all Manitobans and thinking globally, not just acting locally or regionally. We're thinking globally and acting globally, Mr. Speaker.

Criminal Offenders Prosecutions

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Minister of Justice held a self-congratulatory news conference and hung up the mission accomplished sign on auto theft. He went so far as to arrange a question from his colleague, the member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady) to pat him on the back in the House.

Sadly, the next day, 47-year-old Zdzislaw Andrzejczak became the fourth—became the fourth individual killed in two years because of a stolen auto vehicle, the 10th in the last decade.

Mr. Speaker, far too many Winnipeggers are at risk because of these high-risk auto thieves. Will this Minister of Justice and the member for Kirkfield Park spend a little less time congratulating themselves and patting each other on the back and more time trying to get these violent offenders off of the streets?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): And, first, let me—let me say every member of this House is as truly, deeply sorry for the incident, the tragedy that happened on Friday and, as well, I think it's fair for all Manitobans that anger—there's still people stealing cars.

But, at the same time, the member for Steinbach needs to be aware that we are celebrating the work that the Winnipeg city police have done, the work Crown attorneys have done, the work that probation services, within Manitoba Justice, have done, the work of MPI and the work—[interjection]—and the work of our community partners who, together, have worked to get a handle on auto theft.

Auto theft was on the rise for 12 years until 2005. Since that time, it has decreased by 70 percent. There is more work to do. No one in that room said that the mission was accomplished. But we are going to continue working together to battle auto theft, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Goertzen: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice said he's celebrating while a family is grieving. You know, this is the same Minister of Justice who, one of the first things he announced is he intended to get gang members off of the street by advertising them

off of the street. Shortly after, two teens were killed by a suspected gang member.

Today, a Manitoban contacted me, wondering why our government is spending a quarter of a million dollars targetting gang members who were watching *The Young and the Restless* last week 'cause that's where they're advertising.

Does the minister have any intention of getting serious on youth crime, or is he gonna try to go after those high-risk gang members who are addicted to soap operas?

Mr. Swan: It's indeed a shame, Mr. Speaker. The member for Steinbach and his party opposed any investments to try and deal with crime, with organized crime, with gangs, with car theft in this province.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order. Order. Order.

Mr. Swan: Mr. Speaker, these same members opposite who want to heckle have been opposed to the immobilizer program. We've heard through the police; we've heard from Crown attorneys and, in fact, we've heard from MPI themselves that they are very pleased with the courage this government has shown in authorizing MPI to go ahead with an immobilizer program that has taken a big chunk out of auto theft in this city, in this province.

We are not suggesting that the fight is over, but we have been able to accomplish a 70 percent decrease in auto theft that is, indeed, making the streets safer, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Goertzen: Mr. Speaker, last week, this Minister of Justice's contribution to fighting crime was a self-congratulatory news conference. Then he watered down proposed legislation that would have seized vehicles from drug dealers, and then he was spending a quarter of a million of dollars trying to get gang members to leave gangs as long as they were watching *Canada AM* at seven in the morning, the *Ellen DeGeneres Show* or *The Young and the Restless*. Meanwhile, two teens are killed by suspected gang members and a 47-year-old father is killed by a stolen vehicle.

Does he intend to be a paper-tiger Minister of Justice like the previous NDP minister of justices, or is he going to get tough on crime so that criminals are caught, convicted and confined, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Swan: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's good to hear the self-proclaimed expert put down the efforts of this government, which have reduced violent crime, have reduced auto theft—[interjection]

Well, it was interesting, a couple of weeks ago the party opposite, the Progressive Conservatives, had, not a policy convention because they don't have those; they call it an annual general meeting—[interjection]

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

* (14:10)

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order. Order. A whole bunch of questions are being fired across there. He can only answer one at a time. Give him—let's have some decorum here.

Order. Order. Order. Let's have some decorum. The honourable minister has the floor.

Mr. Swan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I presume the member for Steinbach was quite involved in the various resolutions because unlike New Democrats, Progressive Conservatives no longer just allow constituencies to bring them forward. It's all very centrally controlled, and how many resolutions on crime prevention do they bring forward? The answer: not—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Swan: —one single resolution on crime prevention made it. They have nothing in the tank. They have no ideas. We'll continue working with all of our partners to make this a safer province, Mr. Speaker.

Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation PUB's Request for Financial Information

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Some of the highest rates in the province—or in Canada are our MPI rates and yet we see nobody trying to stop the crime. That's unfortunate.

Mr. Speaker, Public Utility Board has once again expressed serious concerns about the MPI's lack of financial transparency. In its most recent order the PUB says, and I quote: As matters now stand with this limited jurisdiction and MPI's lack of transparency as to the details of its overall costs, the board cannot be assured that the costs being allocated to the basic are fair and reasonable or even

that the costs incurred for non-insured purposes are or will be billed to the government, unquote.

How can Manitobans have any confidence in their Autopac rates are fair when this NDP government hides information from the PUB?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): Well, let me say first for the record, Mr. Speaker, that Manitoba Public Insurance provides the most affordable coverage and the best coverage of any jurisdiction in Canada.

And I hope the members opposite will listen. I will explain this. There is basic coverage which is mandatory through MPI in the province of Manitoba. There is extended coverage in which there is not a monopoly.

Any member opposite can walk into their broker and can purchase a competitive line of insurance. The Public Utilities Board does not have the authority to make determinations on a competitive line of insurance. The Public Utilities Board, it appears, does not agree with that. The legislation is very clear, and indeed other Canadian provinces only mandate their equivalent to the Public Utilities Board to deal with monopoly lines, not competitive—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Graydon: Mr. Speaker, our rates have been steadily climbing and are now in the middle throughout Canada and will continue to climb under this government.

Mr. Speaker, the PUB says the MPI has withheld important financial information hidden in its spending plans and refused to answer questions. The PUB can't do its job when the NDP government covers up information. In fact, the PUB says it doesn't have the information it needs to reach a conclusion on the appropriateness of basic rates, premiums and fees.

Worse, the PUB also says that it has been unable to assure itself that all costs incurred represent efficient and effective spending. The PUB has said time and time again that it needs more information to set rates fairly—fairly. Why does the NDP government continue to ignore them?

Mr. Swan: Well, Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely amazed that the member is putting such profoundly incorrect information on the record. Over the past 10 years, in nine of those years, there's been no increase in MPI premiums. I'm not sure where he's

buying his auto insurance because it's certainly not at MPI.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a point of order?

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

The member from Minto has made a comment impugning the honesty and the motives of the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) in asking the question immediately after making at least three false statements about our crime resolutions at our party's AGM, about the coverage of MPI.

Anybody injured in a catastrophic accident in Manitoba will tell you that the coverage in Manitoba is absolutely inadequate, and a further comment about competitive product lines, Mr. Speaker, three blatantly incorrect points on factual points, at the same time as he has the temerity to call into question the honesty of the member for Emerson.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to call the member to order.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Innovation, Energy and Mines.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order. Order.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, the member indicated to—the minister indicated the information provided by the member was profoundly incorrect, and, in fact, that is not only legislatively permissible, but the member is only stating the facts, and if members want to look in the budget they can see that.

Now, having said that, Mr. Speaker, I also question the fact that the Leader of the Opposition, who can stand up any time in a question, was using a point of order to try to deflect some of the attention from his inaccurate inaccuracies in terms of the question that he raised and doing damage control.

So, not only is it not a point of order, it's not accurate, Mr. Speaker, and it's clear damage control on the part of the Leader of the Opposition who can stand up any time, and often does, to try to make his weak points in this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, it is not a point of order; it's a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: So let's continue with question period. The honourable Attorney General has the floor.

Mr. Swan: Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure the member for Emerson seems to recall that four times in the past seven years in the spring he's received a rebate cheque from his insurance company as they've actually refunded a portion of his premiums. So, for the member to stand up and suggest his rates have gone up, I'm not sure whether he's insuring his vehicle or his vehicles in other provinces, because MPI indeed provides the best coverage, the best value in the entire country.

The issue that the member for Emerson is talking about are competitive lines of insurance. They are competitive lines of insurance because other companies can compete in Manitoba for the business. They don't do so very well because MPI has the lowest rates. But if the member wants to spend more and get less, he is free to do so, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Graydon: Mr. Speaker, you're right, the member opposite is right that there has been a rebate four times in the last while, and there could be a rebate this year if they'd told the PUB that they were spending 90 million for the catastrophically injured, which they didn't bother telling the PUB; \$44-million deficit in the drivers' licensing; \$14 million on enhanced ID cards. How much rebate would that have come to, Mr. Speaker?

The PUB mentioned something else in their report, the fact that the NDP government doesn't adequately fund MPI for handling driver's licensing operations. The government gives MPI 21 million every year for this job, even though the actual costs are much higher. Since 2004, MPI ratepayers have picked up the tab for at least 44 million in extra costs associated with driver's licensing. However, MPI hides this expenditure from the PUB by filing it under one of its competitive lines. The PUB has said for years that the MPI must move this function under the board's purview, but MPI immediately refuses.

It's bad enough that this NDP government is offloading millions for driver's licences onto MPI ratepayers. Why do they continue to hide these skyrocketing costs from the PUB?

Mr. Swan: You know, Mr. Speaker, you just never know what you're gonna hear in this Legislature. Now I'm hearing the member for Emerson, apparently on behalf of his party, saying they're opposed to the new legislation we brought in to bring more justice for victims of catastrophic injuries, and it really does boggle the mind if this member is now suggesting that was not an appropriate thing for MPI to do.

I suppose the member is going to blame us, as well, for the hailstorm in southern Manitoba. I expect that'll be next. We got one more day of session left; I guess we can predict that for tomorrow.

What the member fails to recognize is that the system was simplified by bringing the driver licensing system and the public insurance system together under one roof. We've been able to save duplication. There's an amount being paid by the government every year to MPI to cover a portion of those costs. MPI also enjoys reduced costs, Mr. Speaker.

Child-Care Workers Employee Wages

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for River Heights.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order. The honourable member for River Heights has the floor.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, the waiting lists for child care in our province are very long, and about 30 percent of the licensed child-care facilities are actually operating with provisional licences because there has been a shortage of early childhood educators in this province for the last 10 years. Wages are below average. Early childhood educators get fed up and are tired of waiting and they leave child care for greener pastures.

* (14:20)

Will the minister agree that his programming is missing the mark and will he revisit the five-year child-care plan and bring it up to date so that wages and other issues around child-care educators are adequately addressed and we don't have this appalling situation continuing?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs): Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm more than happy to answer questions on child care any time.

Under the Family Choices five-year plan, we're adding 6,500 more funded spaces. We're adding child care at 35 more sites. In fact, I just want to say that since we've come into office, this government has funded 11,000 more child-care spaces.

And I'll just conclude by saying this, that, actually, ever since the beginning of regulated, licensed child care in Manitoba, 40 percent of the child-care spaces have been added since 1999.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba Child Care Association has said in their recent report that the minister's plan is a flop. There's huge waiting lists; 30 percent of child-care facilities are provisionally licensed because there's not enough child-care educators.

I ask the minister: When is he going to give some respect to these dedicated child-care workers? How much longer does this government expect child-care educators to subsidize the cost of child care in this province? When is he going to address the urgently needed pension plan issue, as well as the other issues, to make sure that we have an up-to-date, minimum standard child-care system in this province?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all, since we've come into office, we've increased grants to child care by 42 percent for wages. That is quite historic, and we're not finished. Family Choices has pledged a 20 percent increase in remuneration to child-care workers, and we have seen increases: 3 percent two years ago, 3 percent again last year, and 1 percent as a low-wage adjustment on January 1st. But it's been estimated that up to or as many as 2,000 more child-care workers have actually been added to the work force since about 2004 alone.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are addressing the issue of wages for early childhood educators. I understand that across the country now Manitoba is looked to as being, I think, in second place for the workers' wages in child care.

Manitoba Hydro

Bipole III Impact on Boreal Forest

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, Manitoba Hydro is going to spend hundreds of millions of extra dollars to build a power line down the west side versus the east side because of an ill-informed New Democratic Party that doesn't understand, on the one hand, they're allowing the boreal forest to be cut down to accommodate a few cottages, whereas, on the other hand, they don't seem

to realize that Manitoba Hydro is going to be going into the boreal forest on the west side also.

In fact, I'm looking to the minister of Hydro and ask the minister of Hydro: Can she tell this Chamber that there will be less than 70 acres difference between the boreal forest being cut down on the west side versus the east side? What is the actual difference of the amount of the boreal forest that's impacted because of your decision, the NDP decision, to spend hundreds of millions of dollars more by building on the west side?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member that if we would put the—we do not put a World Heritage site, the last of its kind of a boreal forest, in—at risk if we put the line down the west side, Mr. Speaker.

The member refuses to recognize the value of a boreal forest and, in fact, if you look at the comments that are coming out of Copenhagen, the comments out of Copenhagen are talking about the value of the boreal forest. It says, and I quote: In fact, boreal forests hold more carbon per acre than any other land ecosystem, perhaps two to three times as much carbon as the tropics.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is just not recognizing how important it is and he is refusing to recognize that there is no—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Population Growth Increase

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski (St. James): Mr. Speaker, Manitoba's population continues to grow. With a stable economic climate and our many natural, cultural and community assets, the province continues—[interjection]—the province continues to be a place for people to build a future for themselves and their families.

Would the Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade please inform the House of recent positive news about our population growth?

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade): Well, I'd like to thank the member for the question, Mr. Speaker. Clearly, she's not watching soap operas like members opposite. She must be watching the news, which is all good for Manitoba in terms of our population.

Mr. Speaker, for the first time since 1971—that's in the past 38 years—we have seen the largest increase in Manitoba growth, ahead of the national growth rate and in the top tier among the provinces. Right now, approximately 1,226,000 people call Manitoba home, and over the last 12 months our population grew by nearly 17,000 people, or 1.4 percent over October 1st, '09, to October 1st—from October 1st, '08. This is 5,000 higher than the previous 12 months' gain of 11,900.

And, unlike members opposite, people coming to Manitoba are optimistic about the future of this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

École Van Belleghem

Ms. Erin Selby (Southdale): Mr. Speaker, in addition to math, languages, history and science, educators at École Van Belleghem, in my constituency, are teaching students the value of philanthropy. An impressive number and variety of initiatives at the school are, as Principal Michèle Olson says, helping children become more aware of the world around them and the needs right here in our own city.

This holiday season has been met by students at Van Belleghem with a vigorous interest in ensuring that those less fortunate are touched by the warmth of the holidays. A mitten tree collected and distributes gloves, toques and scarves to those in need; outerwear is passed along to grateful families through the Koats for Kids initiative; pennies are saved and donated through a Louis Riel School Division-wide campaign; and at the school's winter concert \$1,000 was raised for the Christmas Cheer Board.

Not all of the school's projects are season specific. The Samaritan's Purse project delivers toys to underprivileged children around the world, and Projet Amour sends school supplies to impoverished students in Africa. Closer to home, the students are helping out at Winnipeg Harvest.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud of them and the students for responding with—eagerly and with sincerity, and I want to thank students and their families for their enthusiasm and willingness to help others. And, to Principal Olson, Vice-Principal Lynn Fajardo and the teaching staff at Van Belleghem, your efforts to

impart knowledge of the value of service to others is honourable and important. Thank you.

Bernie Toews

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased at this opportunity to recognize the innovative achievement of Mr. Bernie Toews, the owner of Triple Star Manufacturing and inventor of the Auger-Steer. Every year during Manitoba Ag Days, there is an inventors' showcase which features ideas that can make farmers' lives a little bit easier. In this year's showcase, Bernie Toews was awarded first place for his invention, the Auger-Steer, which helps farmers guide large augers through small spaces.

The Toews family used to manufacture marking systems for seeders. However, as field technology improved, their market was shrinking and it became clear they needed a new direction. The answer to their prayers came in the form of an 80-foot auger that Bernie was attempting to move into a farmyard. The size of the auger and the layout of the yard made it impossible to get in, and he was forced to back up half a mile down the road and drive across a neighbour's field.

Knowing that other farmers were encountering the same problem, Bernie came up with a solution: the Auger-Steer. By placing a steering system on the axle, farmers can more easily manoeuvre through tight spaces from the cab of their tractor. The Auger-Steer has since been patented and is already being sent across Canada with plans to expand into the United States.

Mr. Speaker, farmers are integral to the success of Manitoba, yet they face many challenges, from weather, markets and changing technology. Inventions can make their life easier and their business more efficient. Farmers have always been known as innovators.

* (14:30)

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Bernie Toews for his innovation. I wish him all the best as he continues to provide the Auger-Steer to farmers across the country. Thank you.

Brummitt-Feasby ALS House

Ms. Sharon Blady (Kirkfield Park): Mr. Speaker, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease, is a degenerative and fatal neuromuscular disease that currently affects approximately 200 people in Manitoba. There is no cure for this

devastating disease, so specialized health care is the best medicine for ALS sufferers. In this regard, we are very fortunate in Manitoba to have Brummitt-Feasby House.

The Brummitt-Feasby ALS House is a home where persons living with ALS realize their full potential in an environment that respects their rights and their dignity. It is the only residential home in North America, and possibly globally, that cares for those living with ALS in the community rather than the hospital.

Located in Kirkfield Park, this house was a gift to the ALS Society from Faith Johnston and Lynn Brown, whose stepmother died of the disease in 2000. Not only was the house donated, but most of the labour and many materials for the renovations were donated as well. The 1,400 square foot house was completely renovated with wheelchair ramps, call buttons, special bathrooms and wider doors to accommodate clients. A number of dedicated staff are employed at the house, and clients can rely on 24-hour specialized care.

Mr. Speaker, this house is of particular importance to me, because I lost my great-uncle, Max Schiavoni, to ALS, and at the time of his death no such care facility existed.

I want to draw the attention to the—I want to draw the attention of this House to Brummitt-Feasby because, while it is small scale, it provides an invaluable service to those who call it home.

Tonight I will visit the house to celebrate Lite up a Life, a fundraising event to remember those who have gone, to recognize those living with ALS and to bring hope to those who will be diagnosed in the future.

I wish to thank Faith Johnston and Lynn Brown who donated the home and all those that contributed their energy and materials to make the house a reality, Diana Rasmussen, executive director of ALS Manitoba and the many compassionate staff who make the clients' experience at Brummitt-Feasby as comfortable and dignified as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

James Kostuchuk

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. James Kostuchuk, a teacher at the Portage Collegiate Institute in Portage la Prairie. James was recently honoured by the Prime Minister, Stephen Harper,

who bestowed upon him the Canadian Excellence in Teaching Award. This award recognized James's dedication to his students and for the inspiration he provides.

This national award is given to outstanding educators who better equip their students with skills needed to meet the challenges of the 21st century society and economy.

Mr. Kostuchuk teaches world history, the history of rock and roll, drama and a program on archival preservation. He was awarded the prestigious award for his ability to motivate and engage his students. Through active learning methods, such as recording and archiving of historical data, Mr. Kostuchuk ensures his students have an interactive experience when attending his class.

His course on archival preservation has given his Portage la Prairie students a chance to discover and preserve their local history. By creating and fostering an authentic connection with the material, the students develop an increased awareness and genuine appreciation of our communities' colourful history.

Mr. Kostuchuk was nominated by his peers at the Portage Collegiate Institute who recognized his outstanding dedication to his school, his students and to the material he teaches.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Kostuchuk's students are indeed well equipped to meet the challenges of tomorrow and to excel in all their pursuits. On behalf of all members of the Assembly, I would like to thank and congratulate Mr. James Kostuchuk for being recognized for his tireless enthusiasm in shaping the future of countless young Manitobans. Thank you.

High School Water Polo Championships

Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, on an amazingly cold Sunday afternoon this past weekend, I witnessed an extraordinary display of young sportsmanship at Pan Am Pool. I was greatly entertained watching the final gold medal game for one of the divisions in the High School Water Polo League. Despite the cold weather, there was a great spirit of friendly athletic competition evident as Fort Richmond Collegiate squared off against Oak Park High School.

The athleticism demonstrated by these young athletes was particularly astonishing given the sport's high level of difficulty. Water polo is an extremely

demanding sport, requiring dexterity and strong swimming abilities for all the players.

At the end of the game the score was tied 6-6. This necessitated the playing of two three-minute overtime periods.

I am pleased to be able to congratulate the players of Fort Richmond Collegiate water polo team for winning the gold medal. Playing for Fort Richmond Collegiate was Justin Chan, Sarah Mutch, Erin Sawatsky, Taylor Wood, Jessica Waddell, Sam Rasmussen, Jovana Tosovic, Rebecca Kunzman, Jimena Escobedo, Nithinat Chamlerwat, Joel Refvik, Cody Drader, Birte Sterner, Ryan Yarchuk, Rheal Gervais and Danae Hoehne.

All throughout the game both teams' players kept the crowd in suspense. The stands were full of parents, little brothers and sisters, and proud grandparents. Congratulations also go to the proud coach of the team, my son, Steven Brick, his assistant coach, Danika Friesen, and the teacher supervisors, Joan MacDonald and Jillian Seniuk Cicek. The efforts of these people and the parents who have supported their children in the pursuit of their athletic goals has paid off immensely, as was evident on Sunday afternoon's gold medal water polo game.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I want to say, go Fort Richmond, go. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I—we're gonna resume debate on—and, but I will be—I'm in discussions with the other House leaders with respect to certain matters that I will, hopefully, be interrupting within the next little while to—in the next little while. Thank you.

THRONE SPEECH

(Seventh Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: Resume adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the honourable member for The Pas (Mr. Whitehead) that the following address be presented to His Honour Lieutenant-Governor: We the members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba thank Your Honour for the gracious speech addressed to us at this Fourth Session of the Thirty-Ninth Legislature of Manitoba, and the proposed motion of the honourable Leader of the Official

Opposition (Mr. McFadyen), standing in the name of the honourable member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu), who has 10 minutes remaining.

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Morris?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No? Okay, its been denied. We will now have a speaker.

Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to the amendment put forward by the Leader of the Opposition in response to the Speech from the Throne read by His Honour, Philip Lee, at the Fourth Sitting of the Thirty-Ninth Legislature Assembly of the Province of Manitoba.

Before putting any thoughts on the record about the Opposition Leader's response to our government's Throne Speech, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger), on his new role as the Premier of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, as many people know, I ran unsuccessfully in the 1999 Manitoba general election. There is one member in this House who had a huge impact on me during that election.

At that time the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) was a very active MLA who served as our party's opposition critic for a number of key areas, including the Manitoba Telephone System. Despite his very busy schedule he took the time to mentor a young New Democrat in the art of canvassing. In particular, I very vividly remember one evening in 1999 canvassing with the member for Thompson in the Richmond Lakes area of St. Norbert.

I will never forget my struggles to keep pace with the member for Thompson who, as we can see, has amazingly long legs, which give him an unbelievable stride. In addition to his long legs, he is also blessed with a wealth of information on a wide range of topics which enables him to engage the public in any area they choose to discuss.

The amount of information he imparted in our one evening of canvassing together is something I'll never forget. I will always be indebted to the member for Thompson for taking the time to teaching an aspiring, wanna-be-MLA the subtleties of canvassing.

As for the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger), I met him in earnest when I was recruited by the current Minister for Agriculture (Mr. Struthers) who, quite literally, twisted my arm to run a second time in the constituency of St. Norbert in the 2003 Manitoba general election.

* (14:40)

I remember very well my first introduction to the member for St. Boniface which took place during the 2003 election campaign. My campaign manager, Paul Williamson, had arranged for me to canvass in a Manitoba Housing complex in Fort Richmond. When he informed me that I was scheduled to canvass with the current minister for Finance, I thought, I know I'm not supposed to question the decision of my campaign manager, but, really, who is he kidding? A stuffed shirt, blue-suit Finance Minister canvassing in a low-income housing unit? Sounds pretty dumb to me.

Boy, was I proved wrong. I quickly discovered that the member for St. Boniface has a heart of gold and is a very capable communicator. That day in 2003 he showed me that his ability to communicate transcends talking from speaking notes. He showed me that he was just as effective a communicator with people who face economic and social challenges in their life as he is with the business crowd and the economic leaders of our province. That day he showed me that he understands the diversity of our province and has a belief in the concept that we all succeed when programs are made available to encourage people to stretch their wings and grow. I'm so pleased to see that he is our Premier, and I know he can lead us forward with vision and integrity.

I would like to congratulate our government on showing the way forward with a Throne Speech that addresses the many issues our province is facing during challenging economic circumstances.

Across all of Canada the recession has had a big impact on people's lives. On the national news, we hear stories every day from Ontario and Alberta about the struggles people are experiencing in their personal lives as they face an uncertain future with layoffs and plant closures.

As everyone in this House knows, the current economic crisis began in the United States with the meltdown of the subprime mortgage initiative. Under President Bush, debt financing to underwrite a failing bank industry was the order of the day. It is

very sad for me to see that the banking institutions in the United States are once again reporting that they are paying exorbitant bonuses to their top-ranking banking officials. It was this type of thinking, coupled with the loaning of money in an unsound fashion to people who were poor credit risks in the mortgage and loan areas, that began the current worldwide recession.

Without a doubt, Canada's largest trading partner is the United States. The United States has been struggling to recover from this recession. When Canada's largest trading partner is in trouble, it touches all Canadians.

Manitoba is not an island. We are not immune to the effects of the recession, and without a doubt our province will face challenging times ahead. Having said that, Mr. Speaker, our diverse economy and our stable management style will help lessen the impact the recession has on Manitobans.

For a minute, Mr. Speaker, I would like to refer to a major institution in my community that our government has been supporting and nurturing over the last 10 years to ensure its success and the success of our future generations. That institution is the University of Manitoba.

On April 10th, 2008, our Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy (Ms. McGifford) announced that we would be investing \$47 million over a three-year period to help the university achieve its goals of updating and modernizing facilities at the Fort Garry campus.

Project Domino is planned to address space and infrastructure challenges at the university. It uses a phased approach to construction of new facilities and the reconstruction of existing dated facilities that are in need of changes to meet the ever-evolving educational needs of our post-secondary students. Highlights include a new facility to replace the 350-bed Taché residence, with the existing space becoming home to the Faculty of Music and the School of Art.

Our minister said that she was particularly proud of the university for showing vision in preserving history by redesigning the existing spaces to accommodate the current educational needs of post-secondary education students.

Last Friday, at lunch, I had a chance to hear the award-winning University of Manitoba Choir sing Christmas carols in the Manitoba Legislature. This choir has toured South America and sung with the

Winnipeg Symphony, the Winnipeg Chamber Orchestra and performed for the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. Listening to them on Friday, I was enthralled by their beautiful voices and the level of excellence they showed in performing for us. I know their new home at the university will help build their expertise even farther and aid them in expanding their repertoire of music.

On the economic front, the University of Manitoba commissioned a study by Pricewaterhouse-Coopers to assess the economic impact of the university on the city and province. The study, which was released on December 4th of this year, showed that more than \$1.8 billion in province-wide economic activity is stimulated through the activities it is involved in.

An example of the positive impacts of the university is that it receives 183,000 out-of-town visitors each year. It is estimated that these people contribute more than \$102 million to our provincial economy. It was shown that out-of-town students contribute \$130 million in spending. This, combined with the spinoff companies from research and the huge economic impact of the employment at the university, greatly impacts the constituents of St. Norbert and Fort Richmond.

Our government has worked hard to ensure that the university is supported in its new initiatives. Many of these new initiatives are aimed at addressing the issues of aging infrastructure that were left to deteriorate under the Tory government. With a commitment of \$100 million over two years in budget 2008, the Manitoba government will have supported \$562 million in capital investment for post-secondary education since 1999.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that our government is responding to the H1N1 threat in a planned and thoughtful manner. From February 1997 to June 2000, I worked in the office of the director for the Community Services Department of the City of Winnipeg. At that time, I was trained to work as a support staff to the director if an emergency arose and a crisis centre had to be mobilized. This training related to being able to respond effectively and with adequate information to the needs of the media in the event of a tornado, a flood or similar disaster. I feel this training provides me with a unique ability to assess the effectiveness of the H1N1 pandemic plan. To date, the response of our government has been very effective.

What an overwhelming task it appeared at the outset, to inoculate Manitobans against a potentially life-threatening illness. The details involved looking at things like: Deciding a list of people who were priorities to receive a vaccination; arranging and staffing distribution sites that allowed people to get vaccines in a timely fashion. This task was complicated by the fact that we were relying on a single-source producer of vaccines. In addition, this producer had to stop production of adjuvanted vaccines to allow the non-adjuvanted vaccines to be produced, mounting a communication strategy that informed people of the need to get vaccinated and the appropriate locations to visit. In my travels around the province, I have not seen the unhappiness that has been prevalent in the United States with the difficulties people there have been experiencing in securing and distributing enough vaccines to everyone who wants to get inoculated.

I want to congratulate our Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) and all the staff who helped make this task the success it has been to date. I also want to put on record my most sincere appreciation to all the public health officials and the volunteers who worked untold hours to ensure that their neighbours, their friends and any Manitoban who wished could avail themselves of the shot to prevent the H1N1 flu.

I am very hopeful that people will pay attention to the need to vaccinate themselves. Dr. Kettner, the province's Chief Medical Health Officer, said that, as of last Wednesday, 420,000 people or an equivalent of about 35 percent of Manitobans have been vaccinated. I join him in encouraging as many Manitobans as possible to get the shot. As he said, it's not over yet. We all know that Christmas is fast approaching, a time when people make extra efforts to visit with family and friends. The virus is spread easily from person to person, so the precautions people take now may save their life in the future.

Mr. Speaker, speaking about the great job our government is doing in ensuring health-care services are being provided to Manitobans, I want to talk for a moment about a fabulous event I attended at the Victoria Hospital.

* (14:50)

On Thursday last week, I attended the grand opening of the new gift shop that is located in the front foyer of the Victoria Hospital. The gift shop is entirely run by volunteers, who spend countless hours ensuring there is a warm, welcoming presence at the front door of the hospital. One of the patients

who spoke at the opening said she had been in the hospital for over a month and she had often visited the gift shop several times a day. She spoke with sincere gratitude of the kind, caring volunteers who help her get her coffee in the morning and bring it directly to her, as she is currently in a wheelchair.

On behalf of all the residents of St. Norbert and Fort Richmond who receive services from this small hospital with a big heart, as it is fondly referred to, I want to extend a huge thank-you to the Victoria Hospital guild. It is through their amazing volunteer commitment that activities like the Dickens of a Sale and the daily operation of the gift shop are made possible. They are a shining example to all of us of how good will can make a difference to your fellow man. They epitomize the saying: scatter love, show kindness. All the funds generated through the services of these volunteers goes directly to the hospital to assist with the purchase of equipment that aids patients with their care in the hospital.

The relocation of the gift shop was part of a master plan to renovate the hospital and update the services provided to the residents of south Winnipeg. On November 4, 2008, the Minister of Healthy Living officially opened the redeveloped oncology department at the Victoria General Hospital. The \$10.5-billion Buhler cancer-care centre quadrupled the amount of space from the previous oncology department. The new, 13,000-square-foot addition has been received with accolades from patients, staff and the constituents of St. Norbert who are extremely happy with the services they are being provided. The new space is warm, sunny and provides privacy with surroundings that are conducive to the type of treatment they are receiving. Having assisted several of my good friends while they were receiving care for cancer, I know the importance of being surrounded by a bright open space that encourages people to feel positive about facing their challenges with courage.

My friend, Sandy Felix, who died of breast cancer in August 2001, and my very dear friend and training partner, Arland Haus, who died on October 4th, 1997, after a three-year battle with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma are, without a doubt, looking down on our government and applauding the great work we have done in improving cancer-care services here in Manitoba.

I will never forget my friend Arland waiting in excess of 11 weeks to receive radiation therapy after his second bout of chemotherapy. As his primary

caregiver, I know the anxiety and untold hardship this created for him. He knew that research indicated he needed to receive radiation therapy within a three-week window of time for his chemotherapy to be successful. Despite his doctor's numerous requests, the earliest that he could receive this lifesaving treatment was 11 weeks after his round of chemotherapy was completed.

As we all know, in 1997 the Conservatives were in government and, despite their many disagreements to the contrary, their government does not have a shining record when it comes to the provision of services for Manitobans in the health-care area.

The death of my very, very, very close friend occurred during the Conservative government's times. I will never know if his death on October 4th, 1997, could have been prevented with faster treatment, but I do know the emotional anguish my friend experienced trying to make the system work was absolutely unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot express in words the way I feel about our government's initiatives to improve cancer-care services. My visit with the nurses and oncology staff at the Victoria Hospital to view the new facility was, without a doubt, one of my best moments as a politician.

In April 2008, our government announced \$1.7 million to triple the number of radiation oncology beds in Winnipeg to ensure that families do not experience the type of waits and the anguish my friend Arland experienced.

A visit to our government's wait-time Web site this morning showed me that the median wait time for people who are undergoing radiation therapy is one week. Manitoba, along with B.C., has received an enviable place in Canada as having the shortest wait time for radiation therapy—at one week—as indicated in the CIHI wait-time tables of April 23rd, 2009.

The measurement of treatment protocols was never in place under the Conservative government. As a person who has experienced the system up close and personal during the 1990s, I know that the proof is in the pudding, and their pudding, Mr. Speaker, well, it just doesn't seem to gel. During their time in office, they did not prioritize the delivery of radiation therapy as an important service to Manitobans. Both the Canadian Cancer Society and the CancerCare Manitoba applauded our comprehensive cancer-fighting framework launched in June, 2003, which

focusses on prevention, early detection and treatment.

Since the launch of the strategic cancer framework, we have provided over \$57.9 million to fight cancer. Not only do we provide a service that is timelier, but we measure our service, and we post the measures on a Web site for all Manitobans to access.

Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to sit on this side of the House, where providing timely, affordable health care is a priority. I was thrilled to be a part of the announcement that our government made this spring, to unveil the plans for the redevelopment of the emergency department at the Victoria General Hospital. This \$20.5-million project will ensure that emergency health-care services are streamlined and that patient comfort and care is given the highest degree of attention.

My constituents in Fort Richmond and St. Norbert have expressed, numerous times, to me that they are very happy with the attention our government is paying to the health-care system and to the Victoria Hospital, in particular.

I mention my friend Arland, and in thinking about him, it occurred to me that he was a great golfer. He played some of the best golf courses in the world. I remember him telling me a story about a famous golfer he met once who relied heavily on advice of his caddy and his golf successes—for his golf successes. In one particularly difficult game, when this golfer was slicing his tee shots, he said to his caddy, I'd move heaven and earth to break my score of 95. His caddy, having the ability to respond with true honesty, said, try moving heaven; you've already moved a lot of earth today.

Mr. Speaker, as all members of this House know, Tiger Woods has gotten himself embroiled in a pretty difficult situation involving his family life that is tarnishing his public image. I read last week that his approval rating has gone from 76 percent to 54 percent in less than a week.

Like Tiger Woods, the life of a politician is about perception and the emotional connection people have to us. The people of St. Norbert and Fort Richmond showed an amazing amount of faith and trust in my government, and myself, when they chose to return me to this Legislative Assembly as their representative for a second time, in the 2007 election.

Every day in this job I endeavour to do the best I can, to represent their interests and to validate the faith they have shown in me.

Mr. Speaker, as a graduate of the Faculty of Physical Education, I know the importance of keeping your body moving. In the 2004 and 2005 years, I served as the vice-chair of the Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures task force. Manitobans spoke to us very loudly about their desire to see their children grow up healthy and strong, both in spirit and in body.

Over the last four years, it has been very gratifying for me to watch our government institute the changes that Manitobans requested. In particular, we have worked very hard to ensure that physical education is a part of all high school students' lives, regardless of their grade.

I want to congratulate our current Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald). She was an excellent chair, operating with dignity and patience in her role.

As I travel around my community, I still hear accolades for the work we did in crafting this policy document. Our government can rightly be proud of the many ways we are encouraging people to increase their physical activity, eat healthy and reduce their use of tobacco.

I spoke, earlier today, about the success of students from Fort Richmond Collegiate in winning the gold medal for their division in high school water polo league. What I failed to mention is that under the mentorship of my son, Steven, and his fellow coach, Danika, the students practised several times a week to ensure that they had the appropriate skills to play the game.

One of the practices, Mr. Speaker, took place on Wednesday morning at the University of Manitoba swimming pool. Once a week, the students began their day with a 6:30 a.m. practice at the pool. What amazes me still today is the dedication it takes to jump into the pool which is cold on a very cold day. Obviously, all the practices paid off. What every graduate at the Faculty of Physical Education will tell you is that our hope is to encourage people to pursue a sport for life.

I'm really proud of my son, who, for the last three years, has played a part in making this possible for the students at Fort Richmond Collegiate.

* (15:00)

One of the successes of this Throne Speech is our government's continuing commitment to healthy living. In this Throne Speech, we have committed to phasing an adult fitness tax credit in. This is an initiative that many of my constituents, and in particular the older adults who have been participating in the SMART fitness program I sponsored for the last five years, have been advocating us to undertake. It is a proven fact that being physically active helps you live longer and shows amazing benefits in the quality and quantity of our lives. I'm very proud of our government for making this a priority.

In terms of our record on very timely topics, I know our record on climate change is among the best. In 2005, our then-leader and the Premier of Manitoba was recognized by an influential American magazine, *BusinessWeek*, as being one of the top 20 international leaders fighting climate change.

On Tuesday, December 10th, 2009, the federal government announced that Ambassador Doer is one of the eminent expert advisers who's being sent to Copenhagen to discuss climate changes at the Danish capital. The United Nations began talks last week in Copenhagen and our Premier (Mr. Selinger) and Conservation Minister are attending.

Mr. Speaker, I really would like to say that I'm very proud of our government for our efforts in protecting the boreal forests and for our need to recognize that UNESCO designation is required for this important initiative. Manitoba has protected thousands of acres of parkland and forest in the last decade. Recently, I heard on CBC that the boreal forest and Canada's wilderness is now recognized as the No. 1 most important asset in fighting climate change. I am so very pleased that Manitoba is making the boreal forest one of its most important topics.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that on the conservation front, I had the opportunity to attend an important event in my constituency, and that's a project that people at École Saint-Avila has been working on for quite a while. It's called the greening project. We have supported the École Saint-Avila parent council group in making this project a reality. I know that it's very important to the young students at École Saint-Avila that they have an outdoor space to be able to use, an outdoor space that has proper drainage. The École Saint-Avila school grounds' greening project will do just that. And I'm so pleased

that our government is undertaken that project and supporting it.

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I will not be supporting the motion put forward by the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. McFadyen), and I'm very proud to be sitting on this side of the House. Thank you.

House Business

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you please canvass the House to see if there's leave to bring forward a sessional order with the understanding that this is not to count as an interruption or of- or affect the number of days of debate held on the Throne Speech?

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to bring forward a sessional order with the understand that this does not count as an interruption or affect the number of days of debate held on the Throne Speech?

Is there agreement? [*Agreed*]

Mr. Chomiak: Now I'd like to thank the House.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler),

THAT the following sessional order apply to this session despite any other rule or practice of this House:

Monday, December 14, 2004

1. Monday, December 14, 2009, is to be considered the seventh day of debate on the motion for the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. At 4:30 on that date, if the question on the amendment to the motion has not been put, the Speaker must interrupt the proceedings and, without seeing the clock, put the question on the amendment.

Tuesday, December 15, 2009

2. Tuesday, December 15, 2009, is to be considered the eighth day of debate on the motion for the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. At 4:30 on that day, the Speaker must interrupt the proceedings and, without seeing the clock, put every question necessary to dispose of the main motion for the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

At the conclusion of business on that day, the Speaker must adjourn the House without a motion for adjournment.

Tuesday, March 23, 2010 – Session to Resume

3. Subject to rule 2(2), the 4th Session of the 39th Legislature is to resume on Tuesday, March 23, 2010.

Last sitting day in March, 2010 – Interim Supply

4. The House must, if necessary, sit beyond the usual adjournment hour on the last sitting day in March, 2010, to conclude the business of interim supply for the 2010-2011 fiscal year as follows on that day:
 - (a) One hour before the usual adjournment hour on that day, all questions on resolutions respecting interim supply in the Committee of Supply must be put, and the Committee's report must be presented to and received by the House.
 - (b) 30 minutes before the usual adjournment hour on that day, all stages for the passage of The Interim Appropriation Act, 2010 (including all related motions, committee stage and all three readings, but not including royal assent) must be completed.

For this purpose, all other House business under orders of the day, including the budget debate if it is under consideration, is to be set aside.

If the House or a committee of the House has not concluded any item or stage described above by the required hour, the Speaker or Chairperson, as the case may be, must interrupt the proceedings at that time and, without seeing the clock, put all questions necessary to dispose of the required items without further debate or amendment. For this purpose, if a recorded vote has been requested, the reference in subrule 14(3) to "one hour" is to be read as "five minutes".

Royal assent of The Interim Appropriation Act, 2010 must take place before the House adjourns on that day.

Wednesday, June 16, 2010 – Completion of Estimates

5. Despite any remaining—pardon me—despite any time remaining for consideration of the business of Supply, by the end of Wednesday, June 16, 2010, the Committee of Supply must complete its consideration of the Estimates (including supplementary Estimates, if any) for the 2010-2011 fiscal year, other than the concurrence motion.

Despite subrule 78(4), by the—by the start of orders of the day on that day, the Official Opposition House Leader must table in the House a list of the members of the Crown who may be called for questioning in the debate on the concurrence motion.

At 4:00 p.m. on that day, the chairpersons of the Committees of Supply and of the whole House must interrupt the proceedings and immediately put all questions necessary to dispose of the remaining matters without debate, amendment, adjournment or recorded vote.

Thursday, June 17, 2010 – Completion of Business of Supply

6. The House must, if necessary, sit beyond the usual adjournment hour on Thursday, June 17, 2010, to conclude the business of Supply for the 2010-2011 fiscal year as follows by 6:00 p.m. on that day:
 - (a) By 4:00 p.m. on that day, the question on the concurrence motion in the Committee of Supply must be put, the committee's report must be presented to and received by the House, and the question on the concurrence motion in the House must be put.
 - (b) By 6:00 p.m. on that day, all stages for passage of the following bills (including all related motions, committee stage and all three readings, but not including royal assent) must be completed:

The Appropriation Act, 2010
The Loan Act, 2010
The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2010

If the House or a committee of the House has not concluded any item or stage described above by the required hour, the Speaker or Chairperson, as the case may be, must interrupt the proceedings at that time and, without seeing the clock, put all questions necessary to dispose of the required items without further debate or amendment. For this purpose, if a recorded vote has been requested, the reference in subrule 14(3) to "one hour" is to be read as "five minutes".

Royal assent of The Appropriation Act, 2010, The Loan Act, 2010 and The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2010 must take place before the House adjourns on that day.

Priority of actions to be taken

7. Where

- (a) these sessional orders require the Speaker or a Chairperson to take any action at a specified time; and
- (b) at the specified time, a point of order or a matter of privilege has been raised and is under consideration by the House or committee;

the point of order or matter of privilege is to be set aside, and no other point of order or matter of privilege may be raised, until the required action has been taken and all matters related—relating to the required action have been resolved.

Interruption of proceedings

- 8. Where these sessional orders require the Speaker or a Chairperson to interrupt proceedings to take any action, the interruption is to take place and the action is to be taken whether or not the orders of the day have been called.

No deferral of vote

- 9. Subrule 14(4) does not apply to a vision—pardon me—subrule 14(4) does not apply to a division to be taken on a question required to be put under these sessional orders.

* (15:10)

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable Minister for Innovation, Energy and Mines, seconded by the honourable member for the Lakeside,

THAT the following sessional orders apply to this session despite any other rule or practice of this House.

Monday December 14th

- 1. Monday December 14th, 2009—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, thank you and thank the House. I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs will meet at 4 p.m. today to consider the appointment of a new Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

Mr. Speaker: It's been announced that the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs will meet at 4 p.m.

today to consider the appointment of a new Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to thank you and the House, all the members of the House as well.

I'd like to announce that Standing Committee on Public Accounts will be meeting at 5 p.m. for the purpose of electing a new vice-chairperson.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. It's also been announced that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will be meeting today at 5 p.m. for the purpose of electing a new vice-chairperson.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, would you please canvass the House to see if there's leave to bring forward a motion dealing with concurrence in the committee report regarding recommendations of the Judicial Compensation Committee, as well as leave to temporarily set aside the Throne Speech debate to deal with the concurrence motion with the understanding that this does not count as an interruption of or affect the number of days of debate held on the Throne Speech.

An Honourable Member: Not now.

Mr. Chomiak: Not now? Oh. *[interjection]* After 4:30?

An Honourable Member: Yeah.

Mr. Chomiak: Okay. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my request for leave, and I thank members for their co-operation in this regard, and yourself and—

Mr. Speaker: Okay, the honourable minister has withdrawn the leave he was seeking, so that request has been withdrawn.

Mr. Speaker: We will now continue on with the debate—the Throne Speech debate. The honourable member for the Lakeside has the floor.

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, I do want to, first of all, welcome you back to the session, as well as the table officers and all the staff that do such a great job, especially those in *Hansard*. I know they have to listen to our tapes and interpret what we have to say, and I know they have called me from time to time on some of the names that we have, and I know a lot of the other members in the House have certain names that are very hard to understand without seein' 'em, so I certainly want to give *Hansard* as much credit as I possibly can. They do

just a—an exceptional fine job.

Also, I want to thank the people of Lakeside for the opportunity to be here in this House since 2003, trying to represent their interests and, of course, my role as agricultural critic since 2004 has also been a very interesting process. And when we think about what we do in this House, Mr. Speaker, and the things that we talk about is certainly relevant in our job as opposition to hold the government accountable, sometimes get a—gives us a lot of confusion put on the record in regards of really what our stance is on a particular issue.

And one of those issues was brought forward by the member from Transcona in his comments that he put on the record in regards to Keystone ag producers last week, and that had to do with the comments that he put in regards to the Farmer Appreciation Day that day, and that was one that he talked about land-use planning. And, you know, land-use planning is a very important part of agriculture, as we all know. One of the issues that came about in regards to land-use planning was the sewer injector systems, and that regulation was changed through the—through the government without enough consultation, at least in my opinion. And I know that we all in favour of clean water and we want to make sure that we have clean water for the next generations, and we want to make sure that Lake Winnipeg is cleaned up.

But I think it needs to go farther than that, and I think that the municipalities have made their position very clear to the government, that they want more consultation on this particular issue. And I know the First Minister has agreed that he's prepared to have a look at that. We'd encourage him to do that very, very soon. I know we also have met with the Manitoba rural real estate people, and I think that they also have very serious concerns in regards to that.

I also know that the people that should have been consulted—and that's the well drillers. The well drillers have just a vast knowledge of water tables: how deep they are, how far they go, where the aquifers are, what needs to be protected.

But having said that, I also agree that there is bans that need be put in place in certain areas. And I know that, in my particular situation, on my farm, when I had a decision to make whether it got put in a field or a sewer injector system, I went with the sewer injector system because my particular residence where it was being built and the field that

we were going to put in would have been right on bedrock, and that would not have been a good thing to do. In fact, the sewer injector system was the right way to go. We put the necessary things in place, the gravel base and the other things we needed to put in place to make sure that we never got back into the aquifer.

Mr. Daryl Reid, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

So the water is very important to every producer, every farmer. What we have seen is a number of residence being built on good farmland throughout the province. But I think that's where we probably should have been focussing our attention rather than do a blanket policy across the province. So I do think that that's something we need to be looking at. As opposition, we've certainly made our positions very clear, and we would encourage not only the government, but the ministers and the people that represent the urban population within the city limits of Winnipeg, certainly have a look at that as well.

And also, while I'm still talking about the member from Transcona, he talked about MPI, and that, of course, is something that's really important as well, and he talked about the savings. He talked about the savings that we were going to get, and it's interesting, he no sooner finished his speech and the next day the *Winnipeg Sun* had an article on the MPI rates to go down, but only minimal, and the information that was put on record at that time, it seemed as if it was going just to be millions of millions of dollars. But I can tell you, the article says a decrease, an average of 0.2 percent decrease for private passenger vehicles. MPI says the average premium for such vehicles is expected to drop by \$2 to 286–280, 86 for one year. Motorcycle premiums, however—and I know I've had this discussion with the member from Transcona on a regular basis—motorcycle premiums will increase an average of 5.7 percent, while the average for trailers will increase by 3.8 percent.

Now, in regards to the motorcycle insurance, I can tell you that I have two motorcycles. I've been very blessed. I have one that I leave in Arizona, one that I have here, and the one that I left in Arizona for me to be able to use. I can tell you the premium on that motorcycle for the exact same coverage is \$292 per year. My same insurance on that bike before I took it down and left it there was \$1,920. Now, that tells you something's drastically wrong with the way we've got the motorcycle fund set up. And I know I've had this discussion with the member

from Transcona and also several other members, and in committee and in Estimates, and I think that we're doing ourselves a very unjust service for those people that are in the motorcycle business, and I know that we can do much better.

*(15:20)

I know that we have an opportunity to make some of those necessary changes and I think it's imperative on us to make sure that we listen to those and certainly look at the way that that whole policy is set up. And I know that whenever an accident happens, whether it's the motorcycle's fault or not, that money is then charged off to that fund, and as we know, number of motorcycle accidents are not caused by the motorcyclist.

Let that stand on its own, but to charge the motorcycle fund for an accident that was charged, or in fault by another person, whether a vehicle or not, that should not be charged to the motorcycle fund, at least in my opinion. And I think that's certainly changes that we can see—that would be—help to lower that fund, 'cause we know that it is very expensive to ride a motorcycle, and there's challenges with it no matter where you're at in this world, whether it's in Arizona, California or Alberta. But certainly I think we need to have a look at that.

Also, I wanna talk about CentrePort in regards to—while I'm still on the member from Transcona, 'cause he did talk about that as well, and I believe in CentrePort immensely. I think that what we have in opportunity for CentrePort is just unbelievable for the province of Manitoba. But I do have some reservations about it, in the way it's been going, and that's in the fact of the negotiations that's been going on between the City of Winnipeg and that of the R.M. of Rosser.

And I know that there's some \$20 million, that's been explained to me, that has not been able to get on the table as a result of those negotiations not being able to take place, which is a substantial amount of money that we could've had to put to the development of that. There's some \$40 million that are available, are gonna be needed to be available for the sewer and water, and that seems to be the stumbling block between the R.M. of Rosser and the City of Winnipeg.

Now, I know I've met with city officials, I've met with the—of course, my local council, which is the R.M. of Rosser, on this very important issue as well, and I think that it's imperative that we try to

encourage them to develop an agreement. It does not have to go to annexation, it does not have to be expropriated. I think that there's times that we need to sit down with cool heads and resolve this issue.

They can do it through a development agreement. They can do it a number of ways, where they still don't have to have ownership of the property, but they can do it in a way that's sustainable for the city. And that's where it's sustainable for the R.M. of Rosser 'cause I know that the surrounding areas, as a result of CentrePort, whether it's in the R.M. of Rockwood, the town of Teulon, Woodlands, Stony Mountain, Headingley, St. Norbert, all those surrounding Capital Region towns and cities are gonna benefit immensely from that location where it's going to be located. And, of course, with the Perimeter there, it makes it ideal for getting goods and services in and out of that facility.

And the other thing that I wanted to put on the record, in regards to what we were talking about earlier, in regards to being a critic, and I want to correct the record as well from the member from Interlake in regards to what he had said in respect to Ranchers Choice. Now, he did make reference that I was opposed to Ranchers Choice. I want to correct the record: I was not opposed to Ranchers Choice. In fact, my money was on the table.

I felt that the government did do a disservice to those people in Dauphin. They had an opportunity to move forward with a—with a great processing facility but what happened was it was set up to flaw. The government didn't sign off on their share of their funds enabling Ranchers Choice to move forward so they could secure the financing, so they could secure the equity that they needed to move forward.

I remember very clearly negotiations in regards to that particular initiative, and I know I encouraged the Minister of Agriculture to sign off so, in fact, they could get money. But, unfortunately, we saw what has happened as a result of our \$4.5-million investment of good taxpayers' money which we got, as I pointed out last week in this House, we got less than the price of a used pickup, \$15,000, for our \$4.5-million investment.

Also, I think that it's imperative that we also realize the fact that whenever we're dealing with issues such as Ranchers Choice, whether it's them or Keystone processors, who now has just opened up doors in St. Boniface, I think it's also very imperative that we do our due diligence. And you can say that's being opposed to it, if that's what you want, but what

I say is it makes good policy. We have to make sure that we make sure that we do our due diligence, make sure that those investments we invest in within those parameters that it's a good investment for the taxpayers of this province, and I know that, you know, I have some concerns about Keystone Processors, but I support it. I think it's a great initiative. I would like to see more investment from the general public, whether that's through private investment—something other than government money that's gonna be on the table in regards to making sure this is a success, 'cause we do need to make sure we have federal dollars involved, provincial dollars involved, but we have to have a private sector as well.

And also, the member of Interlake talked about the Interlake and Westlake excess moisture, and I think that the Throne Speech totally missed the boat in this particular regard. It had an opportunity to make a right. We had some plans and programs that were put in place last year under the AgriRecovery program. We still have not seen the leadership from this government in regards to bringing back the freight assistance program. I know that that would've been a step that would've certainly shown some commitment. Also, in regards to recovering those acres of cereal crops and others that have been torn up through the flooding, it would've been a way of trying to sustain some of that land and getting it back in production for next year, and I know that the government when they did announce the freight assistance program and the excess moisture last year, they did miss out my constituents. Also the member from Gimli they missed out his as well, and they added on the ad hoc program into that particular area, and I can tell you that was also, unfortunately, just a press release is all it turned out to be.

I know a number of producers that have applied, and rain has no borders. We can't say it stops at Armstrong. We can't say it stops at Gimli. We can't say it stops in Winnipeg. It has no boundaries, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In regards to that, I know that a number of producers have applied. In fact, they're totally frustrated with the fact that they were somewhat assured they would be included in the program, and they didn't—they did not qualify for a number of that. *[interjection]*

Well, maybe the member from Gimli can put it on the record, but I can tell you the number of producers that I've talked to in the municipalities I've talked to certainly see it entirely different in regards

to what's happening in regards to the disaster that's happened in that area, and this year, again, a lot of that land has now still been under water. They did announce some drainage, which I give full marks to. We need to do a lot more, not only in that area, but other areas of the province, and also in regards to the drought that we talked about in regards to the western part of the province.

Again, the freight assistance would've been a sign of good faith in regards to helping those producers in a time of need, and freight assistance is something that we need to look at on an annual basis. I don't think it needs to be something that we look at on a semi-annual or annually basis, but in the past two years, three years actually, you go back to 2004 I remember very clearly the year after BSE broke out that we had a drought in the Interlake area. It was just opposite of what it is now, and the government did bring in freight assistance at that time along with some government loans that's helped those producers, and we got a lot of vacant land sitting within the whole Interlake region that now is gonna become idle as a result of the farmers selling off, and a lot of our farmers are at that age where they had to make those tough decisions whether they wanted to stay and lose their equity or get out of the game, and, unfortunately, as we know, once you're out of the game, it's very difficult to get back in. So I would've liked to see in the Throne Speech the government's leadership in regards to moving forward on just those two initiatives.

But there's other issues that I want to try and get on the record before my time's up and that's in regards to one announcement that was just—I was at, actually, this afternoon—and that was the opening of the National Centre for Livestock in the Environment and to the Bruce D. Campbell discovery centre. And I can tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mike Trevan, along with Bruce Campbell, Vic Toews and Barry Todd, who represented the province very well, along with myself being there, and also Number TEN Architectural Group, Doug Hanna, was there as well.

* (15:30)

I can tell you that this opening and the announcement today is a step in the right direction. I believe very strongly that—in fact, we talked about this very clearly in the debate on Bill 17, and we need to educate our urban colleagues, our students within the city. We need to do this on an ongoing basis. This facility will be an opportunity to do that.

And I remember very clearly that when, in the closing comments from Dr. Trevan, from the dean of Agriculture, he made very clear reference of making sure that he didn't want to use the term "education," and he wanted it used as a learning centre in regards to showing people some of the challenges, some of the issues that are so important to those people want to know where their food comes and some of the challenges. And it's not to preach, but to learn, and at the end of the day, they want to be able to show the farmer and say thank you for a farmer for providing the food.

In the next 10 years, we know we're gonna have some three billion more people to feed in this world, which is substantial. We're gonna be putting more and more pressure on agricultural producers to ensure that they have the best knowledge, the best tools, the best instruments they can have in order to do that.

Which brings me into my next issue in regards to the carbon offsets, and the carbon offsets under the BMP program this fall, when the farmers signed up for those programs and initiatives, they lost their carbon credits. And we know, quite clearly, the reasons why they lost those carbon credits and that's because the government made a commitment by 2012 to have enough carbon credits in place to be able to meet the Kyoto Accord.

And with those carbon credits, the farmer now is without those. Those are not being traded on the market. The Keystone ag producers have said that they're not near as concerned about it as I am. I am very concerned about it. I believe that the Keystone ag producers have people on staff and resources that they're able to ensure the fact that they're doing what's best for the producer. But, I still think it's a red flag. I think to be very careful with what we ask for, whenever we do move forward, 'cause I know these carbon credits are something that we can do an awful lot with in regards to the next generation.

I know, I go back to the *Manitoba Co-operator*, which was—in July of 2009, July 16th, there's an article in regards to carbon offsets that could reduce the stink from manure lagoons, and this is just one of the tools I'm thinking about whenever this flag that I'm talking about goes up and specially in regards to the hog operations and lagoon covers.

This particular colony, I believe it was Starlite Colony, as a matter of fact, from Starbuck, did a fantastic job in covering the lagoon, making sure they're doing everything they can for the environ-

ment, trying to be good neighbours, be good stewards.

And the other thing that comes into a fact—into mind, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that's in regards to the changes in technology and science as we see it come forward. I know I've had meetings with several different companies in regards to the change in the environment where they can dry actually the manure down, get rid of the phosphorus, get rid of the nitrogen, which we don't wanna get rid of entirely, 'cause that is very good for the land.

And we don't get entirely rid of all the phosphorus, that we can bring the levels down to such a level that it's safe to put back on the soil and work with the farmers, work with the scientific world, work with the technology that's out there so that we're able to make sure that we do sustain agriculture. But we do know we need to put nutrients back into the land and it can't be all artificial. They gotta be some natural ones, which is, as we've said very clearly, that the hog manure is one of the best methods of doing that.

So we want to make sure that we don't offset all our carbon credits in regards to government programs, especially in the BMP. So those are the concerns that I have.

I know that probably the next time I'm up and somebody will say, well, geez, you're opposed to this. And, well, I'm not. I'm saying that there's concerns I have that I want to make sure those concerns are put on the record so that when we, as politicians, make those decisions, we have done our homework and made sure that those bases are covered.

Also, in regards to the ATV lawsuits, it has also been an issue that's came about. And I know that the government is talking about snowmobiles this winter, and I know that farmers are very concerned in regards to protecting their land. I know that when you take a snowmobile across a piece of hay land, that certainly does a lot of damage. And it's just—it's just courtesy. I don't think we need to legislate common sense, but I think it's important that we do make sure that we put checks and balances in place where the farmer's not responsible, yet he can receive some compensation in regards to making sure that his land is put back in the position that it was before somebody took the right of going on it.

In conclusion—I didn't realize my time went so fast. I have several other things I wanted to put in the

record in regards to—I do have a couple that I just feel I have to—I have to put on the record, and that's to do with the income. And when we look at AgriStability, with the global averaging, it's not working.

What's happened, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, is that the global averaging, when you have—your margins continue to drop, which last year it was down 4.2 percent. So, if you have a payment of \$90,000 coming in 2005, that margin now drops, to 2008, down to 70,000 or 60,000, that payment becomes less and less and less. So I'm encouraging the new minister to have a hard look at that when he meets in January with his colleagues around the—around the great—the country of Canada, that we make sure we try and pick some of that back up.

And also in regards to the pork producers, I know that there's still an awful lot of herd out there. The federal government stepped forward with their program to make sure that farmers were—the hog farmers were still around. We are seeing a comeback there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I would encourage the government to do that.

And, in closing, I wish everyone a merry Christmas and a happy New Year, and the best of the holiday season to each and every one of you.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Labour and Immigration): Mr. Acting Speaker, it's my pleasure to get up today and discuss the Throne Speech, and I want to start, of course, by welcoming all of us back to the Legislature. I'm glad we're still here, so I get to give this speech. And I also want to especially thank the office of the Clerk and all the table officers, our new pages, and the Speaker's office for all the work they do, and *Hansard*, and the people that make sure we can hear each other, when we choose to hear each other, for all the work that they do to help this place run as smoothly as it can.

I, also, I think, should say a few words of thanks to my predecessor, who's now the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan). When I came into the office, it was immediately a welcoming place. It was immediately clear that it had been a department that had been extraordinarily well run, that it was a department of people who are not only knowledgeable about the work that they do, but brought a passion to the work that they do to make Manitoba the best, most fair and equitable and welcoming place that it can be. And I know that it's really her leadership that helped to set the tone for that, and I'm very lucky to be coming into the

Ministry of Labour and Immigration after such a tremendous example as her.

I also just wanna say a word of welcome and appreciation to our new Premier (Mr. Selinger), and it was a tumultuous fall, Mr. Acting Speaker, in many ways, but part of that exercise was connecting to so many ordinary Manitobans, so many working people that make this province what it is, and talking to them about the opportunities for renewal that we had in government and in our own party. And what was remarkable to me in that discussion were the number of people that I met and talked to that already knew our new Premier, that already knew the First Minister, that had met him either in his role as a professor teaching in the adult education centre, teaching in the Faculty of Social Work, that had met him in his role as a community organizer in St. Boniface, working with people who were very much in the margins of our society, helping them ensure a safer neighbourhood, ensure a safer place to live.

In fact, it was very few people who didn't have a direct experience, who hadn't had a direct connection to our new Premier. And I think it is—it is those connections to the people of our province, to the people who work and live and play and make this province the great place that it is, it's his connection to those people that is going to make him a tremendous leader. And so I just wanna add my voice of congratulations to him.

*(15:40)

In the past couple of months, or a month, I guess, six weeks, that I've been the Minister of Immigration and Labour, one of the great things that I've had the opportunity to do is meet with so many of the people that work in the department and work in the offices that are funded by Labour and Immigration. And I wanna just spend a few minutes paying tribute to them and I want to go through some of those folks that I've met. I'm certainly not going to mention all of them, and it's no slight to those that I leave out because it is a tremendous, tremendous group of men and women that work hard every day to make the department function.

I want to talk about just some of the things that stuck out for me in the tours that I've had of the different offices that I'm now responsible for. I had the opportunity to take a tour of our Employment Standards call centre where men and women answer the calls of workers and employers every day to explain what the code says, what their rights are,

what their obligations are, and sometimes, Mr. Acting Speaker, being on the other end of that phone might not be pleasant, but they never lose their patience and they never lose their commitment to talking to those people about what the rights and obligations are in Manitoba.

I also want to pay tribute to those people working in the office of the Fire Commissioner. I think it was week two in office I went out to Brandon to tour the fire college. It was the first day on the job of our new fire commissioner, Chris Jones, and I had the opportunity really to go back in time because I did spend a summer in my second year of university working at that fire college doing the humble but essential job of assembling fire prevention safety kits for the schools. And I met there some of the folks that do the inspections after a fire, after tragedy has struck, sometimes after a horrible loss of life, certainly loss of property, the kind of loss that changes a family's life, and these people go in after to find out what happened and to construct the codes and the laws and the changes that we need to make sure that we prevent future tragedies.

Similarly, I want to thank the inspectors in the Workplace Health and Safety division who also play that role, and not always are they welcomed when they show up. I think, by more enlightened employers, they are certainly welcomed but, you know, sometimes it's not always a welcome role that government plays to regulate, to inspect, and to enforce, but it's an essential role and they are doing a tremendous job to make workplaces safer, and I know it's their work along with the work of the Workers Compensation Board and their SAFE Work campaign that has helped to diminish, to decrease, the number of injuries and the number—the amount of time lost to injury that we have in Manitoba.

I just want for a moment to talk about the effect of that SAFE Work campaign in a very personal way, and it was the summertime and I was at a local gas station and I noticed that someone had come in with a huge propane tank, the kind for some very large barbeque, I'm sure, and there was a young worker there who had been asked to fill it and I witnessed the exchange between him and his supervisor where he refused to do that work because he felt that it was unsafe. He felt that he wasn't able to handle that large tank on his own and he wanted help to do it and even though his supervisor tried to convince him and cajole him to do it, he stood his ground and he cited the fact that he has the right to

refuse unsafe work, and it was a good example to me of the impact of the education work that we do. Sometimes you wonder if that makes a difference. You wonder if it gets through, but this was a clear and direct example to me of a young worker who had the strength of will and had the education and knowledge to refuse what he felt to be unsafe work and, although I don't know his name, I want to pay tribute to him for doing that.

Part of the department that I've had to learn a lot about is the Immigration part of the portfolio, and I want to just for a moment talk about the tremendous, tremendous success that immigration has been in our province. We heard earlier today in question period in one of, I thought, the best questions of question period, the population growth that we've experienced in Manitoba, and really, Mr. Speaker, it is—not within my lifetime have we seen such population growth.

In 2008, we had over 11,000 newcomers to Manitoba. Many, the vast majority of those coming through the provincial nominee program and getting to meet not only those people who have come to Manitoba but also the folks who work in the many, many non-government organizations who provide settlement services to newcomers. These are the people that are often, if not the first, one of the first friendly, welcoming faces that newcomers to our province get to experience, and you know, for me, I live two hours within where I was born. Most of my family lives here. The idea of travelling to another country to live, another culture, another language where I don't—I'm not familiar with the customs, where I don't understand the laws is very overwhelming to me. I can't imagine what it's like to do that. So the people that do travel that distance, who come to our province to start a new life or new part of their life, I think it's a tremendous achievement that they can do that.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

And I'm always reminded, when I talk about immigration, of the kids in the schools in the constituency that I represent. Just recently had the opportunity to witness the winter concert at Fort Rouge School. This year the theme was bells, and I didn't know there were that many songs that had to do with bells, but we were treated to a full, full, full evening of bell ringing and singing of carols and singing of other songs and saying of poems that had to do with bells. That bell ringing was a bit more enjoyable than the bell ringing that happens here, not quite as rhythmic but certainly more enjoyable.

And among those children that were participating in that winter concert was a young boy who, the teacher let me know, that this was not only his first winter concert but, in fact, this was his first experience in school. He had come from being born into and living his entire life in a refugee camp in Eritrea, and he had just come to school. It was his first experience in school and there he was at the end of the row, playing his xylophone and ringing his bell with the rest of his classmates.

And it's those kids that I get to meet every time I go to the schools in my constituency who have come, sometimes, from horrific, unimaginable circumstances, and who are not only learning a new language, who are often the primary English speakers for their entire family. And it's those kids that I think about every time we talk about immigration and every time we talk about the work that we all need to do to make sure that Manitoba's a welcoming place to newcomers, and that we can provide services and programs to people, especially people who are refugees who come from war-torn countries, that we can provide them the services and programs that they need to rebuild their lives and to live a successful life and to contribute to our province.

I also should say a few words about some of the less glamorous roles within the department and one of those certainly would be among the—in the pension branch. Perhaps we don't really think about pensions till we need them, but we have tremendous folks working very hard, and not only to ensure that the pensions of Manitobans are protected, but that we're moving forward to modernize the pension system in Manitoba, that we're ensuring that people have those pensions now and into the future. And so I wanna thank them for their work that often goes unrecognized but is essential to the future prosperity of many Manitobans.

One of the things that I've come to learn in my brief time as Minister of Labour and Immigration is the number of bodies that we rely on for advice, where employers and employees come together to talk about difficult issues, issues which they traditionally disagree about, but they work hard to come to a consensus. They work hard to understand each other's views, to understand where the other is coming from and to provide me and our government with the best advice they can. And so I wanna thank them for the work that they do.

Also, should say a big, big thank-you to the office of my deputy minister, and my deputy minister, who has created a very easy and safe space for me to learn everything I need to know about the new department, and especially the tremendous support staff that I have in my office, who are unflappable and who make sure that I'm well taken care of every day, that I show up where I'm supposed to with the things that I'm supposed to have. So I wanna thank them as well.

Some of the parts of the Throne Speech which are particular to the area of Labour and Immigration, which I think are worth noting, the first is in Workplace Safety and Health. And I talked a little about the people that are doing that important work of making sure that workers are protected and everybody comes home alive and safe at the end of the day. We introduced legislation that is gonna increase the fines for offences under The Workplace Safety and Health Act, to \$250,000 for a first offence and half a million dollars for a second or subsequent offence. And these amounts have not gone up since '97. They're currently among the lowest in the country, and this will help to put us at a more even position with other provinces. And I think that that law is very important and I'm happy to bring it forward.

* (15:50)

One of the first things that I got to do as minister—I think it was day two or day one—was accompany the now-Minister of Education (Ms. Allan) to the Workers Compensation Board because it was bring your kids to safe work day, and it was another great example of the work that the board is doing to educate future workers on the importance of safety. In an innovative and interesting manner, they had a *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*-type of contest, many questions on workplace safety and health, many of which I didn't know the answers to then. So it was very educational for me as well.

I've spoken a bit about our success in immigration, and part of the many tours that I—that I took part in over the last six weeks was a tour of the Provincial Nominee Program, and this has been, of course, an incredible success for our government. And to get to see all the people working hard to make sure that people's applications are processed in a timely manner was important. It was important to see the heart of that operation. We are working hard and diligently to make sure that we can shorten those wait times to under six months, and part of that is a

new nominee application centre working with the immigrants centre—which used to be known as the International Centre—to help people who are coming here to get their applications processed as quickly as possible. Some of this is looking at the systems and methods, make sure those are streamlined. Some of it is to ensure that people have all the information that they need to submit complete applications so that the time spent ensuring that applications are complete can be lessened, and part of that is also looking at what role technology can play for us to do a better job. So I think those are all tremendous achievements, and I look forward to the Provincial Nominee Program continuing to do the good work that they do to make sure those applications are processed in a timely way.

The other thing that I want to talk a bit about is the work that we're doing on qualifications recognition with the Fairness Commissioner and with the legislation that we've passed. Part of my getting to know the department has also been taking tours of settlement services, and many organizations that do that work are staffed by people who come to this country, and many of them are professionals in other professions, and many of them would like to be working in those professions. So I'm very pleased that we've taken steps to make sure that it's easier, that's it's more fair and transparent for people to get those credentials recognized here in Manitoba, and that we're also taking part in a national process to make sure that that can happen.

In addition to Labour and Immigration, of course, another part of my responsibility is the Status of Women, and this is something that I feel very knowledgeable about. And I'm very pleased to have met with the council, the advisory council, Manitoba Women's Advisory Council, and their staff and their chair, Marlene Bertrand, who is well known to many in this House for the tremendous work that she has done to counter domestic violence. We had, I think, a very moving ceremony on December 7th to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Montréal massacre. I know many members attended that ceremony and were moved, as I was, by the personal stories of violence and survival and, I think, often, when we talk about women who have experienced violence, it's important for us to talk about them as survivors and not victims because it's a lot of personal work. It's a lot of challenging your own sense of yourself and your own sense of your place in the world to be able to survive that kind of traumatic abuse and that kind of traumatic assault on

your own self-confidence and self-esteem. So I want to thank the advisory council for the work that they have done to put that commemoration together.

They will also be working closely with our recently announced action group on vulnerable and exploited women, and I think it's always important for us to remember not only the women who have been tragically killed, but also those women who are missing and those women who are abused and exploited every day on our streets and in their own home. And it's important that we never lose vigilance, that we never stop doing the work that we need to with our partners in the community to bring an end to violence against women everywhere that it's occurring.

Early on, also in my time as minister, I had the opportunity to travel up to Thompson to do some consultations on our new strategy for people with disabilities called Opening Doors. And, while I was there, I also took advantage of my time there to meet with women in Thompson at the YWCA. And this was a place I'd visited a few times before in my past life working on status of women issues, and I knew that the women in Thompson would be full of good advice, and I knew that it was important to go and hear about their perspectives living in a northern part of the province and living in a city that is sometimes much more isolated than the city that we live in. And they didn't disappoint me, they had lots of good advice, advice about housing—of course, they are experiencing tremendous housing need in Thompson—as well as good advice about their need for child care, and our need to be innovative to meet those needs. So I want to thank them for their good advice, and I look forward to speaking to them many more times in my career as the MLA for Fort Rouge and as a member in this House.

I also want to talk about my responsibility for people with disabilities. This, of course, is an issue that has been very important to me because I live my life as a person with a disability and so I understand not all of the issues because people with disabilities have many different disabilities and we all experience those differently and we all experience the world differently, and there is no unanimous, one voice I think that you could say that represents any sector of our society.

But I am very pleased to be able to continue the work that I had been doing with the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Mackintosh), and I think that it's important at this point also to thank him for the

faith in me that he showed in letting me do that work for people with disabilities. I've learned a tremendous amount from him, his tremendous commitment to the most vulnerable people in our society, and that commitment never waivers; it never changes. He brings it to work with him every day and I got to witness that first-hand, and it's a good reminder that however much we may take the criticism out on each other in this House, at the end of the day, we all got elected to serve our constituents and we all came to this place because we really believe that we can make a difference in the world, and the Minister of Family Services brings that belief to his work every day.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I just want to wrap up by saying again what a privilege it is to be the MLA for Fort Rouge, to thank my constituents for allowing me to have that privilege and to thank all the members in this House, many of whom have come up to me and personally congratulated me on my new role. I know we don't always show how much we get along, but I always tell people when they come to visit us and watch question period that they're only seeing the 40 minutes of drama in a day and that most of the rest of the time we're all working hard together for Manitobans. So I want to thank all of my colleagues and wish them a peaceful holiday and all the best in the new year, and I look forward to seeing them every day. Thank you.

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, indeed, it's once again an honour and a privilege to be here and rise in the Legislature to speak in response to what is my tenth Throne Speech response, and I want to also say that it was—and just thank all the constituents of Tuxedo for once again giving me the opportunity to be here. It's indeed a privilege and an honour to represent them here in the Manitoba Legislature and I certainly don't for one day take that for granted, what they do in instilling their confidence in me here in the Manitoba Legislature. So I do want to thank all of the constituents of Tuxedo, which takes in part of Charleswood as well as River Heights, and thank all of those constituents for that.

I also, Mr. Speaker, would like to wish the former premier, Gary Doer, well in his new role as the Canadian Ambassador to the United States. Certainly, he was a formidable character in this House, and we often had some great debates with him in this Manitoba Legislature. And so, certainly, the dynamics have changed in here since he left, and I do wish him well in his new role.

* (16:00)

I also want to welcome the new Premier (Mr. Selinger) in his role and wish him well, as well—the member for St. Boniface. Mr. Speaker, I also want to welcome you back to this session of the Manitoba Legislature, as well as the table officers and *Hansard* staff who are here and wish them all the best for a happy and healthy holiday season, as well as yourself. And thank you all so much for what you do to make it—make life easier for us here in the Manitoba Legislature. And, also, of course, I want to thank our pages for what they do and, often, sitting through here I can only imagine. I know the first—my first days in the Manitoba Legislature some of the debate that took place, and often wondered, you know, what people were talking about sometimes. And, often, you'll get into some filibustering which happens from time to time to time, and people are talking about their dogs and their cats, et cetera, and I'm sure the pages sort of wonder what exactly it is that's going on in the Manitoba Legislature.

So, anyway, I hope that they are learning a great deal from this, what is a tremendous experience to be here in the Manitoba Legislature. It is something you will take with you, the pages here, for the rest of your life, and there's not many people that have the opportunity to sit here on the floor of the Legislature and be amidst some—at sometimes heated debates. And so thank you for what you do to make our jobs easier here in the Manitoba Legislature.

November 21st of 2009 marks the ninth anniversary of me being elected in Tuxedo in the Manitoba Legislature and I know I already had an opportunity to thank my constituents in Tuxedo, but I also wanted to say that a year to that date later—as you know, Mr. Speaker, and you're aware of, my daughter was born a year to the day. And so she celebrated her eighth birthday the other day, and I, of course, wanted to wish her a happy birthday and just say how proud I am of her 'cause one thing that she—that she did for her birthday this year I was very proud of. And I think, in light of all of those people who have—who, unfortunately have to use food banks at Christmastime and, indeed, more than just Christmastime, but especially during this holiday season, my daughter, rather than taking birthday presents at her birthday this year, decided that she would make a donation and ask everyone to make a donation to the Siloam Mission. And we had a wonderful opportunity to go down there and meet with Sherwood Armbruster and some of the staff at Siloam Mission who made her feel very welcome

and really gave her an understanding of how important it is to reach out and to help those who are most vulnerable in our society. And I think, if our young people and our children can learn that at a very early age, I think we'll all be that much better off. So this was her choice to do it. She decided that she didn't need it, that there were other people out there that needed this more than she did, and I just want to say how proud I am of her for making that decision and, hopefully, encourage others. I know some of her classmates have done similar things, donations to different organizations, and I just want to say that I think it's a wonderful thing to see our youth participating in such a way to help make our province a better place to live.

Mr. Speaker, I also wanted to go on and talk a little bit about a Throne Speech. Now, there are some things in this Throne Speech, as we have heard from other members on our side of the House, that are good things. And I think in many of the Throne Speeches that have come forward throughout the years there are some things that have come forward that we do agree with. Unfortunately, what's happened over the years is that there are more things that we disagree with than what we agree with. And I know members opposite like to say that, oh, well, then, now you voted against this, you voted against that. And I think that the public knows that members opposite just try and play games with the votes and procedures in the Manitoba Legislature for their own gain. But I think Manitobans know better and can see right through these—the NDP, and that things, certainly, like, if we go back to one of the things that was announced where—it was the new Polar Bear Research and Arctic Exhibit at the Assiniboine Park Zoo, and I had the opportunity to be there with the new Minister of Conservation (Mr. Blaikie). Of course, I wanted to wish the old minister of Conservation—or, sorry, the former minister. I wouldn't want to call him the old minister—the former minister of Conservation well in his portfolio. I know over the years, he and I worked pretty well together, I think, just with various issues of concern to Manitobans, and so I want to thank him for his time, wish him well in his new role, and, of course, wish the new Minister of Conservation well in his role.

And I certainly had the opportunity to be there at the Assiniboine Park Zoo, which is a wonderful place in my riding in Tuxedo. It's a place where people from all over Manitoba, from all over Winnipeg, have an opportunity to come and visit and see species of animals that they wouldn't normally

have an opportunity to see. And I can recall growing up, Mr. Speaker, and going and visiting the Winnipeg Assiniboine Park Zoo, and I remember seeing Debby growing up, Debby the polar bear, and unfortunately Debby passed away last year and—but I knew her pretty much my whole life, and it was sort of a neat thing. You know, often, I can remember being there little until later on and I didn't realize until much later on that it was the same polar bear and that she had been there the whole time and so I thought that was a really neat thing and I certainly, I think it's no secret that in our family, my husband, my children and I we're—we love animals and we love going to the zoo and having that opportunity to spend at the zoo and so I do welcome the announcement and think it was a good one that was made at the zoo and appreciate the words that were spoken by Hartley Richardson who, of course, has been—has really spearheaded this project and I just want to thank him and Marg Redmond as well who have been instrumental in bringing this forward as well.

And I think we need to remember that when these types of opportunities and these projects come forward in Manitoba, they are primarily driven by people in our communities and not by government, and I think government loves to step in and take the credit for them but I think we need to also recognize and particularly recognize those in the communities that really drive these projects and make them happen. So I particularly want to thank those individuals as well, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to talk a little bit about some of the state—the state of some of the Manitoba Housing complexes in our ridings. I know a number of my colleagues on this side of the House have asked questions time and time again with respect to Manitoba Housing units and some of them being deplorable conditions that people are living in in this province and I for one know and have been approached and it's been an ongoing concern in my riding being those individuals living in 170 Hendon, and we hear regularly from Manitoba Housing units across this province who are dealing with infestation of bedbugs, mice, ants, mould, flooding and just in general very poor maintenance, Mr. Speaker.

And I think it's incumbent upon a government who I know they've had—they've come forward and during their leadership debate, they came forward and they were announcing new Manitoba Housing units and how many more new units they're going to bring forward. Well, maybe they should look at

taking care of the old units first and look at some sort of a long-term plan and a strategy for Manitoba Housing in this province. We have yet to see that from anyone on the government side of the House and I think it's incumbent and in particular, I want to go back to 170 Hendon, what's been going on there.

We, of course, know that several years ago there was a very unfortunate incident and—where a fellow had his arm almost cut off with a machete and it was a very serious incident in one of the—in 170 Hendon. People were absolutely terrified and living there in fear on a daily basis and that was the incident that had to occur in order for something initially to happen here.

So the government did respond and they did beef up security a little bit there, but a little bit is not enough. There still has yet to be 24-hour security. People in the 170 Hendon continue to live in fear. They are afraid to come forward. I held a public meeting there where the Manitoba Housing Authority came forward and attended the meeting, which was good to have them there. That was the first time they had been at a meeting there since I had been elected, which, quite—that was, you know, nine years ago, Mr. Speaker, and I think that's the first time that we've gotten these two groups together, which, I think, is unfortunate because these complaints have been there over the years and yet the Manitoba Housing and the minister—the minister's office had not been responding to them.

*(16:10)

And so I just want to say, Mr. Speaker, that at this meeting, I asked: Are there issues and concerns with respect to safety? And no one came forward. And I thought that was strange, because I'd been getting e-mails from people and, you know, phone calls and, you know, the people were really concerned about safety in their own homes, in these units. And so I asked if there was any issues. Well, no one came forward.

Well, what I found out later, Mr. Speaker, is that people were afraid to come forward at the public meeting because there were people in the room that they were afraid of. They were afraid of repercussions that would come out as a result of this.

And so to me, Mr. Speaker, that is so terrible, when people are living in fear in their own homes, and something needs to be done about that. And we can't just sit back and say, okay, everything's okay; they said at a public meeting that everything's fine.

Everything is not fine. I have brought this to the attention of the minister. I have brought this to the attention of members opposite. There is more than just a public safety issue in this building, that they're also living in deplorable conditions. I have been told by Manitoba Housing Authority, they have been told by people in Manitoba Housing Authority that, oh, yes, trust us, we will get the job done; we will make sure that the renovations take place as of April of this year.

Well, I hope that that actually does happen, Mr. Speaker, because these people have been living in these deplorable conditions for years and years, and something needs to happen. And I think 170 Hendon is just one example of so many Manitoba Housing units out there that are living—and people who are living in fear and living in deplorable conditions in these units that are being run and operated by the Manitoba government.

And I think we have seen no long-term—we have not seen a long-term vision or a plan with respect to Manitoba Housing in our province, and I think it's time, after 10 years. It should've been done a long time ago. It's incumbent upon this government to look after those individuals in that area, and they have yet to do it, so I think it's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to put some words on the—on the record with respect to the H1N1 illness. And I have to say that I was really—you know, you don't like to—when there's an epidemic, such as the H1N1, and the fear associated with it and the somewhat of a, maybe, panic across the country about, you know, what could happen with an epidemic. And, you know, I was reluctant at first to say anything, but I've had so many people come forward to me and say, like, during the course of how the government here in Manitoba rolled out the H1N1 vaccine. And so many people coming forward and saying, Heather, why are children in Manitoba not on the priority list? Why are our children not a priority in this province? And, you know, I didn't—I didn't know what to say to them other than, well, the NDP came up with the list. It's their list of who the priorities are in this province and I think what—*[interjection]*

Well, and members opposite are saying, no, it's the medical people.

Well, I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, that other provinces across Canada and other countries around the world did put children on the priority list. It was

the choice of this government. They were at the helm. They could have put our children on the priority list, but they chose not to. And I would suggest that they, if they wanted to, they could have, but they chose not to. And had they wanted to, they would have made it available in schools. They would have set it up so that children could have been vaccinated in schools. And, of course, that wasn't done. No, instead, people have to go down and pick up their children from school and take them and stand in a long lineup to get vaccinated.

Mr. Speaker, it makes absolutely no sense. This government was—it was complete chaos in terms of how this was organized. And I will tell you that it is beyond me why this government would not put children on the priority list, particularly when children in our province, who are in day cares and who are in—who are in schools themselves, those schools are like breeding grounds. The—think of—think of day cares and all the children that are playing with toys, and so on, on a regular basis. I mean, that's how disease is spread. That's how illnesses are spread. You know, they're not spread by, oh, well, you know, going to a shopping mall or—not as much as being in a day care.

So I think the government needed to really look at what the priorities were here and I think that there are a number of people out there in a number of the ridings in different—in different NDP ridings as well as our own, where people are seriously wondering, why were our kids not on the priority list. So I think, again, that is an unfortunate thing, Mr. Speaker.

I want to go on to my area of—my critic area, being Conservation and Water Stewardship, and just put a few words on the record with respect to why I cannot, unfortunately, support this Throne Speech. Of course I have talked about, you know, a couple of things that were good, including the polar bear announcement. And, as well, the government said that they will be expanding recycling and an increased access to the recycling of electronics and hazardous waste; however, Mr. Speaker, it's still too little and it's still not accessible to the public as they would like, and they need to expand the depots that are out there, and make more of the depots 24-hour depots.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech makes reference to upgrades to campgrounds throughout the province in co-operation with the federal government. These will be appreciated by the public but, as well, the government has committed to provide free entry into

the parks for another year. However, even though we, you know, we welcome the increase of visitors to the park, and so on, it's important that the terms of the waste-water facilities, like lagoons, et cetera, that there's the appropriate waste-water treatment facilities in those parks to be able to handle the increase in number of visitors that attend those parks. And I think what's happened here, Mr. Speaker, is that we're starting to wonder who is going to end up paying for the upgrades to these lagoons.

Okay, it's free for people to enter the park, okay. They're not paying to use the facilities there or anything like that, but those facilities and that infrastructure are way out of date and we need to ensure that the infrastructure is there to be able to handle the increase in the number of people who attend our parks, Mr. Speaker. And so I think that obviously needs to happen. I've been reading petitions in this House with respect to the Whiteshell Provincial Park. We see—we saw this summer, and in 2007, and back as far as 2005, the raw sewage dumping into Otter—in Dorothy Lake and Otter Falls, and to other areas around—in that vicinity.

And I think the unfortunate thing is that the members opposite like to come up and say, well, we've spent \$5 million here, we've done—you know what, it's not working. What they're doing is they're spending more and we're getting less for what they're spending, Mr. Speaker, because they have completely mismanaged this whole—this whole issue. And we've had engineers that have come forward that have stated exactly why and how they could go about doing this, yet they have completely ignored the advice of engineers in this area.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on for so long about all of the things and the mismanagement of this government. One area I really have to mention, of course, and I've mentioned this several times over, is the waste in the nitrogen removal from waste water in the city of Winnipeg. I think it's unfortunate that members opposite have seen fit to waste some \$350 million on unnecessary removal of nitrogen in waste-water facilities in the city of Winnipeg.

And so I think it's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that there are so many examples of waste when it comes to this government when—of how they've—how they've wasted money and yet they like to come forward and say what tough times we're in.

* (16:20)

Mr. Speaker—do I have—is this beeping? Is this for—do I have, like, two minutes or something, or is it—[interjection] Oh, my, okay.

So, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, there are so many things that this government could be doing with Manitoba to make it a better place to live, work and raise our families. Unfortunately, these are not outlined in this Throne Speech. Some of them are outlined in the Leader of the Opposition's (Mr. McFadyen) amendment to the Throne Speech. I would ask that members opposite support the amendments because I think it strengthens the—I think it strengthens the Throne Speech, and it would be wonderful if they would support it.

We need, Mr. Speaker, to reduce and eliminate our reliance on federal government transfer payments to balance our—to balance our core operating budget and make Manitoba the have-province that I know it can be.

Mr. Speaker, the environment in our province—we need to create a sound and stable economic environment in our province so we can create the wealth necessary to help those most vulnerable in our society. We need policies that will attract business to this province, not repel them. High taxes and unnecessarily burden from red tape will not do this and not achieve this goal. We need to create a sound economic environment in this province so that we can increase the tax base in our province so that we can afford to pay for the social services that we desperately need for those most vulnerable in our society.

I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity.

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to rise in support of this Throne Speech led by Honourable Philip Lee, Lieutenant-Governor of the province of Manitoba, first of the Canadian-Chinese community that takes—gives me a huge amount of pride to see how we are developing a society that is a very futuristic, and I'm very proud to support this.

I also like to congratulate our new Premier (Mr. Selinger) for being elected as our leader and accepting the challenging role of the Premier of this great province of Manitoba.

I also like to congratulate three of my colleagues who have been promoted to Cabinet positions. In particular, I congratulate the member from Wellington, the first coloured woman to be elevated

to the Cabinet position. I also like to congratulate member from Fort Rouge for being elevated to the Cabinet position. And I'm pretty sure that she will do a great job because I have admired her from day one that her speech, after being elected, was very charging, and she speaks from passion and she believes in hard work. So I congratulate her also. Also, I would like to—last but not the least—to welcome the member from Elmwood, who has now accepted the position for the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Blaikie) and also for climate change, which is extremely important for all of us. So I'm very happy to see this—our caucus and the new Cabinet, which is very colourful and with people of talent that will be governing our province, and I'm very, very happy to do that.

And I also thank Premier for having his confidence in me when he assigned me the task of being the special envoy for international trade, and I believe that this particular position will entitle Manitoba to concentrate more on developing the trade with international markets, which is growing. And I'm very happy to share that we have done in the past few years since I have been in the—in the Chamber here as elected member, reporting to Premier Doer at one time as his legislative assistant in—on international trade and investment. And I think that when we took the trade mission to India with Premier Doer, it was extremely successful. I think it was the first one which we had the largest trade mission from Manitoba exclusive to India, had generated some revenues and opened some new doors for Manitoba businesses.

I'm also thankful to the Deputy Premier and now the first woman Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk), who also accompanied me on a trade mission which was tailored to agriculture. And, again, I'll repeat, but I was very happy to see that she went right to the community of farmers who would not even speak English. They were directly from the farming community. She worked with them, and she talked to them about the issue that we are going to develop in India for the farming community on food processing industry. So this is something that I'm very happy that this has happened, and we are working on those files to make sure that we continue the international trade relations we have developed with India and other countries.

Also, I would like to say that we have, through this effort of agricultural and farming communities, business in that country which we have, well, just talked about that—you know, the population of the

world is growing and so the demand for food will grow, but we are doing extremely well in terms of looking after our farming community that will produce food with the help of the nutraceutical centre's studies which we have here in the University of Manitoba, one of the world class.

And also, we have the food processing centre, Food Development Centre in Portage la Prairie, which is very, very good. We are trying to get that particular technology to the new world, and we are very happy that that is happening.

So I am also very excited, Mr. Speaker, talking about the CentrePort, which will be, I can assure you, being from the business from the back, I am positive the CentrePort concept is so visionary that, a few years from now, people will see the investments pouring into Manitoba because we are looking at a very innovative way of how we are handling this particular concept of CentrePort, right located in the centre of North American continent.

And I'm very thankful to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure who invited me to the meeting with the CentrePort team led by one of the most competent executive I have met who worked with us in the government sector, namely Diane Gray. And, as Premier Doer said, that she was a brilliant bureaucrat, a hardworking woman that had demonstrated leadership. And I think she is going to do a fine job as the CEO of CentrePort, and I congratulate her for that.

We believe that the future is here when you look at the CentrePort concept and see how the transportation and distribution centre right in the hub of North America will be located in the city of Winnipeg, and I think that today's press also talks about that, which is extremely positive news for all of us.

I believe, and I have always spoken about this, that you look at some of the things that we do in our own economy, you can be short lived or you can be long-term vision. And I think we all admire that the visionary guru, which I call him, Ed Schreyer, who still talks about alternative energy, who still talks about bringing new energy concepts. He built Manitoba Hydro, which is the asset that we are all enjoying, but his vision was to look for future and not immediate, trying to somehow make things happen so that we can look few years. So we have to look for whatever we do; we look for future because this is what we are responsible to build our society for future.

I would not like to repeat this—we have talked so many times—the concept of public enterprises can be profitable, can be good. It can be responsible. And I have mentioned this in the past that several nations on this planet, several countries have—

* (16:30)

Mr. Speaker: Order.

The hour being 4:30 p.m., pursuant to rule 45(4), I am interrupting proceedings in order to put the question on the motion of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen), that is, the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in support of the amendment, say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the amendment, 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.

Order. Order.

The question before the House is the motion of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, that is, the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Division

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

Yeas

Borotsik, Briese, Cullen, Derkach, Driedger, Eichler, Faurshou, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Hawranik, Lamoureux, Maguire, McFadyen, Mitchelson, Pedersen, Rowat, Schuler, Stefanson.

Nays

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

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 19, Nays 32.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

House Business

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you please canvass the House to see if there is leave to bring forward a motion dealing with concurrence in the committee report regarding the recommendations of the Judicial Compensation Committee, as well as leave to temporarily set aside the Throne Speech debate to deal with the concurrence motion, with the understanding that this is not to count as an interruption of or affect the number of days of the debate held on the Throne Speech?

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to bring forward a motion dealing with concurrence to the committee report regarding the recommendation of the Judicial Compensation Committee, as well as leave to temporarily set aside the Throne Speech debate to deal with the concurrence motion, with the understanding that this is not to count as an interruption of or affect the number of days of debate held on the Throne Speech?

Is there agreement? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the House for their concurrence.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh), that in accordance with subsection 11.1(5) and (6) of The Provincial Court Act the report of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs respecting the judicial compensation received on December 1st, 2009, be concurred in.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable Minister for Innovation, Energy and Mines (Mr. Chomiak), seconded by the honourable Minister for Family Services and Consumer Affairs (Mr. Mackintosh), that in accordance with subsection 11.1(5) and (6) of The Provincial Court Act, the

report of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs respecting judicial compensation received on December 1st, 2009, be concurred in.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Chomiak: I again thank the House for their concurrence.

Mr. Speaker, would you please canvass the House to see if there is leave to bring forward Bill 300 for second reading debate with the understanding that this is not to count as an interruption of or affect the number of days of debate held on the Throne Speech?

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to bring forward Bill 300 for second reading debate with the understanding that this is not to count as an interruption of or affect the number of days of debate held on the Throne Speech?

Is there agreement? *[Agreed]*

* (16:40)

SECOND READINGS

Bill 300—An Act to amend An Act to incorporate The Portage District General Hospital Foundation

Mr. Speaker: Okay, I will now call—I will now call Bill No.—second reading of Bill No. 300, An Act to amend An Act to incorporate The Portage District General Hospital Foundation.

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik), that Bill No. 300, An Act to amend An Act to incorporate The Portage District General Hospital Foundation, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable member for Portage la Prairie, seconded by the honourable member for Brandon West, that Bill No. 300, An Act to amend An Act to incorporate The Portage District General Hospital Foundation, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Mr. Faurshou: Mr. Speaker, the bill before us this afternoon is an amendment to an existing piece of legislation that was brought before the House by the then-member for Portage la Prairie, Mr. Ed Connery,

in 1986. The amendment asks the House to approve the expansion of the board of directors by two persons, one to be appointed by the City of Portage la Prairie and one to be appointed by the Rural Municipality of Portage la Prairie. This increases the number of directors to seven.

And I would hope when this bill goes forward to committee that the government sees the value of this legislation and agrees to amend the legislation and incorporate that the Queen's Printer charges and related printing charges are covered so that the donated dollars that the foundation works with effectively are preserved and expended in the manner and fashion to which the donors had donated the dollars. And I believe this would be in keeping with the past government acknowledgment of the importance of foundations that support our health institutions here in the province of Manitoba.

And I will say the Portage and District General Hospital Foundation is, indeed, an exemplary organization and has provided vital support to the expansion and services of the—of the hospital, which the government has brought forward in the last number of years. Without the foundation's support, those expansions could not have taken place, and I hope the government will recognize that, and not only support the bill but provide for amendment to take on the costs of this amendment.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, I seek leave to complete my—

Mr. Speaker: We're dealing with Bill No. 300. We have any speakers on Bill 300?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, the question before House is second reading of Bill No. 300, an act to incorporate The Portage District General Hospital Foundation.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

THRONE SPEECH (Seventh Day of Debate—Continued)

Mr. Speaker: Okay, we will now—we will now revert to the Throne Speech debate, and the debate remains open.

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. We've just had a vote on the amendment, and now we're dealing with the main motion.

An Honourable Member: I ask for leave.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave to continue with his debate? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Jha: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Let's not be too eager here. We got lots of time.

Okay, the honourable member has asked leave, and leave has been given. And I will be now recognizing the honourable member for Radisson to continue with his speech. The honourable member for Radisson.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Jha: Thank you. Thank you.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Jha: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I would be very brief in trying to put some of my points. I just wanted to say that I see some new waves, some new hopes and new things happening in for Manitoba. And I, as I say, I was talking to the new Minister of Entrepreneurship, Trade and Training (Mr. Bjornson), and I think that we are looking at a new wave of training our young people. Aboriginal education has been put on the agenda of the new Premier's special portfolio he have given to the—to the honourable minister, that we will be looking at Aboriginal education, which is important.

And I think education becomes such a valued tool for any society that I take a great pride over the years we have seen a growth in education. And I would like to share that when I was raised, my father used to tell me—he was a professor—and he said that material wealth can be stolen and robbed, but your intellectual knowledge remains with you, and that lets you grow. So I think that when we look at education, it's one of the fundamental things that any society which needs to develop has to invest in, and I'm proud to see that we have done that and we are growing in the Aboriginal education also for our Canadian friends, Aboriginal friends who are actually the inhabitants of this particular society.

I have also take great pride that my constituency of Radisson, there are lot of young students that they write to me about their interest in politics, their interest in social systems, their inquisitiveness about our—how do we govern. And I'm very proud—as a grandfather, I have children that—grandchildren that they also talk about it. I have—I have to take a pride, Mr. Speaker, to share that my granddaughter, Chandini Jha, who is in Washington, D.C., as we talk, is participating in the modern United Nations, and she's only 13 years old, but she's taking active role in terms of how the world will be developed better. Another granddaughter, Shreya Jha in Toronto, she's nine years old and she's trying to now learn how the political system, social system work, so that democracy can prosper. So these are some of the hopes that I as a grandfather take great pride, and I see here in my own constituency young children that they are learning, they're educational and they are trying to really put themselves as new builders of our society.

So I think that fundamental pillars are education, health, safety and futuristic economic development. On that front, I must say, Mr. Speaker, that this Throne Speech has addressed those issues. This Throne Speech has addressed those issues because we are looking at the university of north as the fundamental tool to develop north and economic front. We heard about the university education, how much it returns back to the society in terms of finances.

So another thing that I am very proud to see that international immigration in Manitoba is growing, and as it was reported, we have 17,000 new immigrants coming to Manitoba, which makes the society better, which makes the society more universal because the newcomers come with their ideas, their own experience and they share and build a better society for us.

So I'm—also, I would not really repeat what is already said: an increase of \$303 million over the past decade. In education we have built 17 new schools, 12 replacement schools and over 55 additional projects and renovations in the school system. And I see that when I visit my schools in my constituency I see that they're learning music, they're learning art, they're learning sports, and they're also doing extremely well, extremely well, on the social studies and social responsibility.

So I am, again, thanking all of my colleagues here for allowing me to speak and conclude. And at

the end I would like to wish all members one of the best holidays that are—they are going to have a peaceful, peaceful holiday and a wonderful new year. And I think this will be something that I take a great pride being part of this government that is building Manitoba, one of the best provinces to live in this country. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

* (16:50)

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to make a few comments, probably cut down my speech a little bit but get right to the point. I think this is pretty important in this Chamber. We only have one more day left for Throne Speech debate, and I, too, would like to congratulate the member from St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger) in terms of him winning the leadership race for the New Democratic Party. And I know that it's going to be a challenge for anyone to be premier to take over from the previous member from Concordia, but I believe that he will probably try—he will likely do his best.

I'd like to also thank, Mr. Speaker, the work that you do as Speaker in this House and do an excellent job, very non-partisan approach and for that we appreciate it. Also, the table officers and the job that they do is exemplary. And, also, I know that the government has appointed a new Government House Leader (Mr. Blaikie) and I'm hoping that he would have learned, obviously, from the errors that he may have made this session, but I would—and I'm sure he will—that obviously what members of the opposition do obviously counts, that we can make a difference in this Legislature and we can kind of deal with legislation. We can make amendments and so on. We do have that authority in spite of the fact that we have much fewer members than members of the government.

I'd like to thank the member from Kildonan, the outgoing government house leader, as well. I wish him the best in his new portfolio. I can say honestly, Mr. Speaker, that we got along very well. We were both lawyers and we both knew that sometimes our discussions got a bit heated, but the end result is that you learn as a lawyer very quickly that you shouldn't take things personally. You may raise your voice to each other at times but the end result is you still have to work with each other and therefore you need to develop a liaison, a relationship that allows you to do that.

And also the member from Inkster, Mr. Speaker. We've gotten along very well in this House and I also

thank him for his input when it comes time to making decisions in this House and I value his input and I wish him the best in the next few years, next couple of years, I'm sure, before the next election. I'm sure he'll continue to be the House leader on behalf of the Liberal Party.

Mr. Speaker, I note that in the Throne Speech itself, there's a statement there that this government will not raise taxes by implementing the HST during this time, and I think those are the key words, during a recession. I think that when I look at what the minister or the Premier, our current Premier (Mr. Selinger) has said during the, prior to the leadership campaign and what the member from Minto said during the leadership campaign, I think it's pretty clear that this government has a hidden agenda. I think they're going to be implementing the HST whether it's before the next election or if they are successful, after the next election. I think they will be doing that.

So I want to make it very clear that we in the Progressive Conservative Party and our leader has taken a very clear position on the HST and that position is such that he has—he made it publicly known that the HST is not something that we would ever entertain, whether it's during a recession or not during a recession, whether it's before the next election or after the next election, we won't be implementing the HST, and I think Manitobans can take solace in the fact that we've been very clear in our communication on the harmonized sales tax, that it's not on for Manitoba.

I note as well, that in the—prior to the Throne Speech, the Premier appointed an extra minister, added one minister at a very high cost to Manitobans. When we're in a recession, when we're in a downturn of our economy and this government is adding another ministerial position, I think, is shameful, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to speak a little bit—I know that time is running short. We're nearing 5 o'clock. I'd like to speak a little bit, Mr. Speaker, about what's happening in Powerview-Pine Falls because that's of a huge concern to me as their representative, as their MLA, and I can tell you that there's lots of hopelessness out there right now. There was a lot of fear, particularly after Tembec announced the—that it was locking out its workers, effective September 1st. There was a great deal of fear by all of the workers in terms of what possibly could happen to that mill, whether it was a complete shutdown of that mill or

and how long—they were concerned about how long the negotiations would last and the concern that Tembec was taking a very extreme position when it came time to negotiating.

They knew, or they had a pretty good idea, that Tembec was likely to shut that mill down or try to sell it, and their worst fears came true just about a week ago, Mr. Speaker, when that happened. They were fearful of that announcement, but at the same time they were happy that at least they knew where they stood with the company rather than continuing to negotiate when the company wasn't willing to negotiate.

And I know, Mr. Speaker, that I've visited the picket lines, those picket lines, at least a dozen times from September 1st, and many times, the mill, prior to September 1st. I was weekly—I was in Pine Falls, Powerview-Pine Falls, on a weekly basis, and I visited many of the workers who were on the picket lines. There was a feeling of hopelessness as time went on, and they were really concerned, very concerned, that the Premier and the Minister of Labour didn't attend Powerview-Pine Falls at any time during that period. They were concerned that perhaps the government had abandoned them. I assured them continuously that we would be looking at—trying to look after their interests as opposition, and they were happy with that.

And what happened, Mr. Speaker, is that after about two months a couple of really concerned residents of Powerview-Pine Falls, Michelle Bruneau and Cindy Beck, got together and started a food bank for the workers that were locked out, and I appreciate them doing that. I think it's a great gesture, and I understand this morning when I talked to them that the food bank is being used—is being highly used by those members or employees of Tembec that have run out of money, and I support the establishment of that food bank. In fact, I established the first rural food bank in North America in 1991, and I can understand why they would start one in Powerview-Pine Falls, given the circumstances that they found themselves in.

They also established, Mr. Speaker, a used clothing depot for employees of—Tembec employees as well. I noticed when I was out there—in fact, I was out there Saturday—or sorry, not Saturday, I'm sorry. I was out there Sunday, Sunday afternoon, in Powerview-Pine Falls, yesterday afternoon, and the weather was extremely harsh at -30 degrees Celsius. But I noticed a number of the workers walking the

picket line as locked-out workers, and they still were in relatively good spirits considering the fact that it was -30 degrees Celsius outside.

The Tembec lockout affects, of course, all of the families in Powerview-Pine Falls area as well as all the businesses in the community because it affects their ability to sell food and clothing and other goods and it affects those businesses, but it also affects not only Powerview-Pine Falls but all of northeastern Manitoba because, as we know, there's a number of Tembec employees who live in the Rural Municipality of St. Clements, for example, in the R.M. of Victoria Beach, in the Traverse Bay area, in the R.M. of Alexander, and in the community of St. George, and even in the Rural Municipality of Brokenhead, and the R.M. of Lac du Bonnet, and the

town of Lac du Bonnet, so the effect of this lockout has affected all of northeastern Manitoba, not just Powerview-Pine Falls, Mr. Speaker. And it's a real concern when we have a large employer like that in our constituency shuts down and throws a lot of people out of work.

But, in any event, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a very happy New Year. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, when this matter is again before the House, the debate will remain open.

And the hour now being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, December 14, 2009

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<http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/index.html>